

Irish Foreign Affairs

Volume 2, Number 3

July-September 2009

*“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*

Contents

- Editorial I: The end of an Irish Foreign Policy? p. 2
- Editorial II: Danzig and the Start of the Second World War p. 9
- Lisbon explained: *John Temple Lang & Eamonn Gallagher* p. 2
- The launching of the Second World War: *Brendan Clifford* p. 11
- World War II - A Foreign Affair: *Pat Walsh* p. 16
- Haughey and German Unification; Letter: *Philip O’Connor* p. 19
- Nuclear weapons: Same double standards from Obama: *David Morrison* p. 20
- The elephant in the room: Israel’s nuclear weapons: *David Morrison* p. 22

Documents:

- The role of the Soviet Union (and Poland) in the events leading to the Second World War:
Kovaliov Sergei Nikolayevich p. 27
- United Nations Deliberations on the Question of Palestine, 1947 p. 33
- Blair Interview in *Stern Magazine* pp. 8, 26, 31

The end of an Irish Foreign Policy?

An Bord Snip [Irish Government's Expenditure Review Committee] recommended: "A significant proportion of the Department for Foreign Affairs expenditure is in respect of overseas missions, most of which are small. Given the potential for developing synergies between DFA and agencies such as *Enterprise Ireland*, *Tourism Ireland* and *An Bord Bia* as well as the potential establishment of a *European External Action Service* in the event of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the Group recommends that the network of embassies and consulates be reduced from 76 to 55. The Group also recommends that Ambassador posts routinely be graded at Principal Officer level, with only the three or four largest missions graded at Assistant Secretary level as compared with the 41 ambassadors who are currently of Assistant Secretary grade or higher. The Group notes that the *Foreign Service Allowance* is not taxable nor is it subject to the pension levy or income levy and recommends that it be reduced by 12.5% in recognition of the contributions made by those serving in other areas of the public service."

There was no opposition evident to this proposal and therefore it is likely to go ahead.

This effectively is the winding up of an Irish Foreign Service and the abandonment of a foreign policy. Instead we will have *European External Action Service* which is undefined but clearly saying that Foreign Policy is being handed over to the EU. There would be nothing wrong in this if the EU had a creditable foreign policy. But there is no area in the world where the EU is showing any spark of a policy that differs from the US-UK policy. Do we need to detail where that policy is going?

It is a little remarked fact that all the major members of the EU and the vast majority of its members are ex-Imperial powers. Ireland is the most notable exception. These Imperial powers had to draw in their horns as a result of national liberation movements in the last century and were replaced on the world stage by the two Cold War powers who agreed on little but did agree that European Imperialist powers had had their day. But that situation is gone and the European powers have had another innings.

The major member states have so arranged the new architecture of the EU that they and not the Commission have control of foreign policy. They have not just left the Commission out of it; they have imposed their own High Representative on the Commission, Solana - pacifist cum NATO warmonger. (Solana opposed NATO bases in Spain, and later was Secretary General of NATO 1995-1999).

The new Presidency role will concentrate on Foreign policy and dominate all other EU institutions and, with Blair seriously considered for this role, there is little doubt about what it will become; and if he has first go at it he will shape the template for its future role.

The intergovernmental methodology now applies rather than the community methodology. This means the major member states have a free hand and they do what comes naturally and the most natural thing in the world for them is a modernised version of moralising and dictating to the rest of the world. It's back to the future for them.

Never was an Irish foreign policy more badly needed just as it is being abolished!

Essential Steps for the European Union after the "No" Votes in France, the Netherlands & Ireland.

John Temple Lang & Eamonn Gallagher

[The authors are both former senior officials of the EU. John Temple Lang is a lawyer and a former Director responsible for telecommunications and media in the Competition Directorate General of the European Commission. He was a Director there beginning in 1988, and from 1974 to 1988 he was in the Legal Service of the European Commission, dealing primarily with competition law issues. Eamonn Gallagher is a former Director General in the European Commission and former EC Ambassador to the United Nations, New York. He played a key role in Irish diplomatic affairs over several decades and died earlier this year. Both were committed supporters of the European project but have serious reservations on the direction taken in recent years with the lessening of the power of the Commission and the growing power of the nation states and the replacement of the 'community method' by the intergovernmental method of dealing with issues.]

This paper, which they prepared for the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), is limited to the technical aspects of the changes and does not draw out the full political implications of what these mean – or why they have come about. However, this is an important contribution to the debate and the implications of the changes for Foreign Policy are highlighted in a very useful way.]

Jack Lane

We have created Europe. Now we have to create Europeans.
Bronislaw Geremek, Former Foreign Minister of Poland

Introduction

In the referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon in June 2008, Irish voters who voted against the Treaty gave several specific reasons as well as a variety of vague or general reasons that were unrelated to anything that was in the Treaty. These vague or general reasons are important because they probably were also significant influences in the "no" votes in France and the Netherlands. Moreover, they may be shared by a substantial but unknown number of people in other EU member states who did not get an opportunity to vote in a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty or the Treaty for a Constitution. There were positive referendum results in Luxembourg and Spain. Other countries promised referenda, but did not hold them.

These vague or general reasons for voting "no" can best be described as a distrust of the EU and a dislike of changes or anticipated changes associated, correctly or incorrectly, with the EU. Some of these reasons are imaginary, others are entirely unrelated to the EU and many of them could be refuted by any well-informed observer of the EU. But they cannot be simply dismissed or ignored by any of the governments.

This distrust of the EU and the various reasons that are given for it in public opinion polls are not confined to Irish voters or to

voters in France and the Netherlands. What seems to be a similar distrust, and apparently at least some broadly similar reasons for it, exists to a greater or lesser degree throughout the EU. It is now clear that this distrust is widespread and serious enough to concern all 27 heads of State and government. The absence of referenda in most member states that have ratified or still intend to ratify the Lisbon Treaty should not reassure them. This distrust cannot be assuaged by a short-term crash course informing the public about the EU or about a treaty on which they might be asked to vote. The lack of adequate knowledge of the EU makes it possible for those opposed to the EU or to the treaty in question to make statements that are patently untrue. And while it is impossible to believe these statements were made honestly, they have, nevertheless, influenced significant numbers of voters.

This problem must be tackled. If it is not, the EU will continue to be distrusted and will not have the support that it needs.

The Laeken Declaration

The heads of State and government themselves identified the problem in the Declaration of Laeken on 14-15 December 2001, and pointed to a solution. They said that changes had to be made that would bring citizens closer to the European design and European institutions. The Convention on the future of Europe, set up at Laeken, was instructed to propose measures to increase the democracy, transparency and efficiency of the EU, but it shelved any serious efforts at transparency to concentrate on efficiency.

At the end of its deliberations, the Convention submitted a draft treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe to the European Council in 2003. This led to two proposed treaties which, whatever their other merits, were extremely complicated and difficult to understand. There seem to have been several reasons for this:

- There was no committee on institutional questions during the Convention. As a result, the institutional plans of Mr. Giscard d'Estaing were not adequately discussed, and their implications were not understood clearly, in particular by the representatives of the smaller member states.

- Almost all those attending the subsequent intergovernmental conferences followed the Convention draft and primarily discussed institutional measures to make the EU a more effective political force.

Irish Foreign Affairs is a publication of
the *Irish Political Review* Group.
55 St Peter's Tce., Howth, Dublin 13

Editor: Philip O'Connor
ISSN 2009-132X

Printers: Athol Books, Belfast
www.atholbooks.org

Price per issue: €7 (Sterling £5)

Annual postal subscription: €28

Annual electronic subscription: €20

All correspondence, orders:
philip@atholbooks.org

- The changes to strengthen the EU's political role did not bring foreign policy and security policy issues under the existing decision-making process, the 'Community method'. Instead they confirmed the distinct intergovernmental method of decision making, for foreign and security policy, and introduced a version of that method in which the Commission has no role. The EU would be the only international body in the world with two entirely different decision-making procedures. This basic dichotomy makes the whole structure far more complicated and far less transparent and democratic.

Understanding the Treaty

- This complexity might not have mattered if the new Treaty arrangements had been based on a clear and intelligible concept or set of principles and if the reasons for them had been explained clearly. They were not.

- The added complexity is not because the Lisbon Treaty has been drafted as an amendment to the existing Treaties, rather than replacing them, but is inherent in the institutional structure that emerged from the Convention. The complexity therefore cannot be resolved by having a consolidated version of the Treaties.

Greater power of Parliament

As a result, although under the Lisbon Treaty the powers of national parliaments and of the European Parliament would be increased and, therefore, in some respects the new institutional arrangements seem more democratic, the aims of the Laeken Declaration have not been fulfilled. The real or supposed gains in efficiency and democratic control are not enough to offset the institutional complexity that would result from an illogical compromise that combines two different decision-making processes in the same institutions. The other improvements are insufficient and of too little interest to the general public to outweigh the complex arrangements for foreign policy and security. The intergovernmental decision-making process is essentially undemocratic.

Unfortunately the aims of the Laeken Declaration are not optional extras or unnecessary luxuries for the EU. They are essential for public understanding of the EU and for public support for it. Before considering what now needs to be done, some longer-term factors deserve mention:

- The original Treaty of Rome was never explained by any document corresponding to the Federalist Papers, which explained with great clarity the reasons for the design of the US Constitution. There were 84 Federalist Papers, discussing a Constitution of (then) seven Articles. A comparable explanation of the EU institutions would be longer, because the EU, even without the complications added by the Lisbon Treaty, is much more complex. An EU policy Declaration, setting out the EU objectives of peace, prosperity, and human rights in Europe, environmental conservation, and generous aid to developing countries would be valuable as a job description, but would not be a substitute for carrying out the tasks that were agreed in Laeken, and then put aside and never carried out.

The Community method of decision-making

- The Community method of decision-making comes from mediation theory. It says, in short, that to make majority voting acceptable to a heterogeneous group it is necessary to have all proposals made by an autonomous body that is representative of the group as a whole. Its proposals may be adopted by a majority vote (in the EU, a qualified or weighted majority). But the interests of minorities are safeguarded because of the impartiality

of the autonomous body and because its proposals may be amended only by unanimity. The Community method also involves democratic control by the European Parliament, and judicial control by the Court of Justice. Once explained, this is not hard to understand, but surprisingly it has never been officially explained anywhere. So even the reasons for the well-established Community method were not well or widely understood. This is remarkable, because this method and the role of the Commission are the foundation stones on which the Community was built in 1958, and they are the reasons why it has been accepted as the best available way of managing European economic affairs. If the method had been better understood, there would have been greater unwillingness to depart from it. (In the Convention there was a group of smaller states called the "Friends of the Community Method", but they did not stick to their position.) Because the Community method means that the Commission must have the exclusive right to propose new measures, the European Parliament is not entitled to propose them. MEPs who are not aware of the reasons for the method resent this. It is not surprising, therefore, that many people are easily misled on this issue. Even if everyone understood it, that would not explain the procedures for foreign policy decisions under the recent draft treaties which are based on the wholly different intergovernmental method.

- In all member states, governments have blamed 'Brussels' for unpopular decisions that they have been associated with and that, in many cases, they have voted for. This inevitably leads to incomprehension, dislike and distrust of the EU. The governments have denigrated the institutions that they have helped to set up and which they operate.

- In terms of democracy, the Lisbon Treaty would take several steps in one direction and several steps in the opposite direction. In the long-standing economic and social sphere of the 'First Pillar', the Lisbon Treaty would introduce greater powers for the national parliaments and the European Parliament. But in the area of common foreign and security policy, no democratic safeguards apply and there is no judicial control.

European Foreign Policy

Foreign policy measures would not involve national parliaments, the European Parliament or the Commission. It is not intended that the Commission be given any right of proposal in relation to foreign policy measures. The two separate decision-making processes that result from the Lisbon Treaty would give rise to repeated controversy and litigation over which procedure is legally appropriate for particular measures. Such an institutional structure, whatever its merits, is extremely complicated, and the opposite of what was called for in Laeken. Since it is clear that the intergovernmental approach will apply to foreign policy for the foreseeable future, it is crucially important that in all other respects the EU institutions are as rational and intelligible as possible.

What should be done?

Non-treaty measures

It is clear that all EU governments need to take a number of measures to give effect to the Laeken objectives. Fortunately there are many things that are clearly desirable and uncontroversial and that can be done quickly without any change in the existing treaties. They should be done as soon as possible. Cumulatively they would make the EU institutions much more easily understood, more acceptable and more interesting to the public. These measures need to be taken by all the member states, not only by France, the Netherlands and Ireland.

Public Discussions

The first and most important of these changes would be to hold discussions in the European Council and the Councils of Ministers much more frequently in public. This was envisaged in the Treaty for a Constitution and in the Lisbon Treaty, so it already has the agreement of the governments of all the member states. It would make a great difference for the public to know what was said and done during Council meetings and for the media to be able to report on them. The Council is, in effect, one chamber of a bicameral legislature (the other 'chamber' is the Parliament) and legislatures should meet and debate in public. This simple change would also enable national parliaments to see what their Ministers were saying and how they were voting. Everyone would understand better whatever difficulties there might be in obtaining agreement.

A second simple, clearly desirable and non-controversial step would be to establish a practice by which members of the Commission (not only the Commissioner nominated by the country in question) would routinely visit each national capital at regular intervals to discuss current EU policies and Commission proposals in public with members of national parliaments. This should not be done only when an especially difficult or controversial issue arises.

A third desirable and non-controversial step would be to have regular meetings, in public, between MEPs (not only MEPs of the country concerned) and members of the national parliament. Again, this should be done regularly as a matter of routine, and not only when controversies have broken out.

A fourth measure would be for the Commission to publish papers on long-term EU policies and strategies explaining the arguments for and against each possible policy or course of action. This would help to inform public opinion before individual issues arose on which Commission proposals are needed.

Unique position of Ireland

The combined effect of these steps would be very great even if their influence on public understanding and opinion might not be fully clear for some time. But if, as seems clear, Ireland can expect to have referendums again in future, it is obvious that the Irish government needs to do more than most other governments to inform public opinion. In this respect, the Irish government is, perhaps, in a unique position. More generally, the members of the national parliaments and, in particular, e.g. the members of committees of the Irish Parliament (Oireachtas) concerned with EU affairs, need to be much more active and to spend more time discussing and explaining the reasons for particular EU proposals and policies, as well as explaining the views of the government and the Oireachtas on them. When more Council discussions are open to the public and national parliaments are discussing the issues, there would be much more interest in the views expressed and they would receive much more attention from the media than they do at present.

All this would lead, and in Ireland could certainly be expected to lead, to greater use of modern information technology. Individuals would start to participate, either online or by talking to their TD (a member of the lower house of the Irish Parliament, the Dail), in discussions. The European Commission's offices in the member states could have websites or weblogs on which individuals throughout the country could make known their views or ask their questions. Politicians and Commission officials would become aware, more clearly than they seem to have been in recent years, of the questions and concerns of the average citizen. Phone-in radio programmes and letters to the editor have a similar effect but their capacity is limited by the time or space available.

It is worth pointing out to city dwellers that this would have a tremendous effect in towns and villages far from capitals, and even further from Brussels, from which farmers and fishermen could email views, questions and criticisms. The democratic potential of online communication is enormous, but it can only be exploited if the people know what is going on and why.

If all this were done quickly, it would show that all governments of all the EU member states have listened to what the “no” voters in France, the Netherlands and Ireland were saying, however confusingly.

These are the concerns that governments should be dealing with rather than issues wholly unaffected by the Treaty of Lisbon. Even if some additional guarantees were given to Ireland on issues like abortion, neutrality or taxation, the problem of distrust would be unresolved and such guarantees would leave the underlying problem untouched.

It is only after distrust of the EU has been properly addressed that EU governments could expect to have popular support for the EU or for their own policies in the EU, or could ask for popular approval of any new EU Treaty in a referendum. These suggestions are necessary but not sufficient conditions for popular understanding of the EU. When the Laeken Declaration has been implemented as far as it can without Treaty amendment, the next stage is to see what else should be done to make the EU more democratic, more transparent and more efficient.

Maintaining a representative Commission

Since the Nice Treaty, it has been proposed that the Commission should no longer be composed of nominees of all the member states. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission would be made up of nominees of only two-thirds of the member states, “unless the European Council, acting unanimously decides to alter this number”. The full significance of this reduction in size has not been widely or clearly understood in any of the member states. It means that there would always be, for five years at a time, one-third of the member states without a nominee in the EU’s policy-proposing institution, which is also the body that ensures that the obligations of member states are carried out. Since there are six large member states, there would always be two large states without nominees, and those states at least (and no doubt others) would be likely to say that they would not accept proposals or decisions of a body on which they were not, in any sense, represented. This would inevitably and seriously weaken the Commission, and make it at all times less able to deal with whichever states were without nominees.

One measure that would greatly help to overcome public distrust of the Union is both important enough and conspicuous enough to make a substantial contribution. That measure is to restore the representative nature and integrity of the Commission. As explained above, the rationale for having a Commission is that the EU needs an autonomous body, equally independent of all the member states and representative of the whole Union, to propose EU measures and policies so as to make majority voting acceptable. For this purpose the Commission must be composed at all times of nominees (not representatives, because they must be independent) of all of the member states, not just some of them. In addition, none of the members of the Commission must be subject to instructions from any other institution, whether the Council, the Parliament or national governments of any of the Member States. In short, the provisions in the Nice Treaty which deprive member states of the right to nominate a Commissioner at all times should be repealed and the Community method, which worked so well for so long, should be applied to all economic, social and police ‘First Pillar’ and ‘Third Pillar’ matters.

There are a number of reasons why this is now essential:

- The reduction in the size of the Commission is probably the most important single reason for objecting to the Lisbon Treaty. (The Nice Treaty had envisaged a reduction but did not specify what the reduction should be, so it did not arouse the same depth of opposition.)

- Restoring each state’s right to nominate a Commissioner at all times would help to obtain or improve public support for the EU in all member states and not only in France, the Netherlands and Ireland.

- Restoring the right to nominate a Commissioner from each state would avoid a situation that would certainly erode public support for the EU in every state that finds itself, for five years at a time, without a nominee. No surer way of provoking public antagonism could be devised than to deprive member states of their nominees.

- Restoring the full Commission would represent a genuine and substantial improvement in the future institutional arrangements, which have given rise to such widespread distrust.

- This would maintain the proven Community method that has worked well for 50 years, which is based on a fully representative Commission.

- It would ensure that the Commission can at all times stay in touch with public opinion in all the member states.

- It would be the best, clearest and simplest single change that could be made to convince voters that governments, not the Commission, had really understood what voters are saying to them. It was governments, not the Commission, that were responsible for creating the Nice and Lisbon Treaties.

- It is a change that will be increasingly strongly demanded anyway as the date for reducing the size of the Commission comes nearer, and nine member states realise that they will have no nominee on the Commission for five years.

- Only a Commission composed of nominees of all the member states would be capable of fulfilling the Commission’s increased role and responsibility, which must be to ensure that the EU and its policies are properly explained to, and understood by, the peoples. It is now clear that much more needs to be done to explain the EU to national parliaments. This needs to be done by Commissioners. The argument that there is not enough work for 27 Commissioners is now clearly wrong; there is more than enough work for all of them.

- It would avoid undignified and controversial wrangling over which nine member states would be the first to lose their nominees as Commissioners for five years.

- It would displease only those who want to reduce the influence of the Commission, which is the guardian of the treaties and of the legitimate interests of small states and states in a minority on particular issues.

- Restoring the size of the Commission confers the same benefits on all member states. It would not be a ‘concession’ to Ireland, nor would it mean ‘cherry picking’ among the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. It is a change that would be widely welcomed in all member states, and would avoid weakening the Commission. (It is true that small states would benefit more than big states, which need a Commissioner less.)

- As more countries join, as they must, the EU will become more heterogeneous, and the need for an impartial policy-proposing mediator to reconcile all the competing interests will be even greater than in the past.

- Europe today needs leadership. An independent minded policy-proposing think-tank is more needed than ever.

- Restoring the Commission to its normal strength also bal-

ances the re-weighting of votes in the Council in favour of the large member states, in particular Germany, and makes it more widely acceptable. This is discussed below.

- If the principle that each member state may nominate a Commissioner was maintained, no referendum in Ireland would be needed on this issue. A decision to maintain one nominee from each member state would involve a change from the Nice Treaty, but would not involve an amendment of the Lisbon Treaty because, as mentioned above, the Lisbon Treaty empowers the Council by unanimity to alter the size of the Commission. If therefore it was expected that the Lisbon Treaty would come into force, the Council could decide that each member state should always have the right to nominate a Commissioner, and this decision would come into force at the same time as the Lisbon Treaty itself.

Maintaining the independence of the Commission

As already mentioned, the Community method requires the Commission to be representative of the Union as a whole, and equally independent from all the member states. The independence of the individual Commissioners is essential for the role, and indeed the *raison d'être*, of the Commission. That is why the treaties have always stipulated that Commissions may not accept instructions from any government or other body. If they did, they would be unable to carry out their responsibility to propose policies and measures in the interests of the Union as a whole, including as far as possible any member state that may be in a minority on any particular issue. It is also the reason why Commissioners cannot be elected, just as judges should not be elected.

A high representative for foreign policy

Unfortunately, some provisions of the Lisbon Treaty are inconsistent with this basic requirement. They provide for a high representative for foreign policy who would be appointed by (and therefore responsible to) the Council, and who would be simultaneously vice-president of the Commission and chairman of the foreign affairs council. The effect of this would be, and was intended to be, to reduce the independence of the Commission in foreign commercial and economic policy, to place a key member of the Commission under the direct control of the Council and to take foreign economic policy away from the existing institutional system, and make it essentially intergovernmental. (The way the high representative is intended to operate is not clear: See Articles 18(4), 42(4) of the consolidated version of the Treaty, Council document 6655/08.)

So the Lisbon Treaty not only envisages two entirely different decision-making processes, but it also would introduce a hybrid system involving mutually incompatible roles for the foreign policy representative. The integrity and independence of the Commission will not be restored only by ensuring that all member states can have their nominees as Commissioners at all times. It also requires that the role of the foreign policy representative should be completely separate from the Commission. Otherwise the Lisbon Treaty would involve, in this important respect, a big step away from the Community method and the loss of all the safeguards that the Community method provides.

In short, the proposals for a double-hatted foreign policy representative are undemocratic, inefficient (because they create conflicts), confusing and difficult to understand. They are also incompatible with the Community method, which until now has applied fully to the common commercial policy of the Community and the Union. These proposals are one of the worst features

of the Lisbon Treaty.

It might be said, in the defence of the dual capacity of the foreign policy representative, that there could be no objection to the Council appointing a representative (which is true) and that it is necessary that he or she is a member of the Commission, to co-ordinate the work of the two bodies (which is not true). The Commission, under the Community method, proposes policy to the Council. If the views of the two bodies are inconsistent, the Council can solve the problem, either by altering the Commission's proposal by unanimity or by inviting the Commission to modify its proposal to solve the problem. There is no need for the president of the foreign policy council to be a member of the Commission, or to be a member of the Commission with special powers. A foreign policy representative who was not also a Commissioner could be appointed by the Council without a change in the treaties. The only purpose of the dual role is to take away from the Commission and the Community method, with all its safeguards, the responsibility for proposing foreign commercial and economic policy measures, and to enable them to be managed by the Council, by an intergovernmental procedure in which the large member states will have overwhelming influence, if they choose to exercise it.

A serious defect

The mutually incompatible roles of Commission vice president and president of the foreign policy council do not distort only the relations between the institutions in connection with foreign economic policy. As a member of the Commission, the individual concerned should not be subject to the instructions of any other body. And in particular he or she should not be subject to the instructions of one of the institutions to which the Commission may be obliged to make proposals that may not be readily acceptable to some of the member states in the Council. The likelihood of a conflict of interest arising, and the possibility of influence that is inconsistent with the independence required of Commissioners, are contrary to the Community method, whose formula has made the European Union successful and acceptable. The use of the intergovernmental method in foreign policy matters is regrettable, but it is not new, and one day it may perhaps be abandoned. The mutually inconsistent roles suggested for the foreign representative are new, and damaging to the existing institutional system. It is profoundly worrying that the dangers of this suggestion have not been more widely understood.

This is a serious defect. It is not merely an undesirable and unnecessary complication, although it is certainly that. To correct this defect, it would be necessary to amend the Lisbon Treaty, to keep the Council and the Commission separate, so that their respective roles are clear and understandable. To see the role of the foreign policy representative in context, it is necessary to look at the other new post, the president of the Council.

The President of the Council

At present, the Presidency of the Council is held by each member state in rotation for a six-month period. Under the Lisbon Treaty, a long-term and full-time President would be elected by the Council. This is said to be desirable for efficiency and continuity, although the role and tasks of the President are not defined. What is clear is that the President will not be elected or subject to democratic control. Unless he is a mere figurehead, he is almost certain, like the foreign policy representative, to work closely in practice with the three largest and most influential member states, Germany, France and the UK. So the Lisbon Treaty would establish two new posts, clearly important although their powers are undefined, in addition to the post of President of

the Commission. Such an arrangement, whatever its other merits, is the opposite of the democracy and simplicity called for by the Laeken Declaration and seems destined to lead to rivalry and demarcation disputes between the three individuals concerned, and their respective officials. It is certainly impossible to explain clearly to the peoples of Europe, and indeed the only explanations offered have been superficial and unconvincing. If the President were to be elected by all the peoples of the EU, the post would be intelligible even if his powers were unclear, but that is not suggested.

Treaty amendments that would not require an Irish referendum

There seems to be a widely held impression that any amendment of the EU Treaties necessitates a referendum in Ireland. This is incorrect, for several reasons.

The first reason is that the Irish people in several referendums have allowed Ireland to ratify treaties that clearly envisage changes that affect, or might be thought to affect, the national sovereignty of all member states. Such changes are envisaged when new member states join the EU. The accession of any new member state means that the proportion of the votes in the Council exercised by each of the existing member states is reduced, and this of course involves treaty changes. Other Treaty provisions envisage that police and judicial co-operation matters ('Third Pillar' issues) can be transferred from the former inter-governmental procedures, requiring unanimity, to qualified majority voting under the Community method. The treaties have always included a provision under which, by unanimity, measures could be adopted for purposes for which no mechanism was expressly provided by the treaties (Article 235 of the Treaty of Rome, now Article 308). So the Constitution of Ireland, as amended by successive referendums expressly approving a series of Community Treaties, authorises substantial changes in the terms and operation of the EU treaties without any need for further referendums. These changes, of course, can be made only with Ireland's consent: the point made here is that they are already envisaged, and do not require a referendum.

The second reason why Ireland is free to ratify some changes in the EU treaties without a referendum concerns the *Crotty* judgement. In short, that judgement said that Treaty changes not approved by previous referenda would require a further referendum if they significantly restricted Ireland's freedom of action and national sovereignty in foreign policy. In retrospect, the language of all three judges seems exaggerated. But, as is well known, the Irish people by referendum approved the Single European Act, including Title III, and since then have approved, by referenda, the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice Treaties, which provided for co-operation on foreign policy matters, and which therefore restricted, to a limited extent, Ireland's freedom of action in foreign policy. It follows that only a very substantial reduction in Ireland's sovereignty or in its influence in the EU, not already envisaged by any of the treaties approved by referendum, would require a new referendum. If treaty amendments do not alter the essential scope of objectives of the EU, no new referendum is needed.

The re-weighting of the votes in the Council

The Lisbon Treaty provides for re-weighting of votes in the Council. Where the Council is acting on a Commission proposal, a qualified majority of the Council shall be "... at least 55% of the members of the Council, comprising at least fifteen of them and

representing Member States comprising at least 65% of the population of the Union." This is the 'double majority' rule, which is intended to replace the present system of weighted votes, in particular to give Germany the additional voting weight to which its size entitles it.

Ireland's vote reduced

This is not to come into force until 2014, even if the Lisbon Treaty were to come into operation soon. The effect, when it comes into force, would be to alter Ireland's weighted vote under the population requirement from 7 votes out of 345 (just over 2%) to 4.2 million out of 497 million (a ratio of just under 1%, but this does not allow for the increase in the total EU population due to further accessions or otherwise in the future).

The question may arise whether it would be permissible under the Constitution of Ireland for Ireland to ratify a new Treaty providing only for the adoption of the 'double majority', in the same terms as Article 191 of the Lisbon Treaty. The question is important because the large member states, in particular Germany, are unwilling to agree to new states joining the EU until the votes in the Council have been re-weighted, since at present the smaller states collectively have more power than their populations would justify.

In 1972 the Constitution was amended to allow Ireland to join the European Community, and on some issues to be outvoted by a qualified majority calculated in accordance with the weightings set out in the Treaty at that time. These weightings were repeatedly adjusted without controversy in Ireland on the accession of a total of 18 more countries (and by the Treaty of Nice), and the question may now arise as to whether they could be re-adjusted by a clause of the kind included in the Lisbon Treaty without a referendum. The effect, as already indicated, would be to reduce the weight of Ireland's vote from about 2% to about 1%. This would be part of a rationalisation of the voting strengths to make voting in the Council correspond to population size. Although clearly reasonable, and indeed more democratic if the EU population is looked at as a whole, small member states had previously been given somewhat more voting weight (in Luxembourg's case, much more) than their populations suggested.

However, at no time was there ever an explicit formula or rationale for the weightings, and they were always subject to pragmatic arguments about the relative sizes of particular pairs or groupings of member states. There would, therefore, be no basis for saying that Ireland had a right to expect a vote of any particular percentage of the whole, or to insist on the application of any particular formula.

This is clear when one simple and obvious fact is taken into account. When Ireland joined the Community in 1973, it was one of nine member states and had 3 votes out of a total of 58 votes (5.2% approximately). But the treaties envisaged the accession of additional member states, and every time a new member state joined, Ireland's vote, as a percentage of the total votes, was automatically reduced. Therefore, it is clear that Ireland had no assurance that its vote, as a percentage of the total, would remain at any particular level. Similarly, when Germany was reunited, what had previously been a separate state became a part of the Community, and it was certainly appropriate to alter Germany's voting strength accordingly, although this was not done until later.

The question therefore is whether the suggested reduction of Ireland's voting weight from 2% to 1% as part of a re-weighting of all member state's voting rights, should be regarded as such a significant reduction of Ireland's influence in the Council that it would require formal approval in a referendum. To answer that

question, it must also be kept in mind that the Council rarely takes a decision by voting, and when it does, there must always be two sets of member states under the double majority rule, in both of which Ireland would always have a small proportion of the votes available. The only circumstance in which the difference between 2% and 1% could matter would be if the two voting groups were so evenly matched that there was only about 1% between them. Such a scenario is mathematically possible but so extremely unlikely as to be discounted. A reasonable conclusion is that the proposed change, apart from being a democratic rationalisation and a simplification of the voting rules, would not involve any significant reduction in Ireland's voting influence in the Council and so would not require a referendum.

This conclusion is confirmed by the Supreme Court's finding in the *Crotty* case that the change from unanimity to qualified majority voting for certain issues did not require a referendum. The Court was careful to say that its finding did not imply that a change from unanimity could never require a referendum. But a change from unanimity to qualified majority voting is much more significant than a relatively small reweighting of Ireland's vote in the Council. The re-weighting of the votes in the Council could be done on the accession of the next state to join. It does not need to be done before then, and the Lisbon Treaty is not necessary to do this.

Conclusion

This paper points to a number of things that need to be done to make the EU more comprehensible and acceptable to all its peoples – not only the peoples of France, the Netherlands and Ireland. The paper also points to steps that could be taken to implement uncontroversial parts of the Lisbon Treaty by actions not requiring treaty change, or by treaty changes that would not need a referendum in Ireland. There are other matters that can be similarly treated. In particular, we point out that there are very strong arguments for maintaining the right of each member state to nominate a Commissioner at all times. This could be arranged by a simple amendment to the existing Treaty of Nice. If the Lisbon Treaty is to be adopted, no treaty change would be needed to maintain a fully representative Commission. We also call attention to the fact that the re-weighting of the votes in the Council, which is regarded as a prerequisite for further enlargement of the EU, could be done by a simple treaty change without a referendum in Ireland. Re-weighting would also make acceptable the change from unanimity to qualified majority voting on a number of matters. The French and Dutch governments avoided the risks of second referenda on the Treaty for a Constitution which was not significantly different from the institutional provisions of the Lisbon text. For good or ill, the Irish government has not got that freedom of manoeuvre.

The postponement of the Lisbon Treaty is hardly the disaster for the EU that some of its advocates claim. The Union has worked for 50 years with an autonomous Commission and a six-monthly rotation of the Presidency, and without a double-hatted foreign policy representative. There is no good reason to believe that work cannot proceed on new issues, including further enlargement if Council votes are reweighted, with the same success as in the past. It certainly seems unnecessary and undesirable to make changes whose main effect would be to upset the institutional balance and make the EU more complicated and harder to understand, and so less acceptable to its citizens.

We believe that the EU will not be understood or accepted by its peoples until Council discussions are made public, much greater efforts are made by Commissioners to explain policies, and one Commissioner for each member state is permanently assured. We accept that for the foreseeable future foreign policy and security will be intergovernmental, and will not provide the safeguards for small member states given by the Community method for other EU measures. Having two entirely different decision making procedures is inevitably complex. Therefore, to make the EU more intelligible, governments should now first do what was agreed in Laeken, and make the institutional system simpler and more open. That would mean revising the Lisbon Treaty before it is ratified by any more countries, in particular to get rid of the anomalous position of foreign policy Representative in both the Commission and the Council. When those simplifications have been carried out, it should be possible either to have all member states ratify the revised and improved treaty, or to have the elements of the improved treaty adopted as a series of amendments to the existing treaties, for example at the time of the accession of the next new member state.

It is said that governments do not want to renegotiate the Lisbon Treaty. But governments should not, merely for their own convenience, or because they think they know best, be unwilling to do what is needed to make the EU understood and accepted by its peoples. It is also said that the Irish people should not be able to veto the Lisbon Treaty. But the French and the Dutch also voted against essentially the same thing, and some other peoples would do likewise. Even more important, the French constitution is now being amended deliberately to give the French people a veto on enlargement of the EU, the Union's most important and most successful policy. This development may have much more serious consequences for the EU than the French, Dutch and Irish votes against the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. If this is not to obstruct dangerously the expansion of the Union, the French government will have to do much to inform the French people.

(http://shop.ceps.euBookDetail.php?item_id=1696)

Blair Interviewed by *Stern Magazine* 26 July 2009

S: In the end, the question is why Saddam? Why not Mugabe or other dictators?

TB: I think whoever has the possibility should topple Mugabe – the man has destroyed his country, many people have died unnecessarily because of him. My perception of foreign policy is: If you can, you should, but you obviously have to operate within careful limits.

Editorial II

Danzig and the Start of the Second World War

Seventy years ago the British Empire made use of the anomalous position of the City of Danzig, between Germany and Poland, to provide the occasion for launching a World War. The Danzig anomaly was created by Britain in 1919. Its only purpose could have been to make mischief. It might have been made part of either the Polish State or the German State. Instead of that it was made a point of contention between them.

In the Fall of 1938 Poland took part along with Germany in the breaking up of Czechoslovakia. Then early in 1939 Germany proposed a final settlement of the German-Polish border dispute, with the transfer of Danzig to the German State and German recognition of the Polish Corridor as Polish. To avert a settlement Britain offered Poland the use of its Army in its dispute with Germany. France under British influence did likewise. Poland refused to settle with Germany. Britain availed of the resulting conflict to launch general war but did not come to the assistance of the Poles.

In late August 1939 Russia, seeing how Britain and France were fuelling the German/Polish conflict, and with Poland absolutely refusing to make a defensive alliance with Russia against Germany, made a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany. This included a secret protocol about the eventuality of a collapse of the Polish State in its conflict with Germany.

On the 70th anniversary the German/Soviet Non-Aggression Pact is presented as the cause of the World War, while the Agreements by which Britain built up the power of Nazi Germany are not mentioned. There would have been no dissent from this view if it had not provoked post-Communist Russia, which is emerging from the phase of capitalist anarchy, into thinking and speaking.

The European Parliament, intent on establishing Cold War relations with national-capitalist Russia, set the scene last year (23 September 2008) with a motion to establish a Day of Remembrance on August 23 for the victims of Nazism-Stalinism:

“The European Parliament having regard to [list of Conventions] ... Whereas the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939 ... divided Europe into two spheres of interest by means of secret additional protocols ... Proposes that 23 August be proclaimed European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, in order to preserve the memory of the victims of mass deportations and exterminations, and at the same time rooting democracy more firmly and reinforcing peace and stability in our Continent ...”

The motion was carried by 410 votes out of 736. It was circulated to member states with a list of its supporters, which included Jim Allister (Ulster Unionist), Brian Crowley (Fianna Fail), Gay Mitchel (Fine Gael), Sean O Neachtain (Fianna Fail) Eoin Ryan (Fianna Fail), and Kathy Sinnott (Independent).

The reasoning seems to be that the Soviet Union, by making contingency provisions for the collapse of the Polish state in a German/Polish War caused the German/Polish War, which led to the British declaration of war and the division of Europe. The Soviet intervention, and reoccupation of territory conquered by Poland in 1920, happened in mid-September, after the Polish collapse. It would not have happened if the Polish state was holding its own against Germany, or if Britain (and France) had actually made war on Germany in early September in accordance with their Guarantee to Poland.

The division of Europe came about because Britain (and France) availed of the Danzig issue to declare general war on Germany, while neglecting to support Poland, and because it then stood idly by on the German border for 9 months, allowing the declaration of war to stand but making no effort to prosecute it, until Germany struck in the West, sent the British Army home, and made a provisional settlement with France. As it became clear that Hitler did not intend to invade Britain (clear to Churchill very early because of the breaking of the Enigma coding system), Britain let the declaration of war stand and sought means of getting others to fight it, as the French had let them down. That was the phase of ‘spreading the War’. The great prize was a German/Soviet War. That came about in June 1941.

By December 1941 the German offensive had been held. The defeat of Germany was set in motion in Russia in 1942. When Britain returned to France to re-engage in battle a couple of years later, the defeat of Germany by Russia was a virtual certainty. The spheres of interest followed naturally from that fact.

And that is how civilisation was saved.

Or was it? The European Parliament doesn’t think so. In its conception—supported by Irish pro-Europeans—the War, in its substance, was an event within a Nazi-Soviet continuum of totalitarian barbarity.

**Look Up
Athol Books
on the Internet**

www.atholbooks.org

You will find plenty to read;
you can look over the Catalogue.

To purchase publications or subscribe to magazines
see ad p 40

The question of Danzig in 1939

The Versailles Treaty in 1919 transformed the map of Europe; it dismembered the Austro-Hungarian empire, making imperial Vienna the capital of a small state. Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine, which it had acquired in 1871 after the French attack of the previous year, and the Saarland; in the East its territory was divided; East Prussia was still part of Germany but it was separated from it by Polish territory which gave Poland access to the sea.

After the first world war the German state made every effort to do away with the anomalous and unworkable stipulations of the Treaty and to reconstitute the physical integrity of the country.

We tend to think of Poland in terms of its present borders, but up to 1945 the whole of the Baltic coast from Kiel to Memel was German speaking, except for an area West of Danzig which was Polish speaking. The whole of this northern German population was forcibly expelled after the Second World War from land it had occupied for centuries.

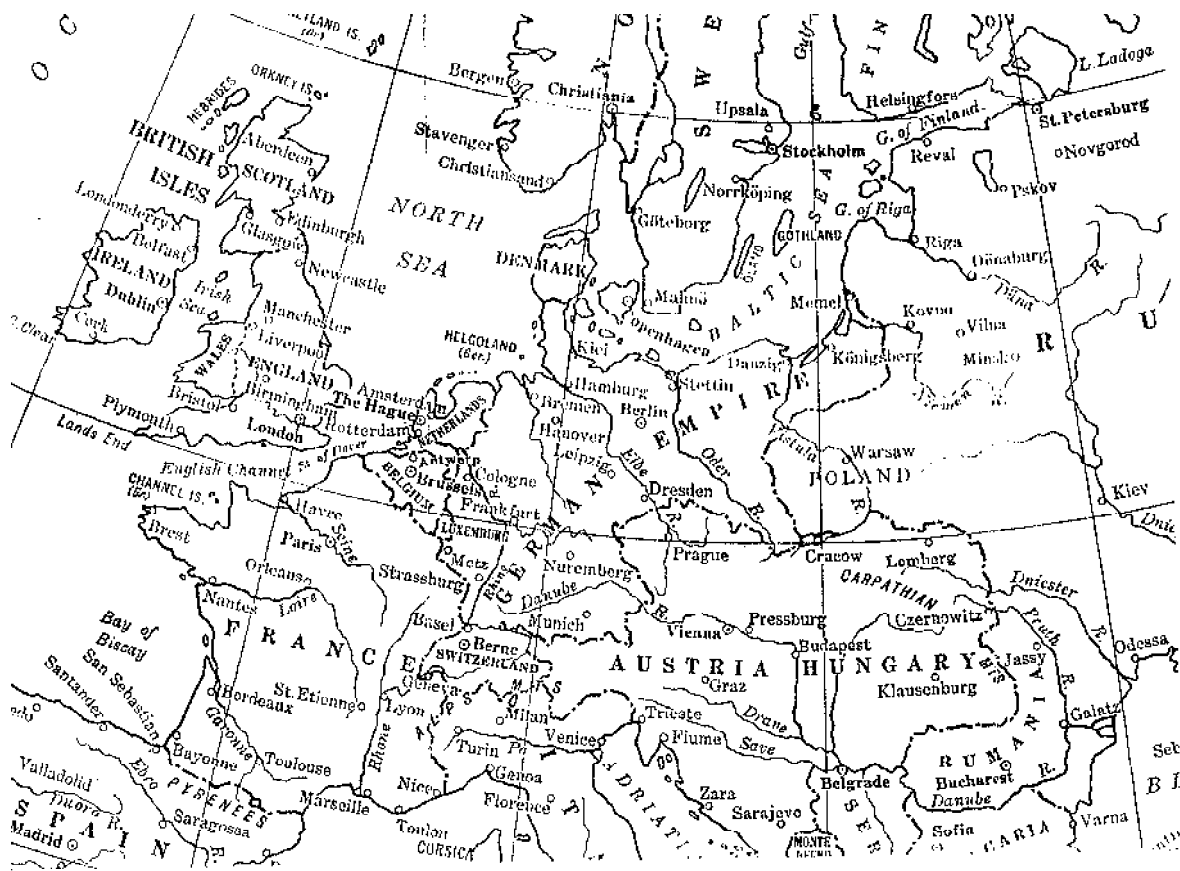
In 1919 Danzig was a German-speaking city on the edge of East Prussia but the Poles refused to let it be incorporated into that

province, arguing that it was on the eastern edge of the 'Polish corridor' and should be given to them. Since it was not inhabited by Poles it was not given to Poland but made a free city within the 'free state' of Danzig under the protection of the League of Nations.

In 1935 a plebiscite of the population voted to reunite the German territory of Saarland to Germany. In 1936 Hitler denounced the clause which internationalized the Rhine, Elbe, Danube and Oder Rivers and the Kiel canal. In 1939 Memel, a German city on the north-eastern side of East Prussia, was given back to Germany by Lithuania.

Germany then demanded that Danzig be reintegrated into East Prussia, and that a motorway be constructed to give road access from the main body of Germany to East Prussia. It did not demand that the area between the mainland of Germany and East Prussia be given back. The maps show that Danzig was contiguous with German territory. In 1939, with the willing annexation of Austria, and the permitted annexation of parts of Czechoslovakia, Germany could feel that its territorial situation was satisfactory, except for the last question of Danzig.

Cathy Winch.



Northern and Central Europe in 1914

The launching of the Second World War

By **Brendan Clifford**

[This article is the first in a series following crucial points in World War Two in this 70th anniversary year; the next issue will deal with the League's authorisation of war against Russia over Finland.]

A dispute over Danzig was the occasion for the launching of the Second World War. Between the World Wars Danzig was a Free City under the authority of the League of Nations. The League's High Commissioner for Danzig between 1934 and 1936 was an Irishman, Sean Lester. In 1940 Lester became the last General Secretary of the League, which was in collapse following the collapse of the British and French war effort in the war which they had declared on Germany on the Danzig issue.

A book about Lester's career in Danzig has now been published by the Irish Academic Press: *Sean Lester, Poland And The Nazi Takeover Of Danzig* by Paul McNamara. It has an Introduction by Michael Kennedy, who I assume is the person of that name who edits and comments on collections of foreign policy documents. They suggest, without giving the matter any consideration, that Lester did well in warding off Nazi control of Danzig in the mid-1930s.

The blurb gives an unusually accurate summary of the book:

"Sean Lester, a Belfast Protestant and Irish nationalist, became one of Ireland's first truly international diplomats when, in 1934, he took up the post of High Commissioner of the League of Nations in the Free City of Danzig, a Baltic port which both Germany and Poland coveted. Finding himself in a cauldron of intrigue, Lester made strenuous and courageous efforts to frustrate the Danzig Nazi Party's attempts to gain complete control of the city and return it to the German Reich. By mid-1936, having become virtually the only obstacle left in the way of a Nazi conquest of Danzig, the Irishman soon became the focus of a very aggressive, and eventually successful campaign by Hitler and the Nazi movement to have him forced out of the Free City. As it was the only country to have official rights on Danzig, Poland's position regarding these events was crucial, and perhaps more important than that of the League of Nations itself. Based largely on documents from Polish archives never before seen in the English-speaking world, *Sean Lester* attempts to explain more fully how and why the League of Nations, Poland and Great Britain allowed a golden opportunity to stop Hitler in his tracks slip by."

Danzig was a "Free City". What is a Free City? Obviously a city that belongs to nobody—or to everybody, which is much the same thing.

There were Free Cities in Central Europe for many centuries, as institutions of the Empire. The Empire, which came to be known as the Holy Roman Empire, was a loose confederation of Princes, Bishops and Free Cities. The Cities were Free in that they owed allegiance to the remote figure of the Emperor, and not to the local territorial Prince. They were phenomena of the comprehensively pre-nationalist era. Danzig was once an authentic Free City. By 1918 it had long ceased to be such and had become part of the German State. But, after 1918, in the era of extreme nationalism, it was set up once more as a Free City, with the League of Nations playing the part of the Empire for it.

It was on Britain's insistence that Danzig was made a Free City.

Because of the part played by Britain in suppressing nationalist development in Ireland, the fact is often overlooked in Ireland that Britain was a fanatical instigator of nationalism in some other parts of the world. In the mid-19th century, for instance, Italian nationalism was a sacred cause to English Liberalism (up to the point of sheltering the terrorist propagandist, Mazzini), even while it was in the course of stamping on Irish nationalism.

The British propaganda presented the Great War of 1914-19 as a crusade for nationality. At the end of the War Britain overruled the democratic nationalism that won the Irish election and it set up a system of military rule, but in Central Europe it destroyed the multi-national Habsburg state and set up a series of nationalist states in its place.

These states are more properly described as nationalist rather than national. They were not the outcome of a strong, consolidated national development over a number of generations. The nation-states of the post-1918 era were constructions of the victorious imperial powers.

In 1917 Britain tried to persuade Austria to desert its ally, Germany, and make a separate peace, on the understanding that if it did so Britain would guarantee the preservation of the Habsburg Empire. When the Habsburgs refused, Britain decided to break up the Empire and establish the pieces into a series of nation-states, with little regard to viability. And these states were to serve as buffers against Bolshevik Russia.

These nation-states, established in Eastern Europe to serve a purpose of the West European Powers, sought to puff themselves up with the nationalist spirit of the age, in order to make themselves viable.

There had been a much stronger prior development of nationalism in Poland than in Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia—where in fact there had been none at all which corresponded with the name. And there had been some independent Polish military action in the World War, led by Joseph Pilsudski—who was the only Continental socialist with whom James Connolly had expressed a sense of affinity in both runs of his newspaper, *The Workers' Republic* (1899 and 1915-16). But, because a Polish Legion had fought in the War (against Russia), and because there was an unbroken line of nationalist continuity between the old Polish state (broken up in the 1790s) and the new Polish state recognised by Britain and France, after the collapse of Tsarism in 1917 allowed them to do so, the new Poland did not have a modest idea of itself. And it had some reason not to be modestly grateful, and obedient, to the Great Powers which had restored it. It had once been a Great Power, and it saw itself becoming a Great Power again—and again with some reason. In 1920 it stopped Lenin's attempt to break through into Central Europe, and it sent the Red Army reeling backwards from the gates of Warsaw.

In Polish eyes Poland was not what the Versailles Powers said it should be. It was historic Poland, to the extent that the Poland

set in motion by Versailles could regain it. Lithuania was certainly to be part of it.

Rosa Luxemburg, the internationalist socialist revolutionary born in Russian Poland, rejected Pilsudski's socialist nationalism. In opposition to his Polish Socialist Party she set up, in order to mark her rejection of nationalism, the Socialist Party of Poland and Lithuania! But Pilsudski naturally had no objection to Lithuania being part of Poland. And, following his defeat of the Red Army, he extended the Polish state eastwards into Byelorussia and the Ukraine.

The new Polish state set up by Versailles was carved out of the territories of the German and Austrian states. And it divided Germany into two separated parts with territory of the Polish state running between them. The East Prussian region of the German state was cut off from the main body of the German state by the territory which gave the Polish state access to the sea. This was known as the Polish Corridor. The City and part of Danzig lay between the two parts of the German State. It lay across the Corridor from the western part, close to the eastern part. The inhabitants of Danzig were predominantly German. But it was decreed at Versailles that Danzig should be neither German nor Polish. It was to be a Free City with international sovereignty, but with Polish connections.

France would have made it part of the Polish state. If that had been done, it is reasonable to assume that the Poles would have dealt with the German problem in it. But Britain would not allow that—in the name of nationality, of course.

The Great War grew out of the Entente Cordiale. Russia was later included, but the Triple Entente fell apart with the collapse of Tsarist Russia. The Entente Cordiale eventually won the War—or America won it for them—and cordiality immediately gave way to animosity. France had borne the main cost of the war and expected at least to gain the Rhine frontier as a minimal reward.

Britain's major concern after 1918 was to prevent France from establishing hegemonic influence in Europe through dominating the Rhineland and establishing close relations with the new states to the east of Germany. (Major Street, who was a key British propaganda writer in the Anglo-Irish war of 1919-21, became a British propagandist against France.)

Britain has had worldwide policy interests for about three centuries. It became habitual with it to leave markers at various places around the world in case they might be useful some time as moral debating points for war. The Free City of Danzig was such a marker. It was an outrage to Germans and an affront to Poles.

I began wondering about Danzig a very long time ago. For decades I assumed that I would somewhere come across a clear account of exactly where it was, and why keeping it as it was worth a World War in which tens of millions died—especially as the War did not keep it as it was. But I did not stumble across an account of it, so I went in search of information. What I wanted in the first place was a detailed local map showing the exact relationship of Danzig to East Prussia. But the only maps to hand were the large-scale maps that told you nothing.

Danzig, which was the occasion for a World War, seemed to be a subject which the major interests in the world thought was best forgotten.

The final absurdity was a discussion with some Germans, some of whom originated from Danzig and all of whom were staunch anti-Nazis. When I asked what exactly lay between Danzig City and East Prussia, the question seemed at first to be

incomprehensible to them. When I persisted, they laboured to get their childhood memories working, and eventually said that as far as they could recall there was nothing between Danzig and East Prussia, except perhaps one small village.

Then I searched through old books published in the 1920s and 1930s and found some sketch maps of the region which seemed to confirm that.

This meant that Danzig was right up against East Prussia. It was not in any real sense *in* the Polish Corridor. That would suggest that the Corridor ran on both sides of it. But the eastern border of Danzig was with East Prussia, while the Corridor ran to the west of it. Danzig would be more meaningfully described as a piece of East Prussia projected into a corner of the Corridor.

Poland claimed Danzig on historic grounds, saying that it had once been Polish but Germans had moved into it. Its aim was to make it Polish once again. The Free City status of Danzig in League sovereignty obstructed and delayed that development. But the Poles refused to accept the Versailles (League) arrangement. If the Germans in Danzig were protected from them, they would not use the facilities of the German city. They built their own port in the Corridor to the west of Danzig, Gdynia, and boycotted Danzig.

Here was a mediaeval entity, a Free City—established in the midst of a situation of intense nationalism, detached from both of the nation-states of which it might have been a part, but subject to the nationalist influence of both—conducting its own local government which reflected the German character of the population. It was strongly nationalist, due to being cut off from its nation-state, and being subject to the Polish state in its foreign policy.

The Poles were prevented by the League from determining the internal affairs of Danzig, and Danzig was prevented by Poland from determining its foreign policy. And this situation of inherent antagonism was rendered incapable of resolution by the authority of the League. And those who set up this state of affairs did so for the purpose of preserving peace in Europe!!!

The League subjected Danzig to Polish foreign policy but withheld it from Polish sovereignty. And Lester dedicated himself to preserving this state of affairs. And he used his influence to maintain electoral structures of party conflict in Danzig after they had been discarded in Germany proper.

MacNamara writes that:

“no-one in Geneva, Paris or London had anticipated that the League would ever have to deal with a governing party in Danzig that entirely rejected democratic principles and whose ultimate aim was to break way from the League's control” (p223).

If that was so, then the people running the British and French Empires must have had a kindergarten view of the character of Europe under Versailles.

I read what was available about the Danzig situation about 20 years ago. What I recall is that it was well understood in diplomatic circles in the 1930s that the Danzig arrangement was unsustainable. The atavistic City State, which was in principle a throwback to the pre-national era in Europe, was incompatible with the extreme nationalist arrangement of Europe made by Versailles.

I find it extraordinary that Lester, a Sinn Feiner, should not have seen that. Since Danzig was not made Polish, it could not fail to want to become German by whatever means presented themselves.



GERMANY BEFORE AND AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Who had an interest in preserving the unsustainable, atavistic arrangement for Danzig? Not Poland. Not Germany. Not France. The only interest it served was England's. It was one of those possible *casus belli* that England kept up all around the world.

MacNamara almost notices this:

"While Lester received valuable practicable help from successive British consuls general in Danzig, it was often the case that London feigned ignorance at the [League] Council table, both in order not to give away their sources of information and to avoid having to take any really effective and co-ordinated international action" (p227)

Kennedy writes in his *Foreword*:

"McNamara is not forgiving of Warsaw's actions vis-a-vis Danzig. Warsaw should have seen a friend in Lester ... Instead, given Beck's disdain for the League, he saw Lester as at best a powerless functionary and at worst an enemy of Polish interests in the city. Beck bypassed Lester and dealt directly with Berlin over Danzig ... Beck later tried in vain through 1939 to bolster the League's position in the Free City. By then it was too late ... Britain and France were set on a policy of appeasing their enemies..." (pviii).

But, in terms of the Polish interest in 1934, Lester was an enemy—an obstacle to the realisation of Polish destiny. Destiny has become a bad word in revisionist Ireland, at least as applied to Irish nationalism—and perhaps rightly so if Ireland settles down within the British entourage—but are the Poles imaginable without their sense of destiny? McNamara calls it "*hubris*" (p228). Whatever one cares to call it, it has always characterised the Poles. Connolly's kindred spirit, Pilsudski, had it in an extreme degree. Without it, would he have had the temerity to defeat Russia in 1920?

Kennedy and McNamara comment on 1934 in the light of hindsight from September 1939. But if one looks at the world from the vantage point of 1934—and I can see little use for a kind of history which does otherwise—one of the least likely predictions would be that Germany, disarmed, shackled and pared-away at the edges, would dominate Central and Western Europe within six years. And, if one looks at the events through which

the improbable came about, one sees that it was an Anglo-German achievement.

Kennedy mentions French appeasement of its enemy. He couples it with British appeasement, but the British enemy is uncertain for most of the inter-war period. There is however little doubt about the French enemy—it is Germany. When, after defeating Germany, did France begin to appease it? By the mid-1920s at the latest. British balance-of-power policy against France kicked in very quickly after the German surrender, and the French will to disable humiliated Germany had been broken by the mid-1920s. Thereafter France was incapable of carrying through a European foreign policy independently of England.

Unfortunately Kennedy and McNamara do not say what they mean by appeasement.

The anti-German propaganda of Britain in the First World War—which Radio Telefis Eireann now presents as "*Our War*"—said that the basic source of evil in the world was the united German State, in which an evil principle called "*Prussianism*" infected the "*good Germany*"—the Germany of Kant (who never set foot outside Prussia), Goethe and Beethoven. The French in 1919 tried to disable Prussianism by taking the good Germany away from it. It sought a Rhine frontier for itself and encouraged the formation of a Rhineland state.

I don't know if there was extensive French belief in the English nonsense about Prussian evil. I doubt that Clemenceau, the staunch Republican nationalist who seems to have believed in nothing but France, believed a word of it—not unless all that one means by evil is an obstacle to one's will. But Clemenceau would have disabled Germany along with humiliating it. Britain however insisted on preventing it from being disabled after humiliating it. It kept it in being as a major state, with bits cut off at the edges, and helped it to restore itself as a counterweight to France, while leaving the humiliations in place. It did this during both the Weimar and the Nazi periods.

If what one means by appeasement is the tolerance of breaches of Versailles conditions by Germany, then Britain was the arch-

appeaser, and France was obliged after a few years' resistance to fall in with British appeasement.

The Weimar breaches of Versailles were covert, though not actually secret. The Nazi breaches were overt—the construction of a Navy, military conscription for a mass Army, the insertion of the Army into the Rhineland, the merger with Austria, the annexation of the Sudetenland.

The guardians of the Versailles Treaty—Britain with France in tow—supervised this reconstruction of Germany as a major military power. And the main enhancement of German military resources happened after the Nazi Party had taken power. The 'enemy' which Britain (and France) conciliated was an enemy which Britain had established in power by conniving at (more realistically, collaborating with) its breaches of the Versailles conditions on its existence.

Realistically considered, Germany did not become a major military power until 1938, when it enacted the merger with/conquest of Austria (which democratic Germany and democratic Austria had been prohibited from accomplishing); was presented with a gift of the impregnable Sudetenland barrier by Britain; and acquired the Czech armaments and arms industry.

Italy did not support the unification of Austria and Germany. It was looked to by patriotic Austrian fascists or authoritarians as a protector of Austrian independence. When the *Anschluss* became an accomplished fact with English connivance, the Italian position was undermined. It then contemplated active alliance with Germany, and Hitler actively discouraged the rancorous German nationalism in the South Tyrol.

The final French attempt at independent foreign policy was a Treaty with Russia which guaranteed Czechoslovak independence. British influence prevented the activation of that Treaty in the Autumn of 1938. This told Russia that Treaties with the capitalist West weren't worth the paper they were written on. A year later—with Czechoslovakia having been divided between Germany, Hungary and Poland, with the Czech remnant settling down as a German Protectorate, and with Russia made reasonably cynical about Western intentions—France, demoralised by what Britain persuaded it to do at Munich, followed Britain in declaring war on Germany over Danzig, but with little more intention than Britain of launching itself into all-out war, as both had done against democratic Germany in 1914.

The 'why' of this is problematical. One can only grope for it by inference from the 'what'. The 'what' of it, however, is so clear that it is a tribute to the ongoing British talent for mystification that it seems shocking when it is stated plainly.

Poland contemplated war on Germany in the early 1930s. One might think it a pity that it did not launch it. A small war might have cleared the air.

Instead of going to war, Poland under Pilsudski made a Treaty with Hitler. And Hitler ended the rancorous German nationalism over the Corridor that had been kept alive by the German democracy (the Weimar Republic). He recognised the Polish Corridor as Polish. But Danzig was not part of the Corridor. It was a German city adjacent to East Prussia, which Poland had failed entirely either to conciliate or to dominate. It had been preserved intact as a grievance to both sides. That was the net effect of its status as a Free City under the League. In 1934 Hitler settled the border issue by recognising the Corridor as Polish. Danzig was left aside for future settlement. Early in 1939, after Poland had taken part with Germany in the dismantling of Czechoslovakia, Hitler suggested that the time had come for a

final settlement. His terms were that Danzig should become part of East Prussia, and that this separated part of the German state should have access by land to the main part of Germany by means of an extra-territorial road across the Corridor.

I never went to the GDR [East Germany], considering it to be doomed, so I never went on the extra-territorial road connecting West Berlin with the Federal Republic. I only know that it existed for forty years, and was functional. And that was between States whose relations were governed by deadly ideological enmity. No such enmity existed between Poland and Germany. Insofar as the Poland of 1918 had an autonomous origin, it was in the national socialism of Pilsudski, which rejected the international socialism of the Russian Social-Democracy. The Polish Government of Pilsudski was often described as Fascist, and was somewhere thereabouts. When Pilsudski died (1935), Polish government became incompetent but did not otherwise change its character.

Poland was not an outpost of Western liberal democracy in Eastern Europe. (Perhaps that is what Czechoslovakia was in ideological veneer, but Western liberalism blotted it out.)

If Poland had settled on the terms suggested by Hitler, I do not see that it would have been a tragedy for any cause. And it would have caused much less alteration to the balance of force in Europe than either the German/Austrian merger, which Britain connived at, or the transfer of the Sudetenland to Germany, which Britain brought about.

Inferring British purpose from British policy, and leaving aside kindergarten notions, one must assume that there was some concern which ruled out the possibility of war in defence of Czechoslovakia from a very strong position, but entertained the possibility of war in defence of the status of Danzig from a greatly weakened position.

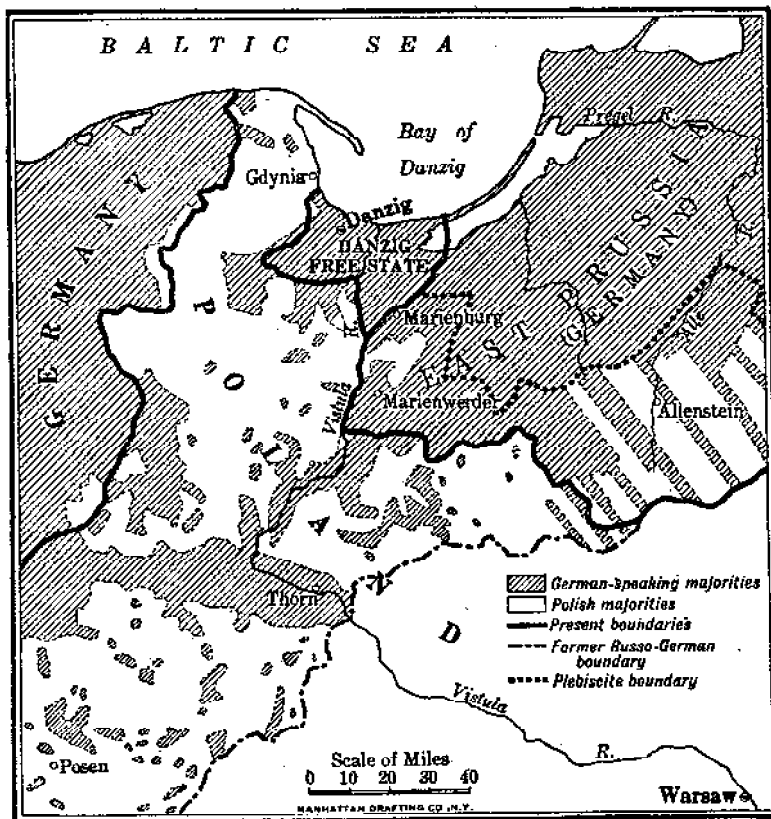
Of course Britain did not actually wage war in defence of Danzig. It only declared war on Germany, and began a limited form of naval warfare which could have no effect on the Danzig issue.

After Poland had co-operated with Hitler in dismantling Czechoslovakia, Hitler suggested that the time had come for a Danzig settlement. That was when Britain gave a military guarantee to Poland, and France followed suit. This Guarantee, which was later elaborated into a Treaty, apparently gave the Poles the use of the two most powerful Armies in the world, the Armies of the British and French Empires. And the Polish Army itself had won the last major war in Europe.

The Guarantee was unique in the history of British foreign policy, in that it gave a foreign state the explicit authority to send the British Army to war in its own interest. Until that moment, Britain had kept itself free of explicit obligations towards any other state to make war on a third party at its behest. (In 1914 it had made extensive military arrangements with France for joint war with Germany, but they were secret, and there was no formal Treaty obligation.)

The Polish Guarantee established a military encirclement of Germany. The Germans said that, by accepting it, the Poles revoked the 1934 Treaty of Non-Aggression. The Poles denied that this was the case, but they must have understood perfectly well that it was the case.

When, about twenty years ago, I was working out in detail how the catastrophic Second World War was brought about, setting aside ideology and looking at military facts for that purpose, I saw that encirclement of Germany as being the crucial thing and I said so. Martin Mansergh, now a Fianna Fail



DANZIG AND THE POLISH CORRIDOR

Government Minister, found my statement of that fact outrageous. He even denied it was a fact.

It is true that, for ideological reasons, the Guarantee is not usually described as a military encirclement of Germany. But the denial, by an Irish politician who asserts a Republican orientation, was absurd.

The South African Government of the time was the most recent and the most active of the Dominions of the British Empire. (The Irish Dominion, which a section of Sinn Fein signed up for under threat of "immediate and terrible war", was never a real and active Dominion. It was only a cowed Republic.) In March 1939, before the Chamberlain Government issued that Guarantee, but seeing which way the wind was blowing, the South African Government was anxious that Whitehall should understand what it was doing—that it was creating an encirclement of Germany which would be a virtual declaration of war. It sent a telegram saying that this:

"can have no other result but that of war, not because Germany necessarily wants war, but because such policy of encirclement cannot be taken by her as meaning anything else than a declaration of hostilities differing but little, if at all, from a declaration of war.

"That Germany would be entitled to so interpret such a policy I do not think anybody will doubt, and initiation of any such policy by Great Britain and her friends would be sufficient to throw upon themselves the responsibility for any war that may ensue" (quoted from *March 1939: The British Guarantee To Poland* by Simon Newman, Clarendon Press, 1976).

After 1945 Nazi Germany has almost invariably been depicted as an irrational and nonsensical construction, established by the hypnotic power over both the masses and the classes by an evil genius who somehow conjured unarmed Germany into an irresistible military force in a few years. Surely it would have been a good thing if that state had been subjected to a military encirclement with a view to destroying, or containing, it!

The deplorable thing about the encirclement is that it was bogus.

The military power to contain Germany, or to defeat it if it the

German Army, a mushroom growth of recent years, had never fired a shot in anger.

The flaw in the Triple Alliance was that two members of it had no intention of fighting over the anomalous position of Danzig. Britain made a superficial show of preparing for war, but beyond introducing a Conscription Act it made no detailed arrangements. And it was certain that France would not act without Britain.

This was evident to Hitler. Unfortunately it was not evident to the Poles, whose acumen had declined severely since Pilsudski died. They acted under the illusion that they had two powerful allies. They refused to contemplate the loss of Danzig, which they did not hold and were never likely to get. The result was that they lost Poland for 60 years.

Britain and France, for reasons best known to themselves, gave the Sudetenland to Germany in 1938, and they gave it a small practice war in 1939. They also declared war on Germany when it was conquering Poland but did not interfere with the conquest. Their armies lay quietly along the Western borders, exchanging no more than an occasional shot with the Germans. The Royal Navy stopped German trade by sea, but did not sail up to Danzig and control the Baltic.

The League of Nations was set aside during this period. It was activated again some months after the fall of Poland, for the purpose of engaging in war with the Soviet Union in Finland. The Finns settled before this could be accomplished.

Maybe none of this indicates that Britain's major concern was the Soviet Union. Maybe what was evident was not the case, and what there was no sign of was the case.

What there were signs of in the Summer of 1939 (following on from the Autumn of 1938) was a set-up for German-Soviet conflict.

Danzig was a popular issue in Germany which the Sudetenland had not been. There was a conspiracy of German Generals and politicians, ready to enact a *coup d'etat* if Hitler attempted a conquest of Sudetenland, and it was in communication with Whitehall. But Whitehall saved Hitler. The gifting of the Sudetenland demoralised the active opposition when it came to Poland.

If Britain was confronted with a set of circumstances like this (as Russia was), it would present it as the enactment of strategic purpose.

If Germany and Russia were being set up for war, they averted it by pre-emptive diplomatic action.

The assumption was that Nazism and Bolshevism were driven by a blind force of antagonism against each other, were incapable of conducting foreign policy towards each other on any other grounds, and would go to war if brought into conjunction. The fact that they took evasive diplomatic action at the eleventh hour, instead of remaining the blind subjects of British manipulation, was seen in Britain as a moral outrage.

Britain declared war over Danzig, but did not lift a finger to preserve the actual authority of the League or the Polish state. It acted without reference to the League—but resurrected it a few months later to expel the Soviet Union.

World War II - A Foreign Affair

by Pat Walsh

The great achievement of Eamon DeValera was to make the Second War on Germany, declared by Britain seventy years ago this month, a foreign affair. This was the major event in the establishing of Irish independence.

Today, of course, it is no cause for celebration in Ireland that the Second War on Germany was a foreign affair. And there have even been attempts made to suggest we really participated in it, in a sly kind of way. But Ireland did nothing to bring down Hitler, or facilitate the deaths of fifty million, or establish Soviet power across Europe. Ireland, to coin a phrase, stood idly by, as Europe and other areas were torn apart.

That is the logic of the collapsed view held widely by our academics and historians today. But it could not be further from the truth. Irish neutrality was a purposeful and activist event in the history of the country. It was a decision that sat logically and comfortably within the Irish world-view of the time. The fact that this world view, of independent Ireland, has conceded to that of the victors of that War is beside the point, except in the issue of making Irish neutrality now a source of discomfort.

It is hard to justify the hard facts of the destruction brought about by the Second World War on Germany. So it has to be presented as that most moral of wars. The morality of the war has superseded all critical thought about it (except, perhaps by some right-wing thinking historians) and to question the morality of the war sets one beyond the pale. But that makes the War a mystery and a caricature in which Irish neutrality is very problematic, and the view that it should have been our affair (Our War?) gains credence.

Ireland had good reasons not to participate in England's War on Germany in September 1939 and these start with Britain's Balance of Power policy.

England got its Balance of Power policy very wrong in the 1930s. From 1934 Britain encouraged and facilitated Hitler's geopolitical ambitions - in contrast to frustrating the modest redresses Weimar Germany had asked for - so that its former ally, France, would not dominate continental Europe. Because Britain is an island and predominantly a global naval power, the Balance of Power always required the enlisting of continental allies and the encircling of the object of that policy. A partially rejuvenated Germany fulfilled that requirement.

But what if Germany played the game too well, under an exceptional leader, and tipped the Balance? Well a new game could begin.

If Hitler did not know his place in the scheme of things, the great Polish State constructed after Versailles could be employed, with the French and possibly, Fascist Italy, to do another job on Germany. That was how it had worked in 1914, after all.

The situation for England was complicated by the presence of the Communist State to the East of Poland, however. Soviet Russia was the State that England detested most in the world and whose influence it feared greatest. But this powerful State lay to the East of the Poles and that caused problems for a new grand alliance against the Hun. England had no compunction about using detestable states against its primary objective in the Bal-

ance of Power Policy. It had utilised great Catholic states when it was anti-Catholic, great illiberal states when it was Liberal and now a Bolshevik one when it was anti-communist.

However, the Poles, given their historical relationship with Russia were disinclined to play ball.

This is where disagreements occurred in England over what to do. The vast majority of the ruling class felt that Hitler should be appeased so that he would turn his attentions eastward against his natural enemy, Communist Russia. However, another smaller group felt that the Hun was the major enemy and the traditional Balance of Power policy should continue despite the Bolshevik complication. This group, who were known as anti-appeasers, perhaps should be called the Bolshevik appeasers - if the term appeasement is to mean anything practical.

So this is the situation that confronted Irish geopoliticians in September 1939.

The reader might wonder: what Irish geopoliticians? But *The Catholic Bulletin* had one in 'Fear Faire.'

'Fear Faire' did not see the war that England declared on Germany in September 1939 in the same terms as the British projected it. He saw it - like most other European neutrals - as another imperialist Balance of Power war waged by Britain to keep Germany down, after Hitler had overstepped the line it had decided to draw in the sand for him at Danzig.

'Fear Faire' was John Tobin or Sean Toibin, schoolmaster. 'Fear Faire' took over the *From The Hilltops* column in the *Catholic Bulletin* from 'A Viewer' (J.J.O'Kelly) in September 1936. The series 'From The Hilltops' by 'Fear Faire' is very representative of Ireland's outlook on the world in 1937-9 on the eve of Britain's second world war on Germany. They were proved by history to have been remarkably astute in their judgement of the situation and its subsequent development. And they are the best thing independent Ireland produced in terms of an account of the events and politics that preceded the war.

The Catholic Bulletin was connected to DeValera through Fr. Timothy Corcoran, Professor of Education at University College, Dublin. Coughlan was the driving force and main contributor to *The Catholic Bulletin* in the 1920s and 1930s. Corcoran had taught de Valera and was a close friend of the Sinn Fein President and Fianna Fail Taoiseach.

The other important influence in the *Bulletin* was its Company Secretary, Patrick T. Keohane. The *Bulletin* had developed an anti-treaty position under Corcoran and Patrick Keohane - who became its editor - until Keohane's death, and that of the *Bulletin* itself in December 1939. Keohane had kept a tight eye on the content of the *Bulletin* and when he realised he was dying it was his wish that the *Bulletin* should die with him.

For a generation after the War, Ireland retained its scepticism, in the face of all the Allied propaganda produced to justify the war that killed fifty million across the world. And it defended its neutrality within understandings it had developed - although it never got around to producing an independent account of that war, to justify its stance. 'Fear Faire' began such an account but *The Catholic Bulletin* folded at the end of 1939 in reverence to the

death of its inspiration and Editor.

By July 1940 Britain had been effectively defeated in its second war on Germany. Britain, in conjunction with its French ally, had outnumbered and outgunned Germany, as in 1914. But, after guaranteeing Poland's intransigent stance over Danzig, it let Poland fall without lifting a finger to help her - whilst the German frontier lay open to the Anglo-French armies. Then it dithered about for nine months refusing to fight the war it had declared. During this period it went to the brink of fighting Soviet Russia in Finland while it was supposed to be at war with Germany and was only saved by the Finnish coming to terms with Russia in the nick of time.

Such a position could not persist and the German Generals duly smashed the Anglo-French armies standing on its borders in a couple of weeks and drove the British Expeditionary Force off the continent in May 1940.

In July 1940 Britain had neither the will to defeat Germany nor the means to do it. It effectively had a choice of accepting generous terms from Hitler (who was a great admirer of the British Empire and its civilising effect on the lesser races) and calling it a day, or holding out until something came along. It had the power to determine whether the localised and comparatively bloodless European war (compared to 1914-18 anyway) it had lost was concluded or whether to throw the situation into the melting pot and hope that an escalation into a second world war could be engineered. And so Britain prodded around the fringes, without ever being able to take on Germany in meaningful conflict and the war was spread wider and wider, until Germany was destroyed.

Britain knew that the outcome of its activities would be devastating for Europe and many parts of the world, at that time untouched. But as in 1915, it chose to make sure it somehow emerged on the winning side by setting Europe ablaze and hoping something would turn up.

And something, indeed, did turn up and saved Britain from disaster. That something was the state that Britain detested more than anything else in the world, the state that Britain had hitherto regarded as the greatest threat to civilisation - Bolshevik Russia.

The war between Bolshevik Russia and Nazi Germany, which started in June 1941, rescued Britain from total defeat. Britain became a minor ally of the Soviet State in that war. Six months later the Japanese/United States war broke out and Britain became a minor ally of America in that war. And that is how Britain 'won' the 'Second World War'.

No matter that because of Britain's desire to wage war (through other nations) to the end, no matter that fifty million died as a consequence of persevering in it, no matter that half of Europe fell to Communism for half a century, Britain won the war and wrote its history.

Ireland, in latter years, became incapable of defending its wartime neutrality on the basis on which it was held at the time. And there has been a wholesale capitulation to the world-view of the victors, decades after the event. This is despite the fact that independent Ireland itself was actually very much a product of its independent stance on neutrality during the Second World War.

So below is a fragment of independent thought that would have made a start in an Irish account of the Second War on Germany. It was published in the October edition of *The Catholic Bulletin* - one of its last editions. It explains why Ireland was neutral in Britain's Second World War on Germany and why it was sceptical of Britain's motives for making war on Germany at the time, having, a couple of decades before, been fooled into

participating in another British war for "democracy" and "civilisation". It recognises the great blundering of Britain that would lead to the end of Empire. It also describes the political skill of Hitler within the situation created by England - but ultimately predicts Germany's destruction in the face of the enemies that will line up against her. 'Fear Faire' also has some pertinent things to say to the Poles and their disastrous decision to place faith in England. And he says, in October 1939, that the real victor in England's War on Germany will be not England, but Stalin:

"The Great War that the world has been dreading for years has come. Germany and the British Empire are locked in a death struggle with France on England's side. Ireland, in common with Italy, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, has announced her neutrality, and has received assurances from Germany that it will be respected. That Ireland has been able to assert her neutrality—her totally independent action—is the greatest proof and the most precious fruit of her new-won sovereignty, justifying Eamon de Valera's statesmanship to the full.

Irish neutrality.

The reason for Ireland's neutrality is the same as that for the neutrality of the other countries that we have named. The war is not our affair. Most of our people have strong opinions about the merits of the war for one side or the other; but, even if we were unanimous in believing one side to be wholly in the right and the other wholly in the wrong, our first duty is to our own nation. Utter destruction must be the fate of a small country that enters this conflict of the giants. Wasted by centuries of misgovernment, famine and emigration, we have little enough man-power left to safeguard our own future, and we are resolved that our little forces shall not be thrown into the furnace if, by God's favour, we can preserve our neutrality and our island's peace.

Neutrality will not be preserved easily. In fact, it will put a greater task before the Government of Ireland than a facile declaration of war. To preserve neutrality will require rigid national discipline and forces strong enough to impose it against would-be mischief-makers. Efforts may be made by one side or the other to use Irish waters or Irish soil for acts of war, and the Government may have to resist those efforts by arms. A large part of our territory is occupied, against expressed will, by one of the belligerent Powers, and attempts may be made to entangle us in diplomatic quarrels. There may be rash action from within when wild gusts of passion or propaganda sweep over parts of our people. Let every prudent mind be well-prepared, not only to resist war-fever in its various forms, and to instruct public opinion, but also to foster loyalty to the Government in whatever course it may find necessary ...

The real issues.

If we are to keep cool heads in a struggle that is fought on the ether with arguments as well as in the air with bombs, we must understand the issues that are at stake. It is needless to remind an intelligent Irish public that the real quarrel is not over the fate of the German city of Danzig or the independence of the Polish people, any more than the real issue of the war of 1914-18 was the neutrality of Belgium. Nor is the issue Hitlerism, any more than the issue in the former war was Prussianism. Each war had its immediate *casus belli*, or minor dispute that brought the opening of hostilities; but in each the real conflict ranged over a world-wide field of rivalry. In 1914, England fought to bring down a Power that had risen to rival her in the markets of all the Continents, and that threatened her predominance upon the seas. She succeeded; she took that Power's colonies, disarmed it and ended its fleet. She bound down Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, which reduced a world-Power to a weak nation. In the present war, Germany seeks to undo all that remains of the Treaty of Versailles and reaches out to even greater strength, military and commercial, than she was attaining in 1914. This time, each side has thrown its entire manhood and wealth into the fight, so that it seems that one or the other (or both) must perish completely; everything is staked in a war without quarter.

The Russo-German pact of non-aggression was the first signal, in the fatal month of August, 1939, of the final alignment for battle. England and France, for months past, had been seeking

to bind the Soviet Power in an alliance against Germany—an encirclement which would be overwhelmingly strong. They miscalculated. At the last moment Russia declined to act with them and made a peace pact with Germany—“we won’t fight you if you don’t fight us”—that broke the hope of the Allies and ruined their plans. It is likely that the miscalculation sprang from a misunderstanding of the new Russia. As we pointed out a few months ago, the new war has been raging, bloodlessly, ever since the Abyssinian affair, and the Allies suffered defeat after defeat. Their diplomacy was outclassed in Abyssinia, in Spain, in Austria, in Czecho-Slovakia, as if England (hitherto the master of diplomatic war) had lost her grip entirely. When Germany secured Russian neutrality the biggest diplomatic defeat of all was suffered, and it may be to the same cause as those that went before it; namely, a lack of understanding of the forces that are moving in the world to-day ...

We have no liking for Stalin, the Georgian spoilt priest who passed through Socialism to the dictatorship of Russia and turned into a new Napoleon. Nevertheless, we understand him, as the English do not. We remember that when the Communist Lenin in 1920 despaired of Petrograd against the army that Winston Churchill backed in war against Russia, it was Stalin who swept that army off the map. We understand why, in the last twelve months, he had a film made of Tsar Peter the Great’s life and caused it to be shown far and wide, rousing young Russia’s interest in a great patriot figure of the past. We understand he caused the Soviet Press to cease its propaganda for internationalism and to preach pride in Russia, as if what the Bolsheviks had called the bourgeois virtue of Patriotism was to be Russia’s guiding light henceforward. The Russian revolution, like the French revolution, has been “liquidated” by a national revival under an iron man’s leadership—an atheist, indeed, and a calculator, but not a futile Communist fanatic ...

The Russo-German agreement made it necessary for the Allies to fight at once, before Germany became any more powerful; for, once rid of danger from Russia, Germany was in a position to master the whole of South-Eastern Europe, unless stopped by arms. That mastery is really what is at stake. Germany has not pressed her demand for the return of her colonies, which was raised in the Chamberlain-Hitler talk after Munich last year and her reason for not pressing what is, on the face of it, the most reasonable of all her demands (and one partly admitted in Mr. Chamberlain’s own utterances) is that her rulers have conceived a much bolder form of expansion. An empire scattered over-seas like the British cannot be defended without sea-supremacy, but a continuous land-empire, self-sufficient in metals, food and oil, can be held like a fortress and can grow stronger and stronger by the internal production of its munitions. This is what Germany seeks. She has brought almost all Germans under German rule, and now seeks to extend the power of the Reich over the lesser nations south and east. In peace, such extension means commercial monopoly in war, it means right of way for German armies and bases for German air forces.

The Slovaks and the Czechs.

Already Germany has pushed her hegemony of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe far. What happened when she wrung the German areas from Czecho-Slovakia a year ago? The Slovaks, a conservative and strongly Catholic people, shook themselves free from the Czechs and invited German protection as an independent people. That is to say, they decided that a small nation, placed as they were, could thrive only within a large system, and they came under the Third Reich’s protection, in place of being isolated, tradeless and defenceless. Down the years they had been part of the Second Reich, so their present position is nothing new, although it allows more freedom than they formerly possessed. The Czechs were constrained to follow the example of the Slovaks, and their country became a German Protectorate. Meanwhile, German influence reached out to Rumania, which lies beyond Slovakia, and this territory, so rich in oil and wheat, was brought into the German economic sphere a few months ago, by a sweeping most-favoured-nation treaty that gave Rumania preference in Germany, and assured to German trade almost a monopoly in Rumania ...

Developments like these make the Third Reich the successor of the

Austrian empire, with an extension of its borders, turning central, south and eastern Europe into one huge economic bloc. Such an achievement is worth more to Germany than a scattered colonial empire. Whether she incorporated the members of this large combination of States in an empire in name and form, or was content, in accordance with Hitler’s expressed theory, to be mistress of them without tampering with their nationalism, does not matter much, as far as her rivals are concerned. The Allies want to prevent a German commercial hegemony just as much as a greater German empire; it is the rising Power, not the name of it that they are fighting. Let that mighty hegemony be established and it must be more powerful by far in Europe and the Near East than France and England combined. How would Britain and France prevail in commercial competition, how would they hold their vast colonial possessions against the rivalry of this immense Power ...

Poland has borne the brunt of the onslaught, and the mechanised German legions have proved irresistible. Most observers expected Poland to make a more effective resistance for she has nearly half as large a population as Germany, and is no small nation, while her soldiers are renowned for their gallantry. The German calculations proved correct and mechanical superiority was established so quickly that the country was overrun before any relief was afforded anywhere. Perhaps (but this we cannot test) the spirit of the Polish people was not equal to their awful ordeal, when they were set to withstand single-handed the enormous, exultant Reich.

Hitler is the most consummate political strategist who ever remoulded the map. His proposals for a Polish settlement, made public in detail on the eve of the war, but offered in principle in a speech months ago, may have taken the heart out of the Polish resistance. Danzig was to go to the Reich, to which it belongs by blood and its people’s desire, but Poland was to retain the seaport of Gdynia. There was to be a corridor across the Corridor, so that both nations would have what they need. Mothers must have asked whether their sons were to die in order to prevent this reasonable settlement, which, by the way, we analysed some months ago and recommended the Poles to accept ...

Poland not a united nation in 1939.

It must be understood that Poland is by no means the united nation which its military chiefs would have the world believe. Consider its record. All true Irishmen have a *gradh* for Poland, by reason of past history, and Poland reciprocated this regard in the days when Adam Mickiewicz read a Young Irelander’s book as he died. The Poland which rose from the peace of 1919 was not the same idealistic nation. Asked to express sympathy with Ireland in her own struggle for freedom, Polish leaders refused—they would not offend their beloved English patron. The Peace Conference assigned to the new Polish State territory extending to Brest-Litovsk. A year later, the Poles carved out a huge part of Ukraine, beyond that limit, and added a third to their country’s territory by subjecting six millions of another race. Some of us can remember Madame Markiewicz describing the Polish landlords dwelling amid the Ukrainian multitudes and treating them with the same brutal contempt that the alien Anglo-Irish landlords showed to the historic Irish people.

Poland also tore Vilna from the Lithuanians, as brutally as ever they themselves were treated. Within the last year, the Poles mustered their army on the Lithuanian frontier and forced a weaker nation to open the Niemen to them.

Meanwhile, they had spent £20,000,000 on the seaport of Gdynia, and had diverted to it two-thirds of the trade that formerly went through Danzig, thus deliberately starving the city, while holding it within their customs union. All this sad record is traceable to Marshal Pilsudski, an imperialistic dictator who lacked discretion with which to safeguard his country’s gains. Poland grew large and rich, but only by creating enemies who were sure to seek vengeance when they in turn grew strong and could demand back their own and something more. Accordingly, Germany has seized Danzig, which ought to have been ceded to her, and has avenged herself by breaking the Polish army. In turn, Lithuania will demand, from broken Poland, her own city of Vilna and maybe something with it. The Ukrainian region, to which Poland denied autonomy, has been entered by Russia, and re-united to the rest of Ukraine; and it is certain that if the Allies succeeded in defeating Germany, they never could restore to a resurrected Poland this Ukrainian territory which has been lost.

In short, the Allies never can make a case against Lithuania recovering Vilna or the Ukraine being united so Poland is likely to find itself reduced to its elements, like Czecho-Slovakia before it, with no hope of recovery unless or until all Eastern Europe is burnt down and the Allies dictate terms amid the ashes. We may assume pretty safely that pre-war Poland is gone forever. If Germany wins, the purely Polish area which surrounds Warsaw and Cracow will be established as an inland buffer-State between the Reich and Russia. If Germany loses, Poland will get Prussian Poland, too, and possibly East Prussia. Before that can happen, a war that staggers the imagination must be fought out to the end, and great Germany must be laid like a corpse on the dissecting table ... There is little doubt that the Allies depend on time as their chief strength, and expect that a long-drawn war may exhaust Germany's finances in three, four or five years, pending which they resign themselves to a series of German victories ...

What we anticipated—the partition of Poland and re-entry of Russia into Europe in force—has come to pass. For our lifetime it is *Finis*

Poloniae. This came of Poland's trusting England, in the hope that English help would enable her to hold all her White Russian and Ukrainian and Lithuanian conquests, and possibly to add to them East Prussia. She would have done better to make a good bargain with her mighty neighbours and to relieve herself of what she could not hold without foreign help. A reduced Poland could have survived. It is likely that Herr Hitler designed to recognise that reduced Poland; but as happens in warfare, once the marching armies were victorious there was no staying them. Russia did not pause at Brest-Litovsk, nor Germany at Posen; their armies swept into the vacuum caused by the unaided Poles collapse, and they said to each other, as it were: 'Why should we set up a new Polish State—why not hold all that we have taken so easily?'

The Poles have some heady native Imperialists, and the untrustworthy diplomacy of London, to thank for this disaster. The advance of Russia to the very gates of Warsaw makes the Soviet Union a power in European affairs no longer aloof and looking Asia-wards. It casts the shadow of Stalin over the Continent ..."

Pat Walsh: *Ireland's Great War on Turkey*

Athol Books, 2009

Contents: Ireland's Great War on Turkey is largely a forgotten event in Irish history. That is despite the fact that it was probably the most significant thing Ireland ever did in the world. That war lasted from 1914 until 1924—when the Irish Free State ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and finally, along with the rest of the British Empire, made peace with the Turks. It made the Middle East (including Palestine and Iraq) what it is today, and had the catastrophic effects on the Moslem world that persist to the present.

Ireland's part in the Great War on Turkey was an embarrassment to Republican Ireland and its historians and the details of the War became forgotten. The more recent historians of a revisionist disposition and the Remembrance commemorators have also refrained from remembering it, for other reasons. This book, the first history of Ireland's War on Turkey, explains why the British Empire really made war on the Ottoman Empire and why Irishmen found themselves part of the invasion force it sent to Gallipoli. It describes the forgotten political and military assault launched on neutral Greece and the devastating effect this ultimately had on the Greek people across the Balkans and Asia Minor. It explains the reasons for the establishment of Palestine and Iraq and why the United States was repelled from the League of Nations by the behaviour of the British Empire in the conquered Ottoman territories after the War. It concludes on a positive note, describing the great achievement of Ataturk in leading the Turkish nation to independence from the Imperialist Powers. This was an event that Republican Ireland could only marvel at, from the confines of the Treaty and the British Empire—an Empire whose demise Ataturk set in motion through the successful Turkish War of Independence. 540pp. Index.

Haughey and German Unification

[Letter to the Irish Times]

Madam,

I was interested to read the report by Mary Fitzgerald on Franco-British hostility to German unification ('Archives reveal Thatcher feared a reunited Germany', September 11). In fact, the near paranoia in British Government circles about German unification went as far as Mrs Thatcher organising a 'think-in' of leading Oxford historians and others in Checkers to ponder the darkness of the German soul and report back to her on their findings!

The stalemate at the Dublin meeting of the European Council of Ministers in April 1990 over how to re-act to German re-unification was broken by the extraordinary motion proposed by Charles Haughey congratulating the German people on the re-unification of their country quoted in your report.

As International Secretary of Democratic Left - then a member of the Rainbow Coalition - I was privileged to attend the Dublin Castle event in June 1996 addressed by the Taoiseach, Mr Bruton, and the German Chancellor, Mr Kohl. In a very emotionally charged speech, Chancellor Kohl noted how appropriate it was for him to be back in Dublin on 17th June, at that time the West German national holiday ('Day of German Unity'). He recalled the famous Council meeting of April 1990 and stated that he wished to use the occasion to thank the Irish people for the initiative of Mr Haughey in proposing a motion so ingeniously worded that no-one could vote against it! In his memoirs Chancellor Kohl again reiterates his personal thanks to Mr Haughey for bringing the Council of Ministers around to a unanimous endorsement of German unification within the framework of Europe.

Yours etc.

Philip O'Connor

Nuclear weapons: Same double standards from Obama

by David Morrison

President Obama made a speech in Prague on 5 April 2009 [1], the main theme of which was “the future of nuclear weapons in the 21st century”. In it, he proclaimed “America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons”.

His seriousness about pursuing this commitment can be judged by the fact that he singled out two states – North Korea and Iran – as malefactors with regard to nuclear weapons, neither of which, it is generally agreed, is a major nuclear weapons power.

Indeed, to be fair to him, he admitted that Iran isn’t a nuclear weapons power at all, saying that “Iran has yet to build a nuclear weapon”. As for North Korea, nobody really knows.

To add a little perspective to this subject, here are the current estimates by the Federation of American Scientists of the number of warheads possessed by the real nuclear weapons powers in the world [2]:

	Total	Operational
Russia	14,000	5,162
	5,400	4,075
France	300	300
China	240	180
UK	185	160
Israel	80	?
Pakistan	60	?
India	60	?
North Korea	<10	?

These numbers are, of course, only approximate, since the exact number of nuclear warheads in each state’s possession, and their degree of readiness for delivery, is a closely guarded national secret. But, according to these estimates, there are well over 20,000 nuclear warheads in this world, of which around 8,000 are operational – and, as the President admits, not one of them belongs to Iran.

Breaking the “rules”

But, the President would say, Iran and North Korea are breaking the “rules” about possessing nuclear weapons. That’s why he singled them out as nuclear malefactors.

According to the President, the “rules” are laid down in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) [3] (which came into force in March 1970). It needs to be “strengthened”, he said, so that it is more effective at detecting and punishing states that break the “rules”. Here’s what he said:

“The basic bargain [in the NPT] is sound: countries with nuclear weapons will move toward disarmament, countries without nuclear weapons will not acquire them; and all countries can access peaceful nuclear energy. To strengthen the Treaty, we should embrace several principles. We need more resources and authority to strengthen international inspections. We need real and immediate consequences for countries caught breaking the rules or trying to leave the Treaty without cause.”

There, the President admits the reality that there are two very different sets of “rules” enshrined in the NPT itself, one for “countries with nuclear weapons” (“nuclear-weapon” states, in

the language of the NPT) and another for “countries without nuclear weapons” (“non-nuclear-weapon” states). Some states were permitted under the NPT to sign it as “nuclear weapon” states and keep their nuclear weapons; others had to sign as “non-nuclear-weapon” states and were forbidden from developing them.

“Nuclear-weapon” states

But, how did certain states acquire the extraordinary privilege of being a “nuclear-weapon” state? The answer is that it’s written into the NPT itself, Article IX(3) of which says:

“For the purposes of this Treaty, a nuclear-weapon State is one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January, 1967.”

Five states – China, France, Russia, the UK and the US – passed that test and were eligible to sign the NPT as “nuclear-weapon” states (though China and France didn’t sign until the 1990s).

The NPT was devised by states that possessed nuclear weapons to preserve their monopoly over the possession of nuclear weapons, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to other states. This monopoly was written into the NPT itself and cannot be removed or amended without the consent of all five states – under Article VIII(2) of the NPT, amendment to the Treaty requires the approval of “a majority of the votes of all the Parties to the Treaty, including the votes of all nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty [my emphasis]”.

Just as each of these five powers has a right of veto over Security Council decisions, each has a veto over any amendment to the NPT seeking to take away its right under the NPT to possess nuclear weapons.

It is true that the NPT pays lip service to the notion of all round nuclear disarmament. Article VI says:

“Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”

But that doesn’t require “nuclear-weapon” states to get rid of their nuclear weapons, nor even to negotiate in good faith about getting rid of them, merely to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating ... to nuclear disarmament”. And no “nuclear-weapon” state as defined by the Treaty has ceased to be one since the Treaty came into force. The five states that possessed nuclear weapons on 1 January 1967 still possess them today.

Since these states are also veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council, their right to possess nuclear weapons is untouchable.

A world without nuclear weapons?

In his Prague speech, President Obama set out to give the impression that, under his leadership, the US took its responsibilities under Article VI seriously and was embarking on an historic initiative towards universal nuclear disarmament. He

proclaimed “America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” and declared that the US will take “concrete steps toward a world without nuclear weapons”. However, he added:

“Make no mistake: as long as these weapons exist, we will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies, including the Czech Republic.”

The “concrete steps” he announced were the negotiation of a new strategic nuclear arms reduction treaty with Russia to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), which expires in December 2009. START I was signed in July 1991 just before the breakup of the Soviet Union. As a result of it, by December 2001, the number of strategic nuclear warheads on both sides was reduced to about 6,000 (from about 10,000) and delivery vehicles to about 1,600.

It remains to be seen what reductions if any the START 1 replacement treaty will actually bring. It can be guaranteed that after its implementation, the US and Russia will both possess an “effective arsenal to deter any adversary”.

The Obama administration is determined to make it up with Russia (see my article *The US “forgets” about Georgia and makes up with Russia* [4]). The signing of a START 1 replacement, when Obama goes to Moscow in July, is going to provide concrete evidence of their new relationship.

No disapproval of India, Israel and Pakistan

President Obama hadn't a word of disapproval for the three states – India, Israel and Pakistan – that never signed the NPT and secretly developed nuclear weapons. Nuclear proliferation on this grand scale didn't get a mention in his speech – perhaps because these states are US allies.

These states chose to remain outside the NPT and therefore didn't break any NPT “rules” by developing nuclear weapons. But, if the President's goal is a “world without nuclear weapons”, one might have thought that these states which actually possess nuclear weapons were more worthy of his disapproval than Iran, which he admits has none.

It used to be the case that these three states were in the international nuclear doghouse, in the sense that they were unable to purchase nuclear material and equipment from the rest of the world, which made it difficult for them to expand their civil nuclear programmes. But, in July 2005, the Bush administration signed the US-India nuclear agreement, an initiative which has led to India being taken out of the doghouse. It is now free to engage in international nuclear commerce (see my article *India & Iran: US double standards on nuclear weapons* [5]).

India: a natural strategic partner for the US

Senator Barack Obama voted for the legislation required to enact that agreement. In July 2008, he explained his actions to the Indian magazine *Outlook*:

“I voted for the US-India nuclear agreement because India is a strong democracy and a natural strategic partner for the US in the 21st century.” [6]

There you have it: the Bush administration, allegedly a determined opponent of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, has rewarded India, a state that has engaged in proliferation to the extent of acquiring around 60 nuclear warheads and the missiles to deliver them. Obama, an equally determined opponent of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, approves wholeheartedly on

the grounds that India is “a natural strategic partner for the US”.

There, Obama was speaking during his election campaign. Now that he is in office, his administration has embraced the US-India agreement. On 23 March 2009, his Deputy Secretary of State, James Steinburg, told a conference at the Brookings Institution:

“The US is committed to working directly with India as a robust partner on civilian nuclear energy. Our governments have taken some of the steps needed to realize the one, two, three agreement [with India on nuclear commerce], but we both need to do more.” [7]

It appears that there are special “rules” for “a natural strategic partner for the US”.

Steinburg went on:

“Both the United States and India have a responsibility to help work, to craft a strengthened NPT regime that fosters safe, affordable nuclear power, to help the globe's energy and environment needs while assuring against the spread of nuclear weapons.”

Think about it: here the US is saying that India, a state that remained outside the NPT so that it was free to develop nuclear weapons, should help “strengthen” the NPT in order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to other states. You couldn't make it up.

It is not as if India is going to sign the NPT. Since it isn't one of the five privileged “nuclear-weapon” states as defined by the NPT, it would have to give up its nuclear weapons and sign as a “non-nuclear-weapon” state. It is safe to say that India will not do that – but nevertheless the US wants it to help “strengthen” the NPT in order to prevent other states acquiring nuclear weapons.

Iran a pariah state

By contrast, the US treats Iran as a pariah state because of its nuclear activities. Unlike India, Iran has been a signatory to the NPT since July 1968, as a “non-nuclear-weapon” state. By Obama's own admission, it doesn't possess any nuclear weapons. It says that its uranium enrichment facilities are not for military purposes and the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) has found no evidence to the contrary. Yet Iran has had economic sanctions imposed upon it in order to force it to cease uranium enrichment and other nuclear activities, which are its right under the NPT so long as they are for “peaceful purposes”. Article IV(1) of the NPT says:

“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” [3]

Clearly, Iran made the wrong choice in 1968 by signing the NPT. Had it taken the same route as India (and Israel and Pakistan) and refused to sign, it would have been free to engage in any nuclear activities it liked in secret, including activities for military purposes, without breaking any of the “rules” of the NPT. If it had kept on the right side of the US, it might have been invited by the US to help “strengthen” the NPT in order to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other states.

Withdrawal from NPT

Under Article IX of the NPT, Iran would be within its rights to withdraw from the Treaty and remove the constraints upon it due to NPT membership. Article IX says:

“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 (and other neighbours of Israel) has good grounds for withdrawal, because of the build up over the past 40 years of an Israeli nuclear arsenal directed at them. There could hardly be a better example of “extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty”, which “have jeopardized [their] supreme interests”.

It might not be wise for Iran to withdraw from the NPT at the present time, since it would risk terrible havoc from the US and/or Israel. But, there is no doubt that such an action would be within the “rules” of the NPT, that President Obama puts so much store by.

References:

- [1] www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/
- [2] www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nukestatus.html
- [3] www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/Others/infcirc140.pdf
- [4] www.david-morrison.org.uk/georgia/us-russia.htm
also IFA Jan-June 2009
- [5] www.david-morrison.org.uk/india/india-iran-double-standards.htm
- [6] in.reuters.com/article/topNews/idINIndia-34476220080712
- [7] www.brookings.edu/events/2009/~media/Files/events/2009/0323_india/20090323_steinberg.pdf
www.david-morrison.org.uk
david.morrison1@ntlworld.com

The elephant in the room: Israel’s nuclear weapons

by David Morrison

“One of the areas that we discussed is the deepening concern around the potential pursuit of a nuclear weapon by Iran. ... Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon would not only be a threat to Israel and a threat to the United States, but would be profoundly destabilizing in the international community as a whole and could set off a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that would be extraordinarily dangerous for all concerned, including for Iran.” [1]

Those words were spoken by President Barack Obama at a press conference in the White House on 18 May 2009. By his side was Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu.

In the room with them, there was an elephant, a large and formidably destructive elephant, which they and the assembled press pretended not to see.

I am, of course, referring to Israel’s actual nuclear weapons systems, which are capable of doing to cities in the Middle East what the US did to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The Federation of American Scientists estimates that Israel has 80 warheads [2]; other experts on these matters reckon it may have as many as 400 [3].

Iran has none, zero. The President said so himself in Prague on 5 April 2009, when he announced “America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” [4]. He averted his eyes from Israel’s nuclear arsenal on that occasion as well.

At a press briefing onboard Air Force One en route to Prague, a funny thing happened which shows that it is administration policy to do so [5]. Denis McDonough, a deputy National Security Advisor, was holding forth about the President’s plans for universal nuclear disarmament, when the following dialogue took place:

Q Have you included Israel in the discussion?

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.

Secret Nixon/Meir deal

It looks as if the US is still sticking to the secret deal that

President Nixon made with Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, in September 1969. Under it, 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*, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No 189 [6].)

Sitting beside Netanyahu, Obama said that “Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon” would be “profoundly destabilizing” and “could set off a nuclear arms race in the Middle East”. That is a profoundly dishonest statement. In reality, the race started in the early 1950s when Israel launched a nuclear weapons programme.

For many years, Israel went to great lengths to keep the existence of this programme secret, 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 inspecting 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 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) 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 refused. The issue was finally resolved by the agreement 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 Treaty.

As I said, it looks as if, 40 years later, the Nixon/Meir agreement still forms the basis of US policy with regard to Israel’s nuclear weapons. But there has been a development, which may mean a change is afoot (see below).

Iran would not commit suicide

At his White House press conference with Obama, Netanyahu told the usual tale of a looming threat to Israel's existence from Iran's nuclear weapons:

"In this context, the worst danger we face is that Iran would develop nuclear military capabilities. Iran openly calls for our destruction, which is unacceptable by any standard. It threatens the moderate Arab regimes in the Middle East.† It threatens U.S. interests worldwide."

One wonders how he has the brass neck to complain about the possibility that Iran may develop a nuclear weapon at some time in the future, when Israel has lots of them now and that, as Israeli Prime Minister, he has the means to raze to the ground, at the touch of a button, tens, if not hundreds, of cities in the Middle East, including Tehran.

Let's suppose for a moment that Iran has a nuclear weapons programme, which will produce effective nuclear warheads and the means of delivering them to Israel, within a few years. Would that make Iran a serious threat to Israel, as Obama said? Of course, not.

Rulers of Iran don't want their cities devastated and they know that, if Iran were to make a nuclear strike on Israel, it is absolutely certain that Israel would retaliate by making multiple nuclear strikes on Iran and raze many Iranian cities to the ground – so Iran won't do it. Israel possesses a nuclear arsenal, and the ruthlessness to use it, that is more than adequate to deter Iran from making a nuclear strike on Israel.

Likewise, it is unimaginable that Iran would attack the US, or US interests abroad, for fear of overwhelming retaliation.

Taking account of the elephant in the room puts a very different perspective on the impact of a nuclear-armed Iran.

Ultimate weapons of self-defence

The significance of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons is not that Iran would become a threat to Israel and the US, but that Israel and the US would no longer contemplate attacking Iran. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate weapons of self-defence – a state that possesses nuclear weapons doesn't get attacked by other states.

As Seumas Milne put it in *The Guardian* on 27 May 2009, writing about North Korea:

"... the idea, much canvassed in recent days, that there is something irrational in North Korea's attempt to acquire nuclear weapons is clearly absurd. This is, after all, a state that has been targeted for regime change by the US ever since the end of the cold war, included as one of the select group of three in George Bush's axis of evil in 2002, and whose Clinton administration guarantee of 'no hostile intent' was explicitly withdrawn by his successor.

"In April 2003, North Korea drew the obvious conclusion from the US and British aggression against Iraq. The war showed, it commented at the time, 'that to allow disarmament through inspections does not help avert a war, but rather sparks it'. Only 'a tremendous military deterrent force', it stated with unavoidable logic, could prevent attacks on states the world's only superpower was determined to bring to heel.

"The lesson could not be clearer. Of Bush's 'axis' states, Iraq, which had no weapons of mass destruction, was invaded and occupied; North Korea, which already had some nuclear capacity, was left untouched and is most unlikely to be attacked in future; while Iran, which has yet to develop a nuclear capability, is still threatened with aggression by both the US and Israel." [7]

In the White Paper arguing for the maintenance of the UK's nuclear weapons (published in December 2006), the Government

said that they are "to deter and prevent ... acts of aggression against our vital interests that cannot be countered by other means". [8] Could there be a better argument for Iran acquiring nuclear weapons?

One thing is certain: attacking Iran, ostensibly to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons, would make the case for it acquiring them like nothing else. It would then be abundantly clear that Iran's "vital interests" could not be "countered by other means" – and it can be guaranteed that it would then make a supreme effort to acquire them.

Gates says Israel has nuclear weapons

Surprisingly, one senior member of the Obama administration, Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, has stated publicly that Israel possesses nuclear weapons and that it would be rational for Iran to seek nuclear weapons as a deterrent. He did so at his confirmation hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 5 December 2006 [9], following his nomination by President Bush to succeed Donald Rumsfeld.

Gates was questioned by Senator Lindsey Graham about the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and the threat to Israel if it did. He said that he believed that Iran was trying to acquire nuclear weapons, and was lying when it said it wasn't. However, he suggested that its motivation was self-defence. Asked by Senator Graham:

"Do you believe the Iranians would consider using that nuclear weapons capability against the nation of Israel?"

he replied:

"I don't know that they would do that, Senator. ... And I think that, while they are certainly pressing, in my opinion, for nuclear capability, I think that they would see it in the first instance as a deterrent. They are surrounded by powers with nuclear weapons: Pakistan to their east, the Russians to the north, the Israelis to the west and us in the Persian Gulf."

This is a remarkable reply from somebody who was about to become US Defense Secretary. He should have a word with his new boss in the White House and put him straight about who is responsible for the nuclear arms race in the Middle East – and suggest that the US could reduce the intensity of the race by withdrawing its nuclear-armed ships from the Persian Gulf.

Israel can live with a nuclear-armed Iran

Some voices are being raised in Israel pointing out that, contrary to the extravagant rhetoric of Israeli political leaders, a nuclear-armed Iran would not be an existential threat to Iran, given Israel's deterrent capacity.

Listen to this from an article in *Ha'aretz* on 15 May 2009

"This is the place to emphasize Israel's mistake in hyping the Iranian threat. The regime in Tehran is certainly a bitter and inflexible rival, but from there it's a long way to presenting it as a truly existential threat to Israel. Iran's involvement in terror in our region is troubling, but a distinction must be made between a willingness to bankroll terrorists, and an intention to launch nuclear missiles against Israel. Even if Iran gets nuclear weapons, Israel's power of deterrence will suffice to dissuade any Iranian ruler from even contemplating launching nuclear weapons against it. ...

"In another year, or three years from now, when the Iranians possess nuclear weapons, the rules of the strategic game in the region will be completely altered. Israel must reach that moment with a fully formulated and clear policy in hand, enabling it to successfully confront a

potential nuclear threat, even when it is likely that the other side has no intention of carrying it out. The key, of course, is deterrence. Only a clear and credible signal to the Iranians, indicating the terrible price they will pay for attempting a nuclear strike against Israel, will prevent them from using their missiles. The Iranians have no logical reason to bring about the total destruction of their big cities, as could happen if Israel uses the means of deterrence at its disposal. Neither the satisfaction of killing Zionist infidels, nor, certainly, the promotion of Palestinian interests would justify that price. Israeli deterrence in the face of an Iranian nuclear threat has a good chance of succeeding precisely because the Iranians have no incentive to deal a mortal blow to Israel.” [10]

This is by Dr Reuven Pedatzur, senior lecturer at the Strategic Studies Program, Tel Aviv University, fighter pilot in the Israeli Air Force reserves, as well as Defense Analyst for *Ha'aretz*.

Much of Pedatzur's article is taken up with reviewing a study by Abdullah Toukan and Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington on the possible scenarios for an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities and the chances of success. Its conclusion is:

“A military strike by Israel against Iranian nuclear facilities is possible ... [but] would be complex and high-risk and would lack any assurances that the overall mission will have a high success rate.” [11]

Pedatzur's point is that Israel should prepare to live with a nuclear-armed Iran, rather than fantasising that it is possible for Israel to stop Iran acquiring nuclear weapons (assuming it has a mind to do so) by bombing its nuclear facilities – and should stop scaring its citizens unnecessarily by giving the impression that, if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, then the existence of Israel as a state is under serious threat.

According to a recent opinion poll, some 23% of Israelis would consider leaving the country if Iran obtains a nuclear weapon [12]. The poll was conducted on behalf of the Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University. Commenting on the poll results, the head of the Center, Professor David Menashri, said:

“The findings are worrying because they reflect an exaggerated and unnecessary fear. Iran's leadership is religiously extremist but calculated and it understands an unconventional attack on Israel is an act of madness that will destroy Iran. Sadly, the survey shows the Iranian threat works well even without a bomb and thousands of Israelis [already] live in fear and contemplate leaving the country.”

Has Iran got a nuclear weapons programme?

Has Iran got a nuclear weapons programme, in violation of its obligations under the NPT?

Iran has repeatedly denied that it has such a programme. Furthermore, the Iranian 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” [13]. In doing so, he was following in the footsteps of his predecessor and founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini.

That's what Iran says. As required by the NPT, Iran's nuclear facilities are subject to IAEA inspection. And, despite many years of inspection and investigation, the IAEA has found no evidence that Iran has, or ever had, a nuclear weapons programme, though Western media consistently give the opposite impression. True, the possibility exists that Iran has nuclear facilities for military purposes, which it hasn't declared to the IAEA. The IAEA has found no evidence for this, but the

possibility cannot be completely ruled out.

Iran's possession of uranium enrichment facilities is not in breach of the NPT, so long as they are for civil nuclear purposes. The operation of these facilities at Natanz is subject to rigorous IAEA scrutiny. The IAEA has testified that only low enriched uranium suitable for a power generation reactor is being produced there and that no nuclear material is being diverted from the plant for other purposes, for example, to further enrich uranium to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon. That being so, the ongoing demands that Iran suspend these enrichment facilities is a denial of its “inalienable right” under Article IV(1) of the NPT to engage in nuclear activities for peaceful purposes.

What is the current US intelligence assessment? A US National Intelligence Estimate, the key judgments of which were published in December 2007 [14], concluded that Iran halted its nuclear weapons programme in the autumn of 2003, and hadn't restarted its programme in the interim (see my article *Iran hasn't a nuclear weapons programme says US intelligence* [15]). Commenting on this 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.” [16]

No uranium enrichment, says US/EU

The present position of the US/EU seems to be that Iran should not have uranium enrichment facilities on its own territory, under any circumstances. As I have said above, this is a denial of Iran's “inalienable right” under Article IV(1) of the NPT to engage in nuclear activities for peaceful purposes. It is also discriminatory against Iran, since no objection has ever been raised to other states, for example, Brazil and Japan, having enrichment facilities on their own territory in order to manufacture reactor fuel.

Iran entered into negotiations with the UK, France and Germany about its nuclear facilities in October 2003. During these negotiations, Iran voluntarily suspended a range of nuclear activities, including uranium enrichment. The negotiations came to an abrupt halt in August 2005 when the European states made proposals, which required Iran to abandon all processing of domestically mined uranium, including enrichment, and to import all fuel for nuclear power reactors.

Had Iran accepted these proposals, its nuclear power generation would have been dependent on fuel from abroad, which could be cut off at any time, even though Iran has a domestic supply of uranium ore. It was no surprise, therefore, that Iran rejected these proposals out of hand – and later resumed those activities it had suspended, including uranium enrichment.

Since then, the US/EU took Iran to the Security Council about its nuclear activities. The Council has passed various resolutions demanding, inter alia, that Iran suspend uranium enrichment and imposing (rather mild) economic sanctions on it in an attempt to compel it to do so. Russia and China have gone along with this rather reluctantly, while using their veto power to keep the sanctions mild.

Providing assurance

The key question is: are there any circumstances in which the US/EU would be content for Iran to have uranium enrichment facilities on its own territory? For example, could additional measures be put in place to provide assurance that these, and other

nuclear facilities, are being used for peaceful purposes only?

In the past, Iran did allow an enhanced form of IAEA inspection, under a so-called Additional Protocol to its basic inspection agreement with the IAEA. This isn't mandatory on a state under the NPT (and Brazil, which also has uranium enrichment facilities, doesn't allow it). The Additional Protocol is designed to allow the IAEA to get a full picture of a state's nuclear activities by providing the agency with authority to visit any facility, declared or not, and to visit unannounced – and thereby seek to eliminate the possibility that a state is engaging in nuclear activity for military purposes at sites that it hasn't declared to the agency.

Iran signed an Additional Protocol in 2003 and allowed the IAEA to operate under it from December 2003 until February 2006. But, it withdrew permission in February 2006 when it was referred to the Security Council. There is little doubt that it would be prepared to allow the IAEA to operate under an Additional Protocol again, if the Security Council dogs were called off and the economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council were lifted.

That is one additional measure that could be taken to help provide assurance that Iran's nuclear facilities are being used for peaceful purposes only. Another measure was suggested by Iran, as long ago as 17 September 2005. Then, in a speech to the UN General Assembly, President Ahmadinejad made the following extraordinary offer, which goes way beyond the requirements of the NPT:

“... as a further confidence building measure and in order to provide the greatest degree of transparency, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran.”

Needless to say, the US/EU have ignored this proposal, which would have put Iran's uranium enrichment facilities under a degree of international control. Perhaps, President Obama's staff should draw this proposal to his attention.

Join the NPT, says the US

An NPT review conference is due in 2010. A conference to prepare an agenda for it took place in New York recently.

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 4 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 from the Treaty.

The US delegate to the preparation conference was Assistant Secretary of State, Rose Gottemoeller, the newly appointed chief disarmament negotiator for the US. The following sentence in her statement to the conference on 5 May 2009 worried Israel:

“Universal adherence to the NPT itself – including by India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea – also remains a fundamental objective of the United States.” [17]

There was nothing new in the US calling for universal

adherence to the NPT. However, the fact that Israel was explicitly named caused anxiety in Israel. No doubt the fact that the US, its closest ally, put it in the dock alongside North Korea, a founder member of the “axis of evil”, didn't please either. *The Guardian* reported that “a diplomatic row” had broken out between the US and Israel about her remark [18].

You can understand why Israel is worried: this has the appearance of the US reverting to its policy prior to the Nixon/Meir agreement in September 1969, when it was pressing Israel to join the NPT.

Joining the NPT has serious implications for Israel. Since it acquired nuclear weapons after the beginning of 1967, it cannot sign the Treaty as a “nuclear-weapon” state. If Israel were forced to sign the NPT, it would have to give up its nuclear weapons and sign as a “non-nuclear-weapon”.

The same is true of India, Pakistan and North Korea – so universal adherence to the NPT isn't going to happen any time soon.

Don't attack Iran, says Obama

Obama has told Israel not to take military action against Iran, and he has told the world that he has done so. “Obama quashed Israel military option against Iran” was the title of an article by Yossi Melman in *Ha'aretz* on 22 May 2009, [19]. Here are its opening paragraphs:

“Israel's military option against Iran has died. The death warrant was issued courtesy of the new US administration led by Barack Obama.

“All the administration's senior officials, from the president to his vice president, Joe Biden, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and others are sending strong, clear hints that Israel does not have permission to strike Iran. Yet, given their familiarity with the Israeli client, they have not made do with simple hints and intimations. Washington dispatched the new CIA director, Leon Panetta, to Israel. Panetta made clear to Netanyahu, in so many words, that an Israeli attack would create ‘big trouble’.”

The *Jerusalem Post* quoted Panetta as saying that he “felt assured” Israel would not break ranks with Washington's strategy (see article, entitled *CIA head: Jerusalem knows not to attack Iran*, on 20 May 2009 [20]). He continued:

“Yes, the Israelis are obviously concerned about Iran and focused on it. But [Netanyahu] understands that if Israel goes it alone, it will mean big trouble. He knows that for the sake of Israeli security, they have to work together with others.”

That's treating Israel like an unruly child that has to be told to behave itself – and then, rather than keeping the matter in the family, broadcasting it to the world.

It is not unprecedented for the US to restrain Israel. What is unprecedented is that the US made public the fact that it restrained Israel. Why did it do so? Its purpose must have been to demonstrate that it is serious about improving relations with the Muslim world in general, and with Iran in particular, and that it isn't going to allow Israel to stand in the way of that policy.

Obama says who's boss

On 8 January 2009, the Security Council passed resolution 1860 calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The voting was 14 to 0, with one abstention. The US abstained, despite the fact the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, had played a major part in formulating the resolution and had therefore been expected to vote for it. The rumour was that Israel had intervened.

A few days later the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, confirmed that this was true, boasting in a speech that he had changed US policy with a single phone call to President Bush:

“In the night between Thursday and Friday [8/9 January], when the secretary of state wanted to lead the vote on a ceasefire at the Security Council, we did not want her to vote in favour.

“I said 'get me President Bush on the phone'. They said he was in the middle of giving a speech in Philadelphia. I said I didn't care. 'I need to talk to him now'. He got off the podium and spoke to me.

“I told him the United States could not vote in favour. It cannot vote in favour of such a resolution. He immediately called the secretary of state and told her not to vote in favour.

“She was left shamed. A resolution that she prepared and arranged, and in the end she did not vote in favour.” [21]

It was very foolish of Olmert to boast in public that he had changed US policy with a single phone call to the US president. It gave the impression that Israel has the clout to make Middle East policy for the US, an impression that wasn't entirely unwarranted in the days of President Bush.

By telling the world that he has killed off Israel's military option against Iran, Obama has made it clear that, where its interests demand it, the US will make policy for Israel, and not the other way round, as happened last January.

References:

- [1] www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-President-Obama-and-Israeli-Prime-Minister-Netanyahu-in-press-availability/
- [2] www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nuclearweapons/nukestatus.html

- [3] www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/080602_israeliwmd.pdf
- [4] www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/
- [5] www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Press-Gaggle- aboard-AF1-en-route-Prague-by-General-Jones-Denis-McDonough-and-Robert-Gibbs-4/4/2009/
- [6] www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB189/index.htm
- [7] www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/may/27/north-korea-nuclear-weapons-us
- [8] www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/AC00DD79-76D6-4FE3-91A1-6A56B03C092F/0/DefenceWhitePaper2006_Cm6994.pdf
- [9] media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/rgates_hearing_120506.html
- [10] www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1085619.html
- [11] www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/090316_israelistrikeiran.pdf
- [12] www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1087472.html
- [13] www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iran/nuke/mehr080905.html
- [14] www.dni.gov/press_releases/20071203_release.pdf
- [15] www.david-morrison.org.uk/iran/iran-nie-2007dec.htm
- [16] www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/PressReleases/2007/prn200722.html
- [17] www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT2010Prepcom/PrepCom2009/statements/2009/05May2009/05May2009AMSspeaker-4-USA.pdf
- [18] www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/06/israel-us-nuclear-non-proliferation
- [19] www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1087331.html
- [20] www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1242212421175&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull
- [21] www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/4224910/George-Bush-shamed-Condoleezza-Rice-says-Ehud-Olmert.html

BLAIR INTERVIEWED BY STERN MAGAZINE 26 July 2009

S: [Your decision to join George W. Bush into the Iraq war.] Is this decision the open wound of your time in office?

TB: Yes, I have to live with that, because I have to live with the consequences of this decision. But the question is: Would the region be better off if Saddam was still in power? Let alone all the difficulties, getting rid of Saddam was never the problem. This happened within two months. The problem was the aftermath.

S: If we recall rightly, you did not go to war to topple a regime.

TB: This is true. We declared war because we had evidence for WMDs. Ultimately, the evidence was wrong. But we knew that Saddam had used such weapons in the past. Therefore we knew that he was in possession of them. It was also the general basis for the previous UN resolutions. Of course I have to accept that important aspects of the chain of evidence were proven wrong. But do I regret having removed Saddam Hussein? The answer is frankly, no.

S: According to international law, as claimed by your Attorney General, you were only permitted to go to war because of the WMDs, not in order to topple a regime.

TB: This discussion is kind of artificial. Of course the character of a regime is essential, if you try to assess its potential danger.

And if you look at the first Gulf war and its consequences, you know very well how dangerous this regime was.

S. The former US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has recently said that he would have never gone in front of the UN Security Council if he knew how fragile the evidence was.

TB: If you are sure that something isn't right, you of course don't claim it is right. You just have to consider that at this time nobody questioned the evidence of our secret services.

S. But the dossiers you received were sexed up.

TB: This allegation is still circulating in our media. We had an inquiry into that for over six months and ultimately the government was cleared by it.

S: Still there is reason for another Iraq inquiry. The government of your successor, Gordon Brown, is just launching it.

TB: You have to learn from the events of the past. We did the same after the Falklands war. But this is a totally different matter than another inquiry into whether or not we deliberately misled people. At that time we took a decision. You can agree with it or not. But we acted in good faith and not because of a dark ulterior motive. There is no scandal, no conspiracy, no piece of paper that states that in reality it was about oil or whatever.

Inventions and falsifications concerning the role of the Soviet Union in the events leading to the Second World War.

By Kovaliov Sergei Nikolayevich

[This article first appeared in the Review "Voenno-istoricheskij zhurnal" (Review of Military History) No 7, 2008, then in mid 2009 it was published on the website of the Russian Ministry of Defence, and removed shortly after its appearance.]

[Kovaliov Sergei Nikolayevich is Head of the Department of Military History of the North-West Region, attached to the institute of military history of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation. He is a Colonel and holds a Doctorate in history (St Petersburg).]

4th June 2009

Numerous studies, by politicians, learned individuals, specialists and civil society, have analysed the role of the USSR in the events leading up to the start of the Second World War. Today anti-Russian attacks regarding this time are often based on falsified and distorted interpretations of the actions of the leadership of the USSR at this period. The idea appears more and more in the media that 'a new Cold War has started'. (1) Some Western commentators say that :

'Now it is time to acknowledge the inconvenient truth. Russia is back: rich, powerful and hostile. Partnership is giving way to rivalry, with increasingly threatening overtones. The new Cold War has begun – but just as in the 1940s, we are alarmingly slow to notice it.' [Times 5/2/08] (2)

It is curious to note how easily labels are stuck on countries that are historically linked to Russia. For example it is said that some European countries, such as Bulgaria, Latvia and Moldavia, have already surrendered to Russia. (3)

In their effort to throw the responsibility of starting the Second World War on the USSR, or at least to say that both bloody dictators, Stalin and Hitler, bear equal responsibility, modern falsifiers of history often use as their favourite argument the signing on 23 August 1939 of the non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union.

Poland and German demands

Historical facts should be examined in context, taking into account events happening in a real situation. When we analyse the German-Soviet pact, we must not forget another agreement, signed around a year previously, in Munich. The two events are intimately linked. It is precisely what happened in the Bavarian capital which determined a great deal of subsequent Soviet policy. Everyone who has studied without preconceived ideas the history of the Second World War knows that it started because of the refusal of Poland to satisfy German requests. What is less well known is what precisely Hitler wanted from Warsaw. In reality, German demands were very moderate: to incorporate the free city of Danzig into the Third Reich, authorize the construction of a motorway and a railway line in order to link East Prussia with the main body of Germany. (4) These two demands have nothing extraordinary about them. The overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the city of Danzig, cut off from Germany following the Versailles Treaty, were Germans, (5) who sin-

cerely desired to be joined again to their historical motherland. The request concerning the road was perfectly natural, especially since there were no pretensions concerning the territory of the 'Polish corridor' separating the two parts of Germany. Contrary to Western borders, Germany had never willingly recognised the territorial changes in the East imposed by the Versailles Treaty. (6)

This is why, when on 24 October 1938 Germany proposed to Poland to settle the problem of Danzig and of the 'Polish corridor', (7) no difficulties were envisaged. Yet the refusal was categorical, and subsequent German requests met with the same response. Dreaming of becoming a great power, Poland did not want to become a subordinate partner of Germany. On 26 March 1939, Poland refused absolutely to satisfy German demands. (8) On 28 April 1939 the reaction of Germany was to annul the 1934 German-Polish pact of friendship and non-aggression. (9)

Meanwhile Western democracies fostered in the Polish government the unrealistic hope that in case of war they would supply Warsaw with all necessary help. On 31 March 1939 Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Great Britain, declared publicly in the House of Commons:

'In the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence ... His Majesty's government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect. I may add that the French Government have authorised me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as His Majesty's Government.' (10)

As subsequent events proved, these promises were pure deception. However the Polish government took them at face value, which caused it to lose all sense of reality. The American journalist William Shirer, who spent thirty years studying Polish life and society, has commented on the British guarantees given to Poland in the following manner: 'It is perfectly possible to insure a gunpowder factory, if security regulations are respected there, but to insure a factory run by madmen is another matter.' (11)

Alliance with Western Democracies

The events occurring in Europe and the growing aggressiveness of Germany could not but seriously worry the Soviet Government. To restrain Hitler's appetite it seemed necessary to make an alliance with Western democracies. However, as Churchill noted 'The Soviet Government were convinced by Munich and much else that neither Britain nor France would fight till they were attacked and would not be much good then.' (12) It was clear that the aim of the Western powers' policy of 'appeasement' was to direct German aggression towards the East, that is to say, against the Soviet Union. As Chamberlain said on the 12 September 1938, on the eve of his meeting with Hitler,

'Germany and Britain are the two pillars of European peace and the principal buttresses against communism, this is why it is essential to overcome our present difficulties through peace ... It will certainly be possible to find a solution acceptable for all, except Russia'. (13)

In this situation the Soviet Government has drawn the only possible conclusion: collaboration with Britain and France is

only possible on the basis of a military treaty outlining clearly and without ambiguity the obligations of the different parties.

On 17 April 1939 Moscow proposed an Anglo-French-Soviet treaty of mutual aid containing the following points:

1. Britain, France and the USSR sign between them an agreement of 5 to 10 years duration by which they are mutually obliged to give each other immediately any useful help, including military, in case of aggression in Europe against one of the signatories.

2. Britain, France and the USSR commit themselves to bringing help, including military, to the countries of Central Europe situated between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea and having a common border with the USSR, in case of aggression against one of those countries.

3. Britain, France and the USSR commit themselves forthwith to discuss and establish how much and what sort of military aid will be offered to each of these states, in implementing paragraphs one and two.

4. The British Government stresses that the help it promised Poland concerns solely an attack coming from Germany.

5. The existing treaty between Poland and Rumania is either declared valid in case of aggression directed against Poland and Rumania, or else is entirely denounced as directed against the USSR.

6. Britain, France and the USSR commit themselves, after the start of military operations, to abstain from entering negotiations or declaring a separate peace with the aggressors independently of each other and without the common agreement of the three powers.

7. A corresponding agreement is signed at the same time as the Convention which must be written in virtue of paragraph 3.

8. Britain, France and the USSR find it necessary to start conjointly talks with Turkey with a view to an agreement of mutual help. (14)

However the Western partners did not appreciate in the least this way of presenting things. On the 26 April, Lord Halifax, minister for Foreign Affairs, said that the time was not yet ripe for such a comprehensive proposal. (15) France and Great Britain hoped that the Soviet Union would enter into unilateral obligations. Thus, at a meeting of the Cabinet on 3 May, Halifax announced his intention to ask Russia if she would not now be ready to make a unilateral declaration saying that she would deliver aid at the time and in the form that would be considered acceptable by Poland and Rumania. (16)

On 6 May 1939, the Soviet charge d'affaires in Germany sent a communication to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs concerning the reaction of the German press to the change of People's Commissar, saying that the German press was trying to 'give the impression that our policy might change in a way that would be favourable to them (giving up collective security, etc). (17) The previous day, 5 May, K. Schnurre, head of the Commercial Policy Division of German Foreign Affairs (Eastern Europe) invited ambassador Merkalov who was leaving that day for Moscow and told him that the German government was of the opinion that the contracts entered into by the former commercial agent in Prague with the Skoda factory should be fulfilled. Indications to that effect had been given to the military authorities and to the Skoda factory, he added, and there would no longer be any obstacle to the firm honouring its obligations. (18)

It was an obvious gesture on the part of the Germans, when as recently as the 17 April Soviet representatives in Berlin had protested against 'the interference of the German military au-

thorities' in the normal economic activity of the Commercial Representation. (19)

Molotov was in no hurry to respond to German signals. He was still involved in active negotiations with Great Britain and France through their diplomatic representatives in Moscow. On the 8 May, the Minister for Foreign Affairs received Sir William Seeds the British ambassador who conveyed to him his government's reply to the Soviet proposal concerning a pact of mutual aid. The reply was discouraging. The British government proposed that the Soviet government publish a declaration in which it would commit itself 'in the event that Great Britain and France should be involved, as a result of their undertakings, in military operations, to give them every help immediately'. (20) Thus the British refused to give a concrete answer regarding the pact, reducing it instead to a simple declaration of intent.

That same day, the People's Commissar communicated to the Soviet charge d'affaires in France Jakob Surits the British proposal and asked him to convey urgently his opinion on the question. (21) In a telegram sent to the minister on 10 May Surits made the following comment on the British proposal: 'it would take us automatically into a war with Germany' because of 'commitments given without our agreement and without concertation' to Britain and France'. (22) From this and from other similar considerations the minister formulated his position.

On 14 May Molotov summoned the British ambassador Seeds and handed him a written note containing the reply to the British proposal. This said that

'the British proposals do not show principles of reciprocity towards the USSR but put her in an unequal situation.

The Soviet Government considers that in order to create a real barrier of peace loving countries against the development of aggression in Europe it is necessary 1) to conclude a real pact of mutual aid against aggression between Britain, France and the USSR; 2) to give the guarantee of the three great powers to the threatened countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic countries and Finland; 3) to sign an agreement between Britain, France and the USSR detailing unambiguously the quantity and nature of the aid that would be given.' (23)

Regarding the soviet proposals, the charge d'affaires in London Maisky noted in his diary that they had put 'the British government in a very difficult situation. Our proposals are clear, simple and full of common sense.' (24) 'On the other hand, the guarantees given to Poland, Rumania and Greece make an agreement with the Soviet Union absolutely necessary, in so far as Great Britain and France will be unable to do anything concrete for Poland or Rumania. Before the British blockade of Germany would have any serious effect on Germany, Poland and Rumania would have long ceased to exist.' (25)

It is only on 25 July that the British government and the next day the French government accepted the Soviet proposal to proceed with talks regarding the signing of a military convention, and declared themselves ready to send their representatives to Moscow. (26) The talks started on 12 August.

The particulars of these talks, which ended in failure, are too well known for it to be worth repeating them here. We should however pay special attention to the real objectives pursued by the parties involved. The British delegation on leaving for Moscow had been given instructions 'to conduct the talks very slowly' (27) and avoid concrete obligations: 'the British government does not wish to be bound by any obligation which could tie our hands regardless of circumstances. This is why as far as a military agreement is concerned it is essential that we limit ourselves to the most general of formulations.' (28)

The position of the Soviet leaders is entirely different. The

head of the French delegation, General Doumenc, is his report on the conduct of the talks, stated in a telegram of 17 August 1939 sent to the French Defence Minister: 'There is no doubt that the USSR wishes to sign a military pact and does not want to be presented with any sort of document that would not have concrete value.' (29)

The role of Poland

The main stumbling block was the question of the passage of Soviet troops through the territory of Poland and Rumania, since at that time the USSR had no common border with Germany. For this reason it was not clear how, when hostilities were declared, Soviet troops could meet and fight the German army. At the meeting of military delegations of 14 August 1939 Marshall Vorochilov asked the following concrete question: 'The general scheme of things is clear, but we do not understand the position of the Soviet Union armed forces. It is not clear on what territory they are deployed and how they take part physically in the general fighting.' (30) In order that the Red Army be in a position from the beginning to take part in military operations, it was necessary that Soviet troops be able to cross Polish territory. Besides, the zones of passage were strictly delimited: the Vilno corridor and Galicia. (31) The head of the French delegation, General Doumenc, in a telegram to the French War Minister of 15 August stresses: 'We must note the importance, to allay Polish fears, of the fact that the Russians limit very strictly the zones of entry [of soviet troops], and adopt an exclusively strategic view point.' (32)

However the Poles would not listen. Thus, on the evening of 19 August 1940 [sic] Marshall Rydz-Smigly declared:

'Whatever the consequences, we will not accept that an inch of Polish territory be occupied by Russian troops.' (33)

And the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs declared to the French ambassador in Warsaw:

'We will never assent to a discussion in whatever form of the possibility that a portion of our territory might be used by foreign troops.' (34)

A report of the second section (intelligence) of the High Command of the armies of Poland, dated December 1938, stresses that:

'The dismantling of Russia forms the basis of Polish policy in the East ... This is why our position comes down to the following question: who will take part in the dismantling. Poland must not remain passive in this remarkable historic moment. Our task is to prepare ourselves in advance physically and mentally ... The main objective is the weakening and destruction of Russia.' (35)

In the course of the talks with Britain and France the Soviet government became convinced once more of the correctness of the words of a Lithuanian diplomat quoted by Astakhov in his diary:

'In case of war, the USSR will bear the greatest losses, whereas Britain and France will retreat and take cover, limiting themselves to an exchange of shots and missiles. There will be no decisive actions on the Western front.' (36)

Seeing its requests rejected by Britain and France, the USSR signed a pact of non aggression with Germany.

From a moral point of view, it should be noted that no representative of the Western democracies has a right to judge the agreement between the USSR and Germany. As the American journalist Shirer so justly remarked: 'If Chamberlain was right and honourable in appeasing Hitler in September 1938 by sacrificing Czechoslovakia, was Stalin wrong and dishonourable in appeasing the Fuehrer a year later at the expense of Poland, which had shunned Soviet help anyway?' (37)

You could say the same of critics who judge from the

standpoint of Leninist norms of foreign policy, which the USSR had supposedly violated by signing an agreement with Germany. The Soviet Union signed a pact of non-aggression with Germany and the result was that, instead of forming a bloc against her, Germany on the one hand and Britain with France on the other hand started to fight each other. The USSR gained the chance of entering the war later than the others, keeping moreover a certain freedom of choice regarding the side it would choose to engage with.

The Soviet leadership, analysing the course of events leading up to the Second World War, drew the conclusion expressed by Stalin on 7 September 1939 in a discussion with the leaders of the Komintern:

'The war is happening between two groups of capitalist countries ... for world domination! We are not against them getting into a scrap and weakening each other ... we can manoeuvre, push one side against the other, to make them fight yet a bit more.' (38)

We must not forget either that during the summer of 1939 Soviet troops were involved in tough fighting against the Japanese on the Khalkhin-Gol river. In as much as Japan was the ally of Germany in the anti-Komintern pact, the signing of the German-Soviet pact was interpreted in Tokyo as a betrayal. On this subject the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Japan said: 'The announcement of the pact of non-aggression between the USSR and Germany has produced a shock here, deeply embarrassing the militarists and the fascists.' (39)

Relations between the Third Reich and its Far Eastern ally were spoiled for a long time as a result. Consequently, leading Japanese circles made the choice of the South Plan, necessitating a war against Britain and the USA. As is known, after the German attack on the USSR, Japan did not declare war on the Soviet Union.

Thus by signing on 19 August 1939 an economic agreement and on 23 August the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the USSR managed for a time to keep war from its borders.

The Soviet government took very seriously the ideas proclaimed by Hitler since 1925 in '*Mein Kampf*' on 'expansion towards the East' and the extension of German living space at the expense of the Soviet Union, ideas many times repeated by him before and after his rise to power, as for example during his first meeting with the generals of the Reichwehr on 3 February 1933. However, in his 'gradual plan' of aggression, as the German historian Hillgruber called it, Hitler still had to go through several stages before realising his plan to 'squash bolshevism'; he started in 1938 (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Memel), then in 1939 (Poland) and finally in 1940 (Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France). Even during the period when the Soviet-German pact was operative, he repeated often that 'his foreign policy would always aim at the destruction of bolshevism' (according to Hitler's aide de camp Colonel von Bulow). On 22 August 1939, justifying to his generals the signing of the pact of non-aggression with the Soviet Union, Hitler declared that 'nevertheless he would crush the USSR later'. As early as 17 October 1939 he gave the order to prepare the ex Polish territories for 'a deployment of forces' (40). Just before attacking France, Hitler indicated that after this operation the Wehrmacht would have to be ready for 'great operations in the East'.

Evaluation of the 1939 Pact

Unfortunately it was not possible for the Soviets to fully realise their plans. The Western powers were very easily beaten and Hitler became master of the resources of practically the whole of Europe. However, even if these circumstances are taken

into account, the Soviet-German pact was at the time the best decision in the conditions obtaining in August 1939. Considering the threat of war, the Kremlin decided to accept the pressing propositions coming from Germany to improve the relations between the two countries. Besides, German diplomats let it be understood that they were ready to make important concessions to meet the wishes of the USSR (41).

Later, after the end of the war, Churchill in his memoirs wrote on the subject of the Soviet-German pact:

'It is a question whether Hitler or Stalin loathed it most. Both were aware that it could only be a temporary expedient. The antagonisms between the two empires and systems were mortal. Stalin no doubt felt that Hitler would be a less deadly foe to Russia after a year of war with the Western Powers. Hitler followed his method of 'One at a time'. The fact that such an agreement could be made marks the culminating failure of British and French foreign policy and diplomacy over several years.' (42)

In the arguments in favour of the detachment of the Baltic republics from the USSR, whether in the nineties or today, we hear most often the assertion that the Treaty of 23 August 1939 had led to 'a Soviet annexation' of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in other words the theme of a Soviet occupation is exploited thoroughly. It should be noted that the earliest date for the start of the period of occupation is fixed to the summer months of 1940, when the parliaments of the Baltic countries voted for their uniting with the USSR. In virtue of which, even the extreme partisanship of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian historians does not allow them to consider the entry of Soviet troops as an act of occupation, and thus they recognise indirectly its objective legitimacy. It is also difficult to deny the fact that for their part the Soviets respected fully the articles of the pact of mutual aid, refusing to interfere in the internal political life of the Baltic States.

The war in Europe, considered by the Soviet government as a real harbinger of conflict with Germany in the short term (signed in August 1939, the pact was only considered as a momentary respite) led to the search for new guarantees of security.

These guarantees were obtained by signing treaties with the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, leading to the creation of Soviet military bases on the territory of the Baltic states: not only on a purely military level, but also on a political level, in as much as these treaties represented an obstacle to the military and political rapprochement of these countries with Germany.

Churchill, explaining the vital necessity for the USSR to improve its strategic positions on the eve of war with Germany, noted:

'They must be in occupation of the Baltic States and a large part of Poland by force or fraud before they were attacked. If their policy was cold-blooded, it was also at the moment realistic in a high degree.' (43)

Before passing judgement on the entry of Soviet troops into the territory of the Baltic States, one must not forget that the international community of the time had received this fact as natural, as an objective unavoidable measure, and not as the expression of expansionist plans. In reality, these events resulted from the fact that all through the thirties, the main European powers had refused to grant the Baltic states any guarantees whatsoever, considering as inevitable their absorption either by Germany or by the USSR. Soviet leaders could not be content to observe passively the Baltic states turn into a zone of German interests, with all the consequences that would flow from that.

The decision to sign the treaties was taken because the great powers of Europe were not interested in the fate of the Baltic countries. Using the contradictions between Britain, France and

Germany, the USSR managed to take control of a strategically important region, to reinforce its position on the Baltic Sea and to create a stronghold against East Prussia.

We must also consider the space factor, which is indissolubly linked to the time factor. The greater the distance from which German troops would eventually start their attack, the smaller the chance of pursuing this attack successfully. The course of the Great Patriotic War demonstrated that this factor contributed to the failure of Hitler's project.

The German Soviet pact of 23 August 1939 which is used in the Baltic states in order to accuse the Russian Federation, as legal heir of the USSR, of entering into secret agreements to annex Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (we should add: at the express request of the government and parliaments of these states) was perfectly in line with international law. All these treaties, this one included, are inscribed on the register of League of Nations, which only sovereign states could be members of, as subjects of international law.

It should also be noted that neither the dispositions of the treaty of 23 August 1939 nor the verbal agreements reached during consultations fixed any borders of state between the countries. The convention signed between the USSR and Germany on friendship and borders on 28 September 1939 is in reality an agreement on the 'non-interference' of these countries in 'the limits or territory of the states involved'. (44) Thus, the fact of declaring Lithuania and an important part of Poland 'spheres of influence' of Germany, meant in effect, in the practical relationship between the USSR and Germany, that 'the USSR would not declare war if German troops entered the territory of these countries'. (45)

Soviet leaders, having signed new agreements on the disposition of extra contingents of Soviet troops and naval forces in June 1940, to complement the agreements signed in the autumn of 1939, deployed these troops and started to prepare and make operational the lines of defence in anticipation of an attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union.

For the sake of historical truth, it should be said that a large part of the responsibility in the failure of efforts to create a collective counterweight to fascist aggression falls also on the 'small' countries of Europe. Their romantic faith in the justice and protection of western democracies, together with their flirtation with fascist Germany and their anti-Soviet prejudice (often coloured with a Russophobe aspect) turned them for a time into pawns on the world political chessboard, making them incapable of influencing the course of events.

[Translation: M. Dunlop and C. Winch]

Notes:

- 1) <http://www.inosmi.ru/translation/239456.html> (The author of the article, Abik Elkin, quotes principally the British journalist Edward Lucas and several of his articles, e.g. Why kowtow to brutal, cynical Russia?)
- 2) *ibid.*
- 3) *ibid.*
- 4) Meltiukhov M.I. *Soviet-Polish Wars: Military and Political Standoff in 1918-1939* Moscow EKSMO 2004 p285
- 5) In 1924, 95% of the 384 000 inhabitants of Danzig were German (see Great Soviet Encyclopedia, volume 20)
- 6) *ibid.*

- 7) Meltiukhov, op.cit. p 285
- 8) *ibid* p 294
- 9) *The crisis year, 1938-1939: Documents and Materials* Volume 2 [2 June – 4 Sept 39] Moscow Politizdat 1990 p 392
- 10) op.cit. volume 1 [29 Sept 38- 31 May 39] p 351
- 11) Quoted in Fuller J.F.C. *The Second World War 1939-1945, a Strategical and Tactical History*. Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956 p37
- 12) W. Churchill *The Second World War* in 3 volumes; Moscow, Voenizdat 1991 Volume 1 Tome 1 p 173
- 13) *The Crisis Year* Volume 1 p 6
- 14) *ibid*. pp 386-387
- 15) *ibid*. Volume 2 p 391
- 16) *ibid*
- 17) *Documents of Foreign Policy [USSR]* 1939 Tome XXII in 2 volumes Moscow 1992 volume 1 January-August p 339
- 18) *ibid*. p 338
- 19) *The Crisis Year* Volume 1 p 389
- 20) *ibid* pp 438-439
- 21) *Documents of Foreign Policy [USSR]* 1939 Tome XXII volume 1 p 342
- 22) *ibid*. p 355
- 23) *ibid*. p 363
- 24) *Short History of the Ministry of Russian Foreign Affairs 1802-2002* in 3 volumes; volume 2: 1917-2002, Moscow, OLMA Press 2002, p245
- 25) *Archives of Foreign Policy of the Federation of Russia*. F. 017a.Op1 p1 d61 130
- 26) *The Crisis Year* Volume 2 p 403
- 27) *Documents and Materials on the Eve of the Second world War 1937-1939. Collection of Materials in 2 Volumes*. Volume 2 January-August 1939; Moscow 1981 p 168
- 28) *The Crisis Year* Volume 2 pp 192-193
- 29) *ibid* p 267
- 30) *ibid* p 212
- 31) *ibid* p 216
- 32) *ibid* pp 228-229
- 33) Mosley L. *On Borrowed Time, How World War Two Began* Translated and abridged by Fedotov; Moscow, Voenizdat 1972 p 301
- 34) *The Crisis Year* Volume 2 p 279
- 35) Z dziejow stosunkow polsko-radzieckich. Studia i materialy. T. III. Warszawa, 1968; pp.262, 287
- 36) *Documents of Foreign Policy [USSR]* 1939 Tome XXII volume 1 p 588
- 37) [Shirer W.L. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* Pan 1964 p 659 (Tr.)]
- 38) *The Year 1941* in 2 volumes Moscow 'Democratia' International Fund 1998 p 584
- 39) *The Crisis Year* Volume 2 p 322
- 40) Cf.†: Generaloberst Halder F. Kriegstagebuch. T%ogliche Aufzeichnungen des Chefs des Generalstabes des Heeres 1939-1942. Stuttgart; W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1962-1964; Bd.1.

- Vom Polenfeldzug bis zum Ende der Westoffensive (14.8.1939 – 30.6.1940); Stuttgart; W. Kohlhammer VI, 1962; p. 107
- 41) *Short History of the Ministry of Russian Foreign Affairs 1802-2002* volume 2 p 255
- 42) Churchill op.cit. pp 179-180
- 43) *ibid*
- 44) Emelyanov I. *The Baltic States*. Moscow, Bystrow editor; 2007 p 232
- 45) *ibid* p 233
- 46) *Short History of the Ministry of Russian Foreign Affairs* volume 2 p 255

BLAIR INTERVIEWED BY STERN MAGAZINE 26 July 2009

S: [...] three years ago, you supported Israel in the war against Lebanon, against the advice of your closest political aides?

TB: Yes, but we have to be very careful here. I criticise Israeli politics and fight hard for the rights of the Palestinians. However, Israel must be able to defend itself if it is attacked.

S: But has Israel not overreacted with the bombing of large parts of Beirut?

TB: Sure. And there was a debate on that. The truth is: Israel has a security problem. And whoever ignores that – and especially the Europeans like to do so – do not help the Palestinians. The problem can only be solved if the Palestinians manage to live under one government, law and army.

S: While the Israel government of Benyamin Netanyahu continues to build new settlements?

TB: We don't really want to discuss this topic, do we?

S: Your successor, Gordon Brown, or Schroeder's successor, Steinmeier, are in deep trouble. Actually social democrats should profit from this crisis, shouldn't they?

TB: It is important for the left wing parties to understand that this is not a crisis of capitalism. I think the voters know that the financial crisis can be tackled with the help of the state. But that's something different than going back to the politics of 40 years. People wouldn't buy that. They know they need competition. They are worried about the price they have to pay in the long run.

S: What has the left done wrong?

TB: You can't win an election without taking the centre into account. Nowadays, parties need the backing of the economy and the unions. You have to be tough on security issues, smart in diplomacy, and reform the public sector not only maintain the welfare state.

S: Gerhardt Schroeder has been criticised for taking on a job at Gazprom, after leaving politics. You are a high paid adviser for American banks. Do you feel like being caught up in a clash of interests or even a moral conflict?

TB: I can't comment on the decision of Mr Schroeder. But I think it's good when the people who have run a country are highly valued.

United Nations on Palestine, 1947

Note

The 'two state solution' to the Palestine question was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 26th November 1947. On that date it voted to divide the territory of Palestine into two parts, a Jewish state and an Arab state; Britain abstained in the vote, although it had done everything since 1922 to make possible the creation of a Jewish state in the area. Britain had been in a position to do this because it had a League of Nations Mandate, set up after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War. The document setting up the Mandate quoted the Balfour Declaration and set out Britain's responsibility for securing the establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. (The Declaration talked about establishing a Jewish National Home whereas the Mandate wording was **the** Jewish National Home.)

Britain helped to secure this National Home, on the one hand by allowing the strengthening of the Jewish presence and on the other hand by denying Arabs the political and administrative role which would have prepared them for independence, the prospect of independence being the declared aim of the mandate system.

In 1922, the administration provided by the Ottoman Empire had long disappeared, destroyed by the conquest, and it was Britain's role to re-establish a working system of government.

The Mandate had envisaged the creation of a Legislative Council which would have been representative of the population, that is, overwhelmingly Arab, but this never happened. Far from nurturing the formation of a local Arab elite capable of governing after the end of the Mandate, as was meant to happen, Britain suppressed and exiled potential leaders, on the occasion of the Arab revolts against Jewish colonisation. The Mandate Document on the other hand stated that 'an appropriate Jewish Agency shall be recognised as a public body to cooperate with the Administration of Palestine'. This should have allowed for a limited consultative role, rather than the position of virtual dominance granted. The Jewish Agency was treated virtually as an arm of government.

As the Mandatory Power, Britain was in charge of immigration. The Jewish population increased from 7% of the total in 1918 to 33% in 1947.

The first Administrator of the Mandate was Sir Herbert Samuel, a man with Zionist sympathies.

The official languages of Palestine were to be Arabic, English and Hebrew.

Britain's policy had the clear result that in 1948 the Zionist presence in Palestine was strong enough in numbers, and political and military organisation, to make possible, with the assistance of the United Nations, the creation of the State of Israel. However Britain also gave repeated assurances to the Arabs that this would not happen, for example in the 1939 White Paper.

The Palestinian Arab population is not mentioned by name in the Balfour Declaration, or in the terms of the Mandate; the Declaration merely mentions the 'non-Jewish communities' in the area as if they might be minorities, and emits the pious wish

that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'. In the words of A. Koestler, by the Declaration 'One nation solemnly promised to a second nation the country of a third'.

In 1947 Britain tried to put obstacles in the path of mass Jewish immigration. Zionists made a great deal of this and Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Minister at the time, on a visit to New York, read full page advertisements in the press describing him as Hitler's successor; the dockers refused to unload his luggage, and when his presence was announced at a football match, he was booed by the crowd.

In the end, the actions of Zionist terrorist organisations encouraged Britain to refer the problem it had created to the United Nations, and to leave Palestine. It refused to have anything to do with the implementation of the UN resolution, and especially refused to help militarily. It abstained in the final vote for partition.

The United Nations formed a committee of 11 supposedly uninvolved countries (Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia). Boycotted by the Arabs, the Special Committee visited Palestine in 1947 where it heard testimony from Zionist organisations and witnessed the turning back of a ship of European Jewish refugees. This Special Committee on Palestine wrote two reports; the majority report of 8 members recommended the partition of Palestine into an Arab State and a Jewish State. A minority report, of three members, recommended a federal state. An Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine made up of 57 members including Arab states, but excluding Palestine as not yet independent, then discussed the plans drawn up by the Special Committee, between 25 October and 25 November 1947, in New York.

As the Iraqi delegate said at the end of the meeting, the General Assembly had power only to discuss and make recommendations; it could not deal with the imposition by force of a settlement contrary to the wishes of the people concerned.

The principle of majority rule was ignored in 1947 in the case of Palestine. The UN set aside the principles listed in its Charter, namely the principle of the self-determination of peoples, the principle of the institution of democratic governments by the free choice of their peoples and the principle of the illegitimacy of States created by means of racial or religious discrimination, as Mr Chamoun of Lebanon reminded the Assembly.

In the event, Israel was not established in conformity with the UN plan, since in 1948 it militarily seized large parts of the territory reserved for Arabs in the partition resolution.

The text of the deliberations.

Extracts from the record of the 34 meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee On The Palestinian Question follow. Speeches were reported indirectly (Mr Ö said) and summarised. Square brackets indicate further summary made for this presentation.

C. Winch

United Nations. Official Records Of The Second Session Of The General Assembly On the Question of Palestine

Summary Records Of Meetings, 25 September to 25 November 1947.

Ad Hoc Committee On The Palestinian Question

Chairman: H.M. Evatt (Australian Minister for External Affairs)

Vice Chairman: Prince Subha Svasti Svastivat (Siam)

Rapporteur: Thor Thors (Iceland)

57 Countries Represented

[There were 10 UK representatives: Arthur Creech-Jones; Hector McNeil; Hartley Shawcross; Alexander Cadogan; H.M.G. Jebb; J.M. Martin; Harold Beeley; D.C. McGillivray; H.T. Moran Man; V.G. Lawford]

Creech-Jones (26 September 1947): [UK would assume responsibility for implementation of any policy if there was agreement between Arabs and Jews but not otherwise]

The UK agreed with Recommendation 1 of the Special Committee regarding the end of the Mandate and with Recommendation 2 regarding independence. Recommendation 6 on Jewish Displaced Persons: the problem of displaced persons, Jewish or non-Jewish, was an international responsibility. ... proposals would be made on a more appropriate occasion.

The UK Government was not prepared to undertake the task of imposing a policy in Palestine by force of arms. In considering any proposal that it should participate in the execution of a settlement, it would have to take into account both the inherent justice of the settlement and the extent to which force would be required to give effect to it" [p4].

He earnestly hoped that the UN would have more success than the UK had had in persuading the two peoples to co-operate in attaining their independence.

Mr Sandstrom (Sweden, Chairman of Special Committee):

Whilst the Palestinian problem was insoluble in the sense that it was impossible to satisfy all the parties concerned, any solution adopted by the General Assembly ought, nevertheless, to be accepted by all.

[Gives 1914 population as 80,000 Jews to 500,000 Arabs
1947 650,000 Jews to 1,200,000 Arabs]

That Jewish minority, settled on a territory so long occupied by the Arabs, represented a different civilisation

[The Jews were industrious:]

The newcomers had not mingled with the Arabs and their colonies had cut Western Galilee off from the rest of the country

The tragedy of Palestine lay in the fact that the claims of both sides were legitimate [therefore compromise was required]

Mr. Husseini (Arab Higher Committee) (29 September 1947):

The case of the Arabs of Palestine ... was that of a people which desired to live in undisturbed possession of the country where Providence and history had placed it. The Arabs of

Palestine could not understand why their right to live in freedom and peace, and to develop their country in accordance with their traditions, should be questioned and constantly submitted to investigation.

One thing was clear: it was the sacred duty of the Arabs of Palestine to defend their country against all aggression. The Zionists were conducting an aggressive campaign with the object of securing by force a country which was not theirs by birthright. Thus, there was self-defence on one side and, on the other, aggression. The *raison d'être* of the U.N. was to assist self-defence against aggression.

The rights and patrimony of the Arabs in Palestine had been the subject of no less than 18 investigations within 25 years and all to no purpose. Such commissions of inquiry had made recommendations that had either reduced the national and legal rights of the Palestine Arab or glossed over them. The few recommendations favourable to the Arabs had been ignored by the Mandatory Power. It was hardly strange, therefore, that they should have been unwilling to take part in a 19th investigation [and refused to appear before the Special Committee]

The struggle of the Arabs of Palestine against Zionism had nothing in common with anti-Semitism. The Arab world had been one of the rare havens of refuge for the Jews until the atmosphere of neighbourliness had been poisoned by the Balfour Declaration and by the aggressive spirit which the latter had engendered in the Jewish community.

The claims of the Zionists had no legal or moral basis. Their case was based on the association of the Jews with Palestine over two thousand years before. On that basis the Arabs would have better claims to those territories in other parts of the world, such as Spain or parts of France, Turkey, Russia or Afghanistan, which they had inhabited in the past.

Mr. Husseini disputed three claims of world Jewry. The claim to Palestine based on historical association was a movement on the part of the Ashkenazim, whose forefathers had had no connexion with Palestine. The Sephardim, the main descendants of Israel, had mostly denounced Zionism. Secondly, the religious connexion of the Zionists with Palestine, which he noted was shared by Moslems and Christians, gave them no secular claim to the country. Freedom of access to the Holy Places was universally accepted. Thirdly, the Zionists claimed the establishment of a Jewish National Home by virtue of the Balfour Declaration. But the British Government had had no right to dispose of Palestine,

which it had occupied in the name of the Allies as a liberator and not as a conqueror. The Balfour Declaration was in contradiction with the Covenant of the League of Nations and was an immoral, unjust and illegal promise.

The British Government and the Zionist organisation had joined hands 30 years before to carry out a policy in Palestine aimed at the destruction of the national existence of the Arabs. Mr. Husseini went on to describe the main trends in that policy.

[In the mid-19th century there was the national awakening of Syria "of which Palestine was the southern part". Opportunity of WWI for Arabs to realize their desired independence.]

An agreement with Great Britain in 1916, in which the latter had undertaken to assist the Arabs to gain independence, had led to the Arab revolt when Arabs left the Ottoman forces to fight on the side of the Allies. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 had been received with vehement protests by the Arabs, and Great Britain had in consequence sent a special envoy to reassure the Sherif Hussein that that Declaration meant only a spiritual and not a political home for the Jews and, further, that it would not affect Arab rights or freedom. That reassurance had been given by the same Cabinet that had been responsible for the Balfour Declaration.

In 1922, the Mandate for Palestine, which had been drawn up by the Zionist Executive and the UK Government, had been ratified by the League of Nations in the absence of the Arab owners or the country and against their unceasing protests. The Mandate did not correspond in any way to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which defined the mandatory system. The Mandate for Palestine had in no sense fulfilled its object—tutelage—since both tutor and pupil were the UK Government or its nominees. The Palestine administration did not represent the inhabitants of Palestine and consequently had no legal basis under the League Covenant

Contrary to the letter and spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant, the Arabs had no political freedom in Palestine. They had no say in legislation or administration and held no responsible position.

On the other hand, the Jewish community had an Agency, the original function of which had been to advise the administration on the establishment of a Jewish National Home and which was in a position to express the will of the Jews in a manner more effective than any form of democratic representation. Thus the Jewish minority had been given a privileged position with regard to the Arab majority. [...]

Mr. Husseini stated that there was discrimination against the Arabs in Palestine. For example, in the field of immigration all illegal entries by Arabs were dealt with in accordance with the law, whereas Jews were still entering illegally in great numbers without being deported. Lately, when Jewish illegal immigration, by its manner and its magnitude, had become a challenge to the administration, Jewish immigrants had been deported to Cyprus until their entry had been legalized. Meantime the expense of their maintenance fell on the Palestinian taxpayer. In that record of discrimination the case of the *SS Warfield* had been the only exception, and the Jewish Agency had made capital out of it in its efforts to enlist the sympathy of the world for illegal immigration.

Mr. Husseini contrasted the drastic measures used in the treatment of Arabs during their revolt in 1936-1940 with the treatment of the Jewish terrorists in their current campaign, in which no such stringent measures had been taken.

[Article 6 of the Mandate, regarding economic absorptive capacity had been breached.]

If there were any room in Palestine for an increase in the

population, that should be left for its natural increase. Without immigration the population of Palestine would be doubled in less than twenty years, which would make Palestine one of the most thickly populated countries in the world, with a density of 400 persons per square mile in a country of which more than one-half was uncultivable ...

Education offered another example of the Mandatory Power's basic policy of undermining Arab national existence in Palestine ... [There was 70% Arab illiteracy under the Turks, and that had hardly changed. Less was spent on education than in other Arab states.]

The Jews ... had control of their own educational system, while the Arabs were deprived of that right.

There was economic discrimination: with Jordan and Red Sea concessions to the Zionists. Action by the High Commissioner for Palestine during the 1920s had compelled the sale of Arab lands by Arab debtors to the Jews. [...] Jews were not to employ Arabs [...] and any land bought by Jews could not be resold or leased to Arabs.

In the financial field [...] Jewish local authorities received a far greater proportion of government loans and special loans for housing and other purposes [than the Arabs].

[The 1939 curbs on Jewish immigration were not implemented.]

The UK Government had finally declared that the aims of the Mandate were contradictory and that it was therefore unworkable. Mr. Bevin ... had said that there was nothing in the Mandate which would warrant him or the Government of the UK taking a step to deprive the Arabs of their rights, liberties or land. The obvious fact was that both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate contained inconsistent terms which could not be fairly applied. The UK Government and those who drafted the Mandate had created the problem which had led to the current crisis. [...]

No people would be more pleased than the Arabs to see the distressed Jews given permanent relief. But the Jews could not impose their will on other nations by choosing the place and manner of their relief, particularly if that choice was inconsistent with the principles of international law and justice and prejudicial to the interests of the nation directly concerned. [...]

...The Zionist organisation, however, did not want Palestine for the permanent solution of the Jewish problem nor for the relief of the distressed Jews: it sought power; it had political ambitions and designs on strategically important Palestine and the Middle East.

One other consideration of fundamental importance to the Arab world was that of racial homogeneity. The Arabs lived in a vast territory stretching from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, spoke one language, had the same history, tradition and aspirations. Their unity was a solid foundation for peace in one of the most central and sensitive areas of the world. It was illogical, therefore, that the United Nations should associate itself with the introduction of an alien body into that established homogeneity, a course which could only produce new Balkans. [...]

[There should be a democratic Palestine Arab state with human rights and protection of minorities.] The Special Committee's report was unacceptable and not a basis for discussion.

Dr. Silver (Jewish Agency for Palestine) (2nd October 1947)

[The Arab Higher Committee was flouting the authority and

denying the competence of the United Nations.]

History was not a story out of the *Arabian Nights*, and the Arab Higher Committee was indulging in wishful thinking. Its theory that the Jews of Western Europe were descended from a tribe of Khazars in Russia was a relatively recent invention, politically inspired. He was surprised that the Arabs of Palestine should wish to engage in genealogical research.

He recalled that at the time when the Allies had liberated Palestine, the country had formed part of a province of the Ottoman Empire and there had been no politically or culturally distinct Arab nation. The Arabs had held sway over a heterogeneous population between 636 and 1071 AD and later the Seljuks, the Kurds, the Crusaders, the Egyptian Mamelukes, and finally the Ottoman Turks—all non-Arab peoples—had conquered the country. But by 636 AD the Jewish people had already had 2,000 years of history behind it, and the Jewish civilization, besides giving rise to both Judaism and Christianity, had also brought forth spiritual leaders venerated also by Islam. In contrast to that, Dr. Silver quoted the report of the Royal Commission of 1937, which stated that in the 12 centuries and more that had passed since the Arab conquest, Palestine had virtually dropped out of history, and that in the realms of thought, of science or of letters, it had made no contribution to modern civilization.

Palestine owed its very identity to the Jews, losing it with the Jewish dispersion and resuming its role in history only at the time of the Mandate, which had given it a distinct place alongside the Arab world. [...]

In a speech made in the House of Lords on 27 June 1923, Lord Milner, who had called himself a strong supporter of the pro-Arab policy, had said that the future of Palestine could not be left to be determined by the temporary impressions and feelings of the Arab majority of the day.

[Quotes High Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, on Arab riots of 1929:]

"atrocious acts committed by bodies of ruthless and blood-thirsty evil-doers, of savage murder perpetrated upon defenceless members of the Jewish population, regardless of age or sex, accompanied, as at Hebron, by acts of unspeakable savagery, by the burning of farms and houses in town and country, and by looting and destruction" [which brought] "the execration of all civilized peoples throughout the world ..."

Great Britain had offered no opinion on the Report of the Special Committee.

[Quoted Creech-Jones, on Sept 26:]

there was "a distinction between accepting a recommendation in the sense of not impeding its execution by others, and accepting responsibility for carrying it out by means of a British administration and British forces:

He [Creech-Jones] could not easily imagine circumstance in which the UK would wish to prevent the execution of a settlement recommended by the Assembly. However the crucial question for his Government was the matter of enforcement.

The UK Government was ready to assume the responsibility for giving effect to a plan on which agreement was reached by the Arabs and the Jews. If the Assembly were to recommend a policy which was not acceptable to the Jews and the Arabs, the UK Government would not feel able to implement it. It would then be necessary to provide for some alternative authority to implement it."

Dr. Silver wondered why the UK had asked that the problem of Palestine should be placed on the agenda of the General

Assembly if, as would appear from its representative's statements, it did not intend to accept the recommendations made and to help in implementing them. In that case, why appeal to the UN and waste months, during which time the situation had gravely deteriorated ...

Recommendation XII, of the Special Committee report, to the effect that any solution for Palestine could not be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem in general, was unintelligible. [...] The Jewish problem in general was none other than the age-old question of Jewish homelessness, for which there was but one solution – that provided for by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate – the reconstitution of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

The minority report called for Palestine as an Arab state with two Jewish enclaves with no control over tax or immigration (it was a variant of the Morrison plan).

According to Mr. Lloyd George [...] the Balfour Declaration implied that the whole of Palestine, including Transjordan, should ultimately become a Jewish State. Yet Transjordan had been cut off from Palestine in 1922 and later set up as an Arab kingdom; and now a second Arab State was to be carved out of the remainder of the country. Thus the Jewish National Home would finally represent less than one eighth of the territory originally set aside for it. Such a sacrifice should not be asked of the Jewish people. [...]

[He (Silver) would be prepared to accept a smaller territory] subject to further discussion of constitutional and territorial provisions.

Mr. Chamoun (Lebanon) (3rd October 1947)

Mr. Chamoun recalled the history of Palestine from 632 AD when it had been conquered by the Arabs. He emphasized that that had not been a conquest of the Jews, who had completely abandoned Palestine during the first century, but a conquest over the Byzantine Empire. From the 11th to the 13th century it had been the Arabs and not the Jews who had fought and triumphed over the crusaders, and later over other invaders, to preserve Palestine from foreign occupation. Finally, in the 16th century, they had succumbed to conquest by the Ottomans; but that conquest, as in the case of other conquests, such as those of the Germans by the Romans and the English by the Normans, had not changed the national or ethnic character of Palestine. Palestine had remained Arab in its population, language, culture and ideals.

For nearly two thousand years the Jews had had no connexion with Palestine ... At the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the population of Palestine, according to official statistics, had been 93% Arab and only 7% Jewish ... Mr. Chamoun claimed that the statement made by the representative of the Arab Higher Committee that the term "Jew" did not designate a race but a religion, and that the European Jews, the strongest partisans of Zionism, had nothing in common with those who had inhabited Palestine two thousand years before, was no fiction but a reasoned statement drawn from the Jewish Encyclopedia ..."

[British negotiations with Hussein:

Peel commission of 1937 recommended partition; but it was followed by a Commission under Sir John Woodhead which found the Peel partition proposal iniquitous.

1939 White Paper saw that Palestine could become a continuous source of friction in the Near East:]

The British Government had accordingly been faced with two solutions: first, to seek to expand the Jewish National Home indefinitely against the wish of the Arab people or, secondly, to permit its further expansion only with the acquiescence of the

Arabs. The British Government had recognized that the former policy meant the use of force and would thus be contrary to the spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Mandate.

The British Government had had no right to dispose of a country over which it had no jurisdiction. From the standpoint of international morality, the Balfour Declaration was completely without foundation, and the fact that it had been incorporated into the Mandate for Palestine did not give it any added validity. [...]

It was important not to confuse the humanitarian aspect of the problem, with which the Arab countries were the first to sympathise, with the political aspect, which aimed at the domination of a territory to which the Jews had no claim.

The Palestine question could not be solved by expedients which might appear to have the superficial attraction of practicality, but which were incompatible with the principles of the Charter, namely, the principle of the self-determination of peoples, the principle of the institution of democratic governments by the free choice of their peoples, and the principle of the illegitimacy of States created by means of racial or religious discrimination.

[Majority plan gave 6,000 square miles to the Jewish State and 4,000 to the Arab.

Figure of 407,000 given as the Arab population of the proposed Jewish State should properly be 500,000.

Jaffa, a centre of Arab nationalist thought, with a population of 70,000 Arabs and 30,000 more in its immediate environs, to be given to the Jewish state.

Beersheba with an exclusively Arab population of 100,000 was to be given to the Jewish state although separated by a corridor which would belong to the Arab State.

[Haifa, the only important Palestine port, to be linked to Jewish State.

Hula, Safad, Tiberias and Beison regions, each predominantly Arab, to be in Jewish State]

In the Arab State, the Jewish minority would be small (8,000 to 10,000), while in the Jewish State the Arab population would be the same as or even greater than the Jewish.

The Special Committee had taken the view that the tragedy of the situation arose out of a conflict between two series of rights—the rights of the Arabs and the rights of the Jews—and the Chairman of the Special Committee, speaking at the second meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Committee, had confirmed that view. In ... the special Committee's Report it was stated that the rights of the Arabs were based on the fact that the Arabs had been the indigenous inhabitants of the land for several centuries and that the rights of the Jews were based on historical association and on international undertakings. Mr. Chamoun considered that those matters deserved more critical study than the Special Committee had given them ... The claims of the Arabs were based on their natural rights and on the occupation of Palestine for more than a thousand years, while the claims of Zionism were based on a fictitious historical association which had lapsed for two thousand years ..."

[Regarding the protection of the Holy Places, he saw no reason for a Jerusalem enclave to protect them, taken from the territory of Arab Palestine. The right of access had been preserved for centuries.

Jews with Palestinian nationality could have guaranteed political as well as economic rights [...] and full local autonomy.]

Rivera Reyes (Panama) (6th October 1947)

... Comparing the demographic situation in Palestine with that in Belgium and the Netherlands, Mr. Rivera Reyes said he thought it was no cause for pessimism regarding the scope for immigration into Palestine. But every country had the right to settle such problems for itself.

It would be a mistake to believe that the majority solution would satisfy the Jews but, should the Jews agree to make sacrifices, particularly in the economic sphere, their example might well be followed by the Arabs ... He referred to the sufferings of the Jewish people and recalled that other States, Great Britain and Ireland for instance, or India and Pakistan, had settled analogous difficulties by partition. Any settlement involved a sacrifice of rights and legitimate interests ...

General Noury As-Said (Iraq)

recalled that the Committee had heard both the representative of the Arab Higher Committee and Dr. Silver, a US citizen representing the Jewish Agency for Palestine. To see the whole question in its true light it was necessary to go back to 1916, to the British Government's promise to ensure the political independence of the Arabs of the Ottoman Empire. In 1917 Mr. Balfour had proposed to promote the establishment of a Jewish National Home without prejudice to the rights of the non-Jewish communities. The anxious Arab rulers had been assured by the British Government that politically it was not intended that the Jewish National Home should be a State. The UK had maintained that point of view in its military proclamations of 1917, 1918 and 1919, the White Papers of 1922, 1930 and 1939, its parliamentary statements and its annual reports to the League of Nations: the UK Government had stated that it would indeed regard as contrary to its obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate as well as to the assurances which had been given to the Arab people in the past, that the Arab population of Palestine should be made the subject of a Jewish State against their wish. According to the Command Paper of 1922, the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine was not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole but the further development of the existing Jewish community in order that it might become a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole, on grounds of religion and race, might take an interest and a pride.

The Zionists, however, had their own interpretation, and spoke of a Jewish commonwealth, a Palestine as Jewish as England was English, a Jewish State which should embrace the whole of Transjordan and parts of Syria and Lebanon. Finally, on 1 October 1947, the Jewish National organ, *The Day*, in an appeal to the President of the United States, had gone so far as to insist on the necessity of establishing a Jewish State of Palestine, to absorb the millions of displaced persons still in the camps and ghettos, in order to build up an American rampart in the Near East. In the days to come, it had said, American democracy could not look for a more steadfast ally in that part of the world than a Jewish State.

Replying to what had been said by the representative of the Jewish Agency, General Noury As-Said declared that Zionist arrogance alone had been the cause of the Arab revolt of 1936, which, moreover, had been put down by the Arab States in 1938.

In 1939, Egypt, as well as Iraq, had collaborated with the British. In 1940 Iraq had offered to declare war on the Axis

Powers and to place half its army at General Wavell's disposal, provided the UK agreed to carry out its policy as stated in the White Paper of 1939. The Jewish Agency had prevented the UK from accepting that offer, and the Axis had alleged that the UK did not intend even to apply its own White Paper of 1939. In spite of that, Iraq had declared war on the Axis at the end of 1942.

During its 25 years of stewardship, the UK had not even attempted to give Palestine a measure of autonomy and to assist its people to attain full independence. Instead, it had devoted its efforts to establishing the Jewish National Home. It was not until the UK had settled over 500,000 foreign Jews in Palestine that it had realized that it would be unable to carry out [its] fundamental duty in accordance with paragraph 4 of Article 22 of the Covenant, namely, to assist the people of Palestine to attain full independence. After the foreign Jewish community which the British had settled in Palestine had armed itself and had attacked them actively for two years, they had submitted the question to the UN. The Special Committee had prepared its report with commendable speed, but without basing its solutions on the very facts it had itself described ...

[Its proposals were like something from the *Arabian Nights*.

Two courses open to UN: To invite Britain to carry out its promises to the Arabs or:]

to start afresh without taking into account either British promises or the Mandate, and to base the solution of the Palestinian problem on the Charter ...

The second solution would be the better, for the peace of the world depended on strict observance of the Charter to the exclusion of all politics and all favouritism.

[In either case the objective was an independent Palestinian state] but

...the problem of finding a home for the Jewish refugees from Europe should never have been referred to the *Ad Hoc* Committee: it was one for the International Refugee Organisation, which dealt with Jewish as well as other refugees. If one started from the principle that the Palestinian question must be dealt with in the spirit of the UN, then the future of the country had to be considered without reference to the refugee problem, which was quite another matter. A real and lasting peace could be ensured in Palestine only by keeping to the principles and purposes of the Charter ...

Mr. Jamali (Iraq)

attached primary importance to respect for the fundamental international principles for which the Allies had waged two wars, on which the peaceful and just world of the future should rest, and which had been enunciated in President Wilson's fourteen points, the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Atlantic Charter and the UN Charter ...

[Ownership of the country by the people with long inhabitance was the principle:]

If three hundred years was enough for the Americans, the rights of the Arabs were incontestable, since the Arabs had lived in Palestine for the previous fourteen centuries. Moreover, they were mainly descendants of the inhabitants of Palestine who had been there before the Jews. Violation of the principle of ownership was an aggression which usually led to hostilities, and neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Mandate could deprive the Palestinians of their right to their own country.

The Zionists alleged that historical links with a country conferred a right of possession. That principle would apply to the

Greeks, to the Romans and to many others, and would sow discord throughout the world. There was only one sound principle which could be universally applied: any country belonged to its existing rightful inhabitants.

The Zionists were relying on dollar diplomacy and extra-territorial rights. However, economic development of another people's country did not entitle a foreigner to political rights there. In the modern world technical and economic superiority should not lead to political domination ... Zionist achievements due to American funds and western techniques did not give them political rights and should not allow them to dominate the country ...

The inhabitants of a country were the sole authority on the admission of immigrants into their country.

[Only the inhabitants should decide on immigration. There should be no foreign interference in internal affairs. The democratic character of community life should be respected.]

The US Government [should] close schools in the United States where terrorist and military instruction was given.

Loyalty to one's country was indispensable. The homelessness of the Jews was an acquired feeling which was detrimental to their loyalty and destroyed the unity of the countries in which they lived ...

Humanitarian aid should be given to displaced persons [...] The whole world should share the burden equally.

A distinction should be made between politics and religion. Judaism was a world religion linked indeed with Palestine as were Christianity and Mohammedanism, whereas Zionism was a modern political movement of an aggressive character founded on the association of religion and racial mythology, and using Nazi propaganda methods ...

Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan (Pakistan) 7th Meeting, 7 October 1947

... The Balfour Declaration ... was invalid, since it had been issued without reference to King Hussein and was contrary to the British pledges made to him concerning Arab independence ...[i.e. that Arab areas of the Ottoman Empire would become independent after the defeat of Turkey.] and contrary to promises that the creation a Jewish refuge in Palestine would not interfere with the freedom, both political and economic, of the existing population.

[Hussein protested. Hogarth got his cooperation with spin.] [King-Crane Commission at the end of WW1 had gone to Syria and Palestine and concluded that] the idea of making Palestine a Jewish State should be abandoned.

Cited letter from *Dr. Magnes*, President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in *New York Times*, 26 September 1947, criticising the majority plan:]

Dr Magnes had said that partition would not stop the terrorist activities of Jewish groups, and that having secured partition through terror, they would attempt to secure the rest of the country for the Jews in the same way. Moreover partition would arouse the Arab front, which had been quiescent ...

Mr. Winiwicz (Poland) 8 October 1947

regarded Palestine as a powder keg. The Mandatory Power had adopted the motto *divide et impera*. The authors of the

Balfour Declaration and of the Mandate had considered, indeed, that the various obligations assumed towards the Arabs and the Jews were compatible with one another. The policy of the Mandatory Power had not, however, been inspired by the interests of the Palestine community. Even today the British Press was still asking what would happen to British interests in the Near East

The Arab States had used all possible arguments and even threats.

[Poland was interested in the national democratic aims of Arabs, but gave primary importance to the Jews:]

The Poles had witnessed the massacre of 6 million Jews. From their fellowship in suffering had been born a moral solidarity to which Poland would adhere.

The Jewish claims had been confirmed by numerous documents of international importance

[e.g. the Feisal/Weizmann agreement of January 1919, Articles 1 & 4, Sevres Treaty of 1920, US declarations.

There was the shocking case of *Exodus 1947*

Anti-semitism and the immigration restrictions imposed by certain States which could have accepted Jewish refugees had led the Jews to look towards Palestine, which the Mandate had promised them as an immigration area.

[He supported the majority report:]

The Polish delegation considered that the problem [of distressed European Jews] could and ought to be solved primarily by Jewish immigration to Palestine. The immediate admission of 250,000 refugees who were awaiting their turn would not have any decisive effect upon the numerical relationship between Jews and Arabs. The UN should solemnly repeat the promise made in the Covenant of the League and open the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigrants immediately, while at the same time giving favourable consideration to the suggestion for opening up greater possibilities of immigration for Jewish refugees into other countries.

In solving the Jewish refugee problem, an effort should also be made to do away with racial discrimination. Anti-Semitism was not dead. It was only by combating it, by creating better conditions for Jews and by facilitating Jewish immigration into Palestine that a healthier atmosphere could be created ...

Mahmoud Fawzi Bey (Egypt)

wished the UN would be a little more realistic ...

[The Arabs opposed to Zionism but had nothing against Jews:]

Yet the Arabs were being asked to pay for others ...

[Palestine was already overcrowded:]

Zionist aggression had been generously subsidized, while great and rich countries had scarcely responded to the UN appeal on behalf of displaced persons

Mr. Masaryk (Czechoslovakia)

The Arab people had taken a seemingly uncompromising stand. Mr. Masaryk appealed to that great people and to the noble Jewish people to find a solution beneficial to both parties ...

Mr. Arslan (Syria) 9 October 1947

[The UK had no right to make Balfour Declaration promises:]

Mr. Lloyd George ... had stated in his memoirs that the

Balfour Declaration had been made as a reward to Dr. Weizmann for his invention of toxic gas. It was a paradox that although the civilized world, including the UK, had forbidden the use of poison gas, the UK had continued to concern itself with rewards for the inventor ... The Balfour Declaration would live in the history of Great Britain as an unfortunate gesture, for never had that country been compelled to carry out a policy so contrary to its basic interests ...

[Balfour had no conception of the link between Palestine and Syria but:]

It was an undeniable fact that the persecuted Jews from Europe had always found a refuge in the past with the Arabs. If the question were one of a large number of orphan children, the Arabs would not fail to give them hospitality; but the question was one of machinations on the part of an organisation which considered everything was permitted to it because Jewish voters held the electoral balance in a certain country. Zionism was a purely aggressive imperialistic plan, with a Zionist Army behind it; and to attempt to give it a humanitarian aspect did not conceal the facts, which were transparent. Mr. Arslan called upon other countries to open their doors to the Jewish refugees and to make the same sacrifices as the Arabs had already made.

Discussing the problem of the persecuted Jews in Europe, Mr. Arslan asked whether the Jews of Europe were still persecuted and, if so, who was responsible for that persecution, and what efforts had been made to prevent it. If there was still persecution, he could not understand how 30,000 German Jews in Palestine had asked to be repatriated to Germany. He asked also why they had been prevented from returning. Zionism was responsible for that situation ...

[He quoted documents about displaced persons] only 12 countries out of 48 asked by the International Refugee Organisation had given information regarding reception facilities for refugees.

Garcia Granados (Guatemala)

Jews are superior to Arabs in culture and intellect; he read a letter for Mgr Mobarat, Archbishop of Beirut, to that effect.

Mr. Johnson (USA) 11th Meeting, October 11th:

[mentioned continued violence in Palestine over a period of years.]

He recalled that in consequence of the 1st World War, certain areas of the Near East, including Palestine, had been liberated and a number of States had gained independence. The United States, having contributed its blood and resources to the winning of that war, had felt that it had a certain responsibility in the disposal of the freed territories and in the fate of the liberated peoples. The United States had taken the position that those peoples should be prepared for self-government and also that a National Home for the Jews should be established in Palestine ...

[But as it was not a member of the League it had in 1924 concluded a Convention with the UK regarding American rights in Palestine.

He supported the plan of the Special Committee in principle, but changes had to be made to bring it more into accord with the principles on which it was based:]

Certain geographical modifications would have to be made, such as the inclusion of Jaffa in the Arab State, since Jaffa was predominantly an Arab city ...

In the final analysis, it rested with the people of Palestine to make any solution work ...

[He could see what Weizmann referred to after all the Arabs have many states already.]

Mr Tsarapkin (USSR) 12 October

[in favour of partition]

It was necessary to take into consideration all the sufferings and needs of the Jewish People, whom none of the States of western Europe had been able to help during their struggles against the Hitlerites and the allies of the Hitlerites for the defence of their rights and their existence.

The Jewish people were therefore striving to create a State of their own and it would be unjust to deny them that right.

Mr. Vieux (Haiti) October 14:

He did not believe that the Jews had any right to claim a whole or part of Palestine as their fatherland on the basis of historical connexion. The suffering of the Jewish people, distressing as it had been, was not an argument for the partition of Palestine or for their claims on a land inhabited for thousands of years by another people; nor did their material contribution during the preceding twenty-five years constitute a vested interest in Palestine. If such a principle were accepted, it would create an unfortunate precedent for the determination of possession on the basis of material contributions ... Although the world was growing narrower every day, frontiers did exist and small nations had reason to attach great importance both to frontiers and to the concept of sovereignty ...

[But he supported the Partition plan because it was an act of sovereignty by the Powers to whom sovereignty over the Middle East had passed from the Ottoman Empire. Sovereignty had transferred from the Ottomans to the League and:]

those who were advocating partition were after all, the Powers which had had sovereign authority over Palestine by virtue of the treaties which had followed the 1st World War ...

[A matter of law, not of national self-determination was in question. It could not be supported on any other basis.]

Mr. Ilsley, Canada:

Canada's problem as a nation of two peoples with two cultural traditions bore some points of resemblance to that confronting the Committee. A satisfactory working arrangement had finally been reached in the establishment of a federal State. Confederation in Canada, however, was based on agreement and it had been stated in the Committee that partition should not take place without consent. As yet, however, there was no evidence that Arabs and Jews would accept unity in a single State. In fact, they had emphatically rejected even the form of federation proposed in the minority plan. In the circumstances, the Canadian delegation had been led, somewhat reluctantly, to accept, as a basis for discussion, the partition plan ...

It was to be hoped that ... the executive functions of the Security Council would not have to be invoked in the implementation of any decisions.

[Implementation should be studied by a special sub-committee which would include the 5 permanent members of the Security Council.]

Mr Ulloa (Peru)

The Jews, because of their intellectual development and financial and commercial activity, often inundated those spheres of life to their own advantage. That factor, especially in countries which were not economically strong, was prejudicial to the nationals themselves and created discontent which was often used against the Jews by political and religious groups.

Mr Chamoun (Lebanon)

[On the question of refugees coming to Palestine] It was easy to be humane at the expense of others.

[About Mgr Mobarat, Archbishop of Beirut] The supreme head of the Greek Church of Antioch condemned his speaking for the community. [Mr Chamoun as a Christian of the Roman Catholic faith thought the cause of the Palestinian Arabs was just.]

The King-Crane Commission had said that to subject a people to unlimited Jewish immigration would be a gross violation of the principle of self-determination.

In 1922, in the House of Lords, a motion of non-acceptability of the Mandate, on the grounds that its terms were in contradiction to the sentiments and wishes of the majority of the people of Palestine, had been carried.

British assurances to the Arabs in the Hogarth message, Declaration to the Seven, Bassett letter, Anglo-French Declaration, White Paper of 1922 and of 1939, had shown unequivocally that it had never been the intention of the British Government to establish a Jewish state in Palestine or in any part thereof.

Yemeni Representative

[On refusal of other countries to accept Jewish refugees mentioned the non-passage by US Congress of the Stratton Bill designed to admit 400 000 displaced persons to the United States]

Mr Jamali (Iraq) 16 October

The effect of the United States interference in the Palestine problem had been publicly proclaimed in the House of Commons in 1947 by Mr Bevin [ie US support for a Jewish State].

Certain moderate Jews, such as Dr Magnes and the American-Jewish Committee, did not sponsor a Jewish State.

Mr Mahmoud Fawzi Bey (Egypt)

Palestine had nothing to do with Zionist aspirations or with the solution of anti-semitism.

Jewish Agency Statement (Mr. Shertok) 17 October 1947

The Jewish Agency was a body representing Jews throughout the world who were organised to defend the interests of the Jewish people as a whole in regard to Palestine ...

[There was a disparity in status *vis a vis* the Arab Higher Committee, since there were also delegations from Arab States.]

First, Palestine was the only country in which the Jewish people could hope to attain a secure home and a national status equal with that of other independent nations; secondly, that the Arabs of Palestine were not a people in themselves, but a fraction of a much larger unit secure in their possession of vast areas and enjoying full-fledged sovereignty and independence.

He referred to King Hussein's article in *Al-Quibla*, which said that immigration was welcomed so long it was an exclusively a Palestine phenomenon. He referred also to the 1919 agreement

between Weizmann and Feisal, when Feisal had agreed to the encouragement of Jewish immigration into Palestine.]

Certain representatives had argued that Great Britain had had no right to promise Palestine to the Jews, yet its pledges to Syria and Iraq had been regarded as binding. Jews from all over the world, including Palestine, had fought with the Allies in the First World War, and it was an established fact that no Palestinian Arabs had taken a share in the fighting. The final victory of the Allies had been responsible for the liberation and creation of the independent Arab States, as well as the promise of Palestine to the Jews. Similarly the victory in the Second World War, to which the Arab States had contributed nothing and in which they had finally joined at the last moment in order to qualify for membership of the UN, had saved Arab independence from possible Nazi-Fascist enslavement. Mr. Shertok seriously doubted whether Iraq had offered to send troops to fight in North Africa with the Allies in 1940, and denied that the offer had been rejected owing to intervention on the part of the Jewish Agency, as had been alleged by the representative of Iraq ... The Jews of Palestine had been the only community in the Middle East which had really fought in the war, and their contribution had been rewarded by a regime in Palestine which had inflicted untold suffering on the Jewish survivors of the European tragedy. Yet the Arab States, without having participated in that war, were resisting the claim of the Jewish people for a place in the family of nations by invoking the Charter.

Mr. Shertok invoked the Preamble and purposes of the Charter in support of his contention that there was no effective way of saving succeeding Jewish generations from extermination and the sorrow of homelessness except by the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. The Jews of Palestine had become a nation, deserving the same rights and the same self-determination as other peoples.

With regard to the Arab denial that the Jews were a people or that they had any valid connexion with Palestine, it was true that historical associations alone could not decide a burning political issue. It was rather the organic facts of history which counted. The Jewish people had been born in Palestine, their mass settlement had continued until the seventh century and their efforts to return had never ceased. Zionism and the idea of a Jewish State had not been conceived with the Balfour Declaration, but were the products of history and the practical ideals which had animated the first returning pioneers in the 19th century.

Claims that the Jews of Europe were not Jews at all but descendants of a Mongolian tribe were fantastic. The Jewish Encyclopaedia frequently referred to by Arab representatives in that regard in no way substantiated such a claim. Such discussion, of a pseudo-scientific kind, was quite irrelevant.

The Arabs had attempted to draw a distinction between Judaism and Zionism and had resorted to false statistics to show that organized Zionists were only a small minority of the Jewish people. Zionism was the quintessence of Jewish national life and Jewish striving for a better future. It was the core of Jewish national will and energy, centred on Palestine. Large numbers of Jews were Zionists at heart if not in name. Zionism had in recent times been universally accepted as a decisive political factor in Jewish life.

A parallel had been drawn between Zionism and Nazism. The very charge refuted itself. It was not the Jews who had associated with Hitler or who had been interned during the war as allies of the Nazis.

With regard to the historical claims of the Jews, the Arab spokesmen had argued that the guiding principle in the determination of the right of sovereignty could not be based on past possessions and that, under such a thesis, the Arabs would have the right to return to Spain. But the Arabs were settled in their own countries and had no tie with Spain whereas the Jews were striving to regain their cherished land. The so-called analogy served merely to stress the uniqueness of the Jewish attachment to Palestine ...

[The Pakistan representative had argued that as Jewish claims could be based on benefits conferred, then the British claim to India would have been equally valid:]

But India was not the native land of the British, nor had they endured physical hardship by wresting a living from the soil. The Jews had never based their claim on benefits conferred, but the benefits were an incontrovertible fact. The development of Palestine by the Jews had inundated the entire economic sphere and in consequence had brought greater prosperity to their Arab neighbours.

It had been alleged that as a rule Jewish enterprise employed only Jewish labour, but it was a fact that the proportion of Arabs employed by Jews was a hundred times greater than that of Jews employed by Arabs. A conspicuous trend in Palestine's economic life was the increase of Arab employment in proportion to Jewish enterprise. Apart from positive evidence of that, it could be proved by the large increase in the Arab population and the rise in its standard of living, together with the fact that Arabs no longer emigrated from Palestine but came from neighbouring States to be employed as labourers ...

[As to the allegation that Jews were driving Arabs from their land, Jews had so far got 7% of the land area of Palestine:]

and less than one-half of that was national Jewish property. The remainder was held under private ownership [and much of that had been given up by the Arabs as uncultivable.]

Along the coastal plain, over 150 Jewish settlements had arisen, but not a single Arab village had disappeared.

(To be continued in next issue)

New site for Athol books sales:

<https://www.atholbooks-sales.org>

Secure site for Athol Books online sales
with
link to main Athol Books site