Irish

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

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Editorial

Sovereignty and economic recovery

Fianna Fáil-Green governance of the economic crisis has operated to date on foreign policy instinct. The manner in which the crisis unfolded and negative commentary on Irish policy by British and European politicians and the British/Irish press has made this necessarily so. As Irish economic meltdown and the alleged hollowness of the "Celtic Tiger" were being proclaimed from London's Fleet Street, and reiterated in our national press, the country's credit worthiness went into freefall. Whatever about possible alternatives, the Irish Bank Guarantee Scheme, denounced by EU President Sarkozy among others, rapidly stabilised the financial system and was soon being emulated elsewhere. This occurred against a background of the failure of the Euro-Zone to operate as a coherent currency interest in the global crisis. A cabal of European Big powers (including the hostile Sterling currency zone) presumed Lisbon gave them a basis for functioning on behalf of 'Europe' and they proceeded to do so. But, through the Bank Guarantee, and subsequently the creation of the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) and the December 2009 budget – again what were the possible alternatives? – the Irish Government created the type of basis for recovery that has restored national and international confidence (the core factor in functioning capitalism) without resorting to society-destroying deflationism *pur*. The state operated competently and apparently successfully in the face of UK-EU advice to the contrary.

This functioning on instinct in a crisis has had a healthy de-Anglicising effect on Government and gave it something of an independent sense of purpose. The public has slowly been given to understand that while GDP has fallen 13% in the last year, and may well fall another few percentage points, and unemployment has risen to over 12%, these must be set against GDP having grown by 135% in the previous fifteen years, the workforce having doubled to 2.3m and general standards of living having risen to among the highest in the world, a position that is obviously unrepresentative of actual Irish wealth creation but enjoyable while it lasted. Managing a "landing" in the new global economic reality is the programme the Government is offering. The balance at the end of the Celtic Tiger is that a giant leap forward in economic and social terms has ended in a relatively small step back. In per capita GDP terms Ireland is still – incredibly - the second richest society in Europe. Panic measures were avoided and, despite the stalling of the social partnership process, the budget indicates that the project of creating a "social market economy" on the European model was not abandoned. The failure to produce a social partnership agreement has not been accompanied by the unravelling of the many layers of "social dialogue" it produced in its heyday. The willingness of public sector workers to take staggering cuts in take-home pay (in the order of an average of 15%) as a first stage in the process shows a degree of social solidarity that one would have believed had gone out of fashion. The social state was not deconstructed but trimmed and consolidated.

This act of economic sovereignty seems to have rubbed off on other areas of Government too. Following the desultory record of Irish foreign policy during the arrogant period of Irish-UK collaboration in the EU, hints of De Valeraism have re-emerged in the state's responses to the world, most notably in the position adopted internationally and at EU Council of Ministers level in relation to Palestine since Israel's onslaught on Gaza a year ago. Foreign Minister Micheál Martín, despite the disappointing grasp of history revealed in his book on Cork politics published last year, can be given credit for this.

Irish Foreign Affairs is under no illusion about the intellectual health of Fianna Fáil. Half a dozen years ago, Bertie Ahern, motivated perhaps by Peace Process goodwill, said we should keep open the option of rejoining the Commonwealth. Martin Mansergh, the party intellectual, had after all been assiduously cultivating a framework of thought on Anglo-Irish matters for over a decade conducive to such a change in direction by the state. All of this coincided with a marked retreat in Irish EU policy from a European integration line. The strategic alliance with France and Germany carefully nurtured by Haughey and Reynolds (and to some extent by Fitzgerald before them) was thrown away in favour of an ever closer alignment of the state with the UK in EU matters. Over the last year of economic crisis the state has paid dearly for its relative isolation in the EU resulting from this ill-judged foreign policy alignment. Hopefully we will now see some initiative in a new direction in the stormy post-Lisbon months ahead.

The assertion of a sovereign line in economic policy in the current crisis has stabilised the Cowen government, and relocated the political crisis to the opposition. In a special New Year Editorial (2nd January 2010), *The Irish Times* conceded with blatant displeasure that the Fianna F·il-Green government was making "considerable strides in handling the crisis". It continued, however, with a bizarre warning on the dangers of nationalism ("protectionism on a national scale and domination by vested interests on a local scale"). The opposition had little to offer, having "spent much of the past decade fruitlessly waiting for a devastating tribunal disclosure which would propel them into office." Leaving aside the fact that Tara Street had not a little to do with this state of affairs, the editorial went on to warn that the opposition seemed to be facing into a looming election with little or nothing to say. The point was driven home by political correspondent Stephen Collins, who had once worked for the *Sunday Press*. He urged opposition leaders to start telling the public what they would do differently in government, or risk remaining in opposition: "If the Opposition parties are not seen to be facing up to the issues in an election that is about policies rather than personalities Fianna Fáil could actually stage a bit of a comeback". Such a scenario apparently was to be prevented at all costs.

Former Fine Gael leader Garret Fitzgerald caused something of a sensation a few months ago when he called on Fine Gael to forget its "Good Bank" proposal, realise that the state was facing a crisis of economic survival and, in that context, facilitate it in getting the McCarthy Report implemented, NAMA securely onto the statute book and a tough deflationary budget through the Dáil. He presumed that such measures were only possible against the will of the population as they would entail a high cost in social

expenditure. Electoral considerations could be returned to thereafter ('Government must not fall until crucial measures implemented', *Irish Times*, 29 August 2009). Within a week Alan Dukes - another former Fine Gael leader, who twenty years ago had championed what he had wrongly presumed to be Haughey's Thatcherite recovery plan of 1987 – also threw cold water on Fine Gael's plans, describing its "Good Bank" as "very cumbersome, very doubtful of success and much less clear than the NAMA proposal" (*Irish Times*, 6 September 2009).

Though the Government acted other than predicted, Fitzgerald's article collapsed the opposition, a collapse from which it has yet to recover.

The Irish Times is keen to fill the void occupying the space that should be the mind of the opposition. Stephen Collins in his article recommended a policy platform of property tax, electoral reform and general anti-corruptionism, while the editorial urged a foreign policy alignment that countered the threat of "protectionism on a national scale". This alternative was presented in a column by John Bruton, another former Fine Gael leader and, until recently, EU ambassador to the US. The editorial endorsed Bruton's thoughts on foreign policy and recommended them to the opposition as part of their approach to winning a general election. Fine Gael/Labour would be well advised to ignore this advice.

Bruton declared the end of the nation state and proposed a world system in which the will of the "international community" was enforced politically and militarily. America and China must learn to subordinate themselves to this will. This would mean somehow preventing interference from Congress in US foreign policy. European nations – including Ireland - should abandon separate foreign policy positions and combine as one of the powers submerged in the leadership of the "international community" ('Nation state model no longer works in today's complex world', *The Irish Times*, 2nd January 2010).

The naivety of this view of the world is breath-taking. John Bruton had an innings as Finance Minister in the 1980s and as Taoiseach of the Rainbow Coalition of 1994-97. He had a tendency in opposition to advocate socially divisive and uninspired foreign policy positions, but in power abandoned these and worked creatively with the options inherited, notably in finance, the Peace Process and social partnership. He was a competent and effective Taoiseach, but failed the only electoral test the Rainbow faced, in 1997. After he subsequently lost the Fine Gael leadership he rose rapidly through the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and from there stepped into the role of EU ambassador to the US, a position which ended recently.

Since ceasing to run a state he has developed the idea that the "nation state" is redundant and has advocated an alternative. In 2004 he was keynote speaker at the first (and only) conference of the 'Reform Movement' - a grouping that campaigns for the Anglicisation of Irish matters and advocates an Irish return to the British Commonwealth. He told the Movement that the system of nation states "established by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648" was redundant and declared his adherence to the alternative "vision" of John Redmond, the Irish Parliamentary Party leader who broke with IPP anti-imperialist tradition when he hitched Ireland to Britain's 'Great War' in 1914. Bruton has continued to propagate this position. In 2008 he declared the 1916 Rising a "waste of time" and claimed that Redmond had been a "federalist" who believed that Ireland "could do best as an autonomous part of a wider comity of equal nations, linked together by a Senate, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as England, Scotland and Wales." He gave the following interpretation of Redmond's great achievement:

> "The record will show that the constitutional nationalist leadership in achieving Home Rule had created an Irish Parliament with substantial powers and capable of making the case for a progressive addition to those powers. It retained continued representation of all of Ireland at Westminster thus providing, in the event of Partition, a vital form of protection for Northern Nationalists which did not exist in the Treaty of 1921."
>
> (John Bruton, 'Why 1916 was a waste of time', *Sunday Independent*, 12 April 2008).

Of course Redmond achieved no such thing. Following the suspension of the Home Rule Bill and the installation of the unelected Unionist War Coalition in Britain in 1915 which reversed the previous Liberal Government's promises to the Irish Party, all-Ireland Home Rule was dead in the water. By 1918 and as a direct outcome of the failure of the IPP Great War project, the southern Irish population had moved way beyond Home Rule and overwhelmingly voted for the establishment of a sovereign Republic. As regards his "vision" of a "wider comity of equal nations" made up of the Anglo-Saxon/Celtic bits of the British Empire (with the other bits in subordinate child-nation roles), his naivety regarding the prospect of Irish "equality" with the state then commanding the most powerful empire in the world defies belief.

What Britain's war had shown more than anything else was that 'Small Nations' were going to have to look after themselves in the World Order created at Versailles. The 'Rights of Nations to Self Determination' proclaimed in Allied wartime propaganda was firmly and solely to be applied to the peoples of the non-Allied multi-national powers, even where those peoples had never sought it. In the Irish case, it was forced by the Imperial power to defend in arms its democratically declared sovereignty against the counter-insurgency forces sent by that Imperial power to suppress it. In his recent New Year *Irish Times* article, Bruton sees it as "ironic" that the "United States that pioneered the idea of a League of Nations, of a United Nations, as a binding global rule maker" refuses to submit itself to international law. He goes on to bemoan the fact that "big nations, like the US and China, clung to the old and bankrupt notion than nations should be absolutely sovereign inside their own territory and should not be bound by global rules." But the US, though it had created the

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League of Nations, never joined it (the US democracy would not countenance the idea that its sovereignty could be subject to an international organisation). Britain and France ran the League thereafter, and ensured that its role of "global rule maker" applied to everyone but themselves. When Roosevelt created the United Nations in 1945 it was as a "global rule maker" dominated by five veto-empowered Great Powers ("the policemen of the world") who would make "international law" to keep the rest of the peoples of the planet in their place. This followed a further World War in which Allied commitments to "small nations" had again been trumpeted in the 'Atlantic Charter' of 1941 – though only after Churchill had secured a commitment from Roosevelt that it the British Empire would be exempt from its provisions.

The world in which the UN is the supposed "global rule maker" is a very unequal place. Small states with a will to survive have rapidly made pragmatic arrangements – where allowed – to enable them to do so, and have not relied on the UN. Various agglomerations such as the UN, EU etc. have yet to seriously supersede in any way the need for states to act pragmatically in their interests. In the globalised world, whatever sentimental tribute might be paid to such international arrangements or useful agreements made through them, the reality remains that the only thing that stands between the individual and global chaos or domination by others is the state. It has not been superseded in any substantial way, including by the EU, as the recent economic crisis demonstrated all too clearly.

John Bruton's views on the nation state in history are also seriously flawed. In his latest article he again returned to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, at which, he claims "the concept of the modern nation state was devised" and, following it, "the nation state was a perfectly workable means to organise world affairs, and remained so for centuries" ('Nation state model no longer works in today's complex world', *The Irish Times*, 2nd January 2010). In fact Westphalia simply involved the arrangement of state matters in Europe at the end of the Wars of Religion, re-organising relations between powerful states established by military force through the religious wars. None of the new or old states involved either was or regarded itself as a "nation state".

The idea of the "people" and popular sovereignty underlying the "nation state" was forged in the French Revolution a century and a half later and only gained a type of general currency in the 19th century. The idea that popular sovereignty was only possible through the formation of separate "nation states" was considered by many European peoples in 1848 but disregarded by most, who went on instead to seek to reform in their interests the larger entities in which they lived. Most "nation states" – apart from the imperial states - only arose later when the larger entities in which various peoples co-existed were wilfully destroyed from outside (notably the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, destroyed by Britain) or where the larger entity could not bear to contain national groupings except on the basis of total assimilation (the British Empire in relation to Ireland or the Russian and German in relation to Poland).

It was the destruction of non-"progressive" agglomerations which never sought to assimilate their nationalities into a conformist common culture and language, like the evolving Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman "empires", that left peoples - if they wished to survive in the jungle created at Versailles in 1919 - with little choice other than to organise themselves as nation states. The scramble to do so characterised the disastrous history of Europe and the Middle East between the Wars and, in destroying – among other things - the framework for the trans-empire Jewish middle class, created the political anti-Semitism of the interwar years that made the Holocaust possible. The breakup of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire was the result of the dogmatic stipulation of Britain and the US of a compulsory "Right to National Self-Determination" in nation-state form at the end of World War One, applicable only and compulsorily to the territories of the defeated powers. The nationalism of small nations played no role in the causes of the First World War, except perhaps the outside manipulation of it in the case of Serbia. To claim the situation in the world today to be anything like that of Europe in 1914 flies in the face of historical fact.

Bruton regrets the arrangement of non-binding political agreements rather than binding rules that characterise current world governance on matters such as Climate Change. He believes:

> "As in 1914, we now live in an interdependent world, where no one power is any longer completely dominant, and where there is no properly functioning system for making binding decisions collectively between nations. We are instead relying on a series of *ad hoc* arrangements of the very kind world leaders tried before the First World War Those arrangements did not suffice when the crisis erupted between Austria and Serbia in July 1914... Anyone who studies the history of Europe between the years 1900 and 1914 will see how dangerously weak and ineffective such political understandings can prove to be."

World governance where even medium powers voluntarily make their interests subservient to the will of the "international community" is and always has been a myth. His analogy with 1914 makes little sense, as in fact there was a functional 'balance of power' which was deliberately disrupted by Britain in pursuit of the elimination of an emerging industrial rival that threatened its pre-eminent position in world power. The only alternative to balanced arrangements between powers, states, regions etc. is domination by a few of them. Bruton seems unable to see Britain operating either in 1914 or now in its own interest on the world stage and be prone to locate the problems of world governance among foreigners. His blindness in relation to the realities of the UN and power in the modern world is of a kind with his blindness in relation to the project Redmond proposed to Ireland in 1914 of a future as a junior partner in a world dominating empire.

The chaos of the Eurozone in the face of global economic crisis led Ireland to act as if it had the measure of the new EU: it did what was required to get them off its back (passed Lisbon) then proceeded to act unilaterally to ensure its own survival, falling back in the process on its De Valerist instincts. If the approach to the world being proposed instead by John Bruton and *The Irish Times* is indeed adopted by the opposition leaders it would be surprising if it formed the basis of an election victory for them. *Irish Foreign Affairs* would advise them to disregard it.

The Launching of the Second World War (2)

by Brendan Clifford

[This article is the second in a series following crucial points in World War Two in this 70th anniversary year; the next issue will deal with Churchill's position on Finland and with the Norwegian affair.]

Britain declared war on Germany on 4th September 1939. It bombarded Germany with millions of propaganda leaflets and exchanged a few rifle shots with the Germans across the front lines in France. Then, at the end of 1939, it began preparations to engage in serious warfare with the Soviet Union in Finland.

The issue on which it declared war on Germany was that Germany had acted without its permission to incorporate the German city of Danzig into the German state.

Germany had done many things without Britain's permission after coming under Nazi government in 1933. German military power was very weak in 1933. It grew stronger through a series of breaches of the conditions of the Versailles Treaty of 1919. Britain might have acted against it on any of those breaches from a position of great military superiority. A mere declaration of intention to act would have been sufficient to stop Germany in its tracks at the time of the early breaches.

Since it did not oppose the Nazi breaches of the Versailles conditions, it supported them. Neutrality was not a possible position for the British Empire with relation to the Versailles Treaty. Maintenance of the Versailles arrangement was predominantly the responsibility of the British Empire.

The United States did not sign the Treaty because it was in breach of the express conditions on which it had entered the Great War and gained victory for the Entente Powers.

The conditions on which Italy declared war on Austria and Germany, and joined the Entente, were dishonoured by its Allies in 1919 so that the superficial, opportunistic, spurious 'nation-state' of Yugoslavia might be formed, and Italy saw itself as a victim of the power-War settlement masterminded by the British Empire. It was, however, willing to act against Germany in the matter of preventing a German-Austrian merger, but it gave way when it saw that Britain was not willing to act.

France, which had gone to war in 1914 for the irrendentist recovery of Alsace and Lorraine, which it had lost through its 1870 aggression, wanted security against a counter-irredentisim of Germany to regain Alsace-Lorraine. Britain denied it that security.

France wanted Germany disabled after defeat. It would have been entirely in accordance with the British war-propaganda of 1914-18—which got 50,000 Irishmen killed—to have disabled Germany by dismantling the German State formed in 1870. The message of the war propaganda was that the German State was the major source of disorder in the world. There was something about Germans which made them incapable of running a civilised state. Some influential British war propagandists were of the opinion that this was because of the bad example of Frederick the Great, while others thought it was because Frederick's example had not been followed. Some thought it was because of Bismarck's influence, while others thought it was Bismarck had been sacked. Still others (the Redmondite, Tom Kettle, to the fore amongst them) said it was because a diabolical philosophy of evil invented by Nietzsche had infected German political culture, while another group thought it was because Nietzsche's warnings about the German State formed in 1870 were not heeded in Germany. There was also an opinion that the source of the trouble lay much farther back, in the time of the Roman Empire, when the German barbarians destroyed the Roman Legions of Varus in 9 AD at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest and as a consequence failed to become civilised. But all were of the opinion that, for one or other of these reasons, the German State formed by Prussian action was the major source of disorder in the world, and that the unification of Germany brought about by Prussia in the course of its war of defence against France in 1870 could not be allowed to stand.

But it *was* allowed to stand. Britain in 1919 promptly forgot all it had been saying about Germany for four years and insisted that a German State combining Prussia, the Rhineland and Bavaria must be part of the post-War order of Europe, but under conditions which were provocations to revengeful nationalism. The new German Government was compelled to confess to German guilt for the War, knowing it was a false confession. A little bit of Germany was given to Belgium and settled down. Another bit, separating the East and West Prussian regions of the German State, was given to Poland. The German city of Danzig, adjacent to East Prussia, was made a 'Free City' under League of Nations authority while being notionally, though not actually, part of the new Polish State.

Breaches of the Treaty of Versailles

The major breaches of the arrangement made for Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, which was International Law under the League of Nations system (the League itself being a creation of the Versailles Treaty) were:

The introduction of military conscription by Hitler in 1935;

The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935, allowing Nazi Germany to build a Navy—and a much bigger one than it had means of building then or for many years afterwards. This major breach of the Versailles conditions was authorised by Britain without reference to France or to the League;

The militarisation of the Rhineland, i.e. the putting of the German Army into a 50 kilometre zone east of the Rhine, which was prohibited by Versailles. This was done in early March 1936 and was not even debated by the British Parliament for three weeks;

The *Anschluss*, i.e. the merger of Germany and Austria, in March 1938. Democratic Governments in Germany and Austria had wished to merge the two states in the early 1920s and had sought permission from the Versailles authorities to do so. Permission was denied, and the Germans and Austrians obediently refrained from uniting. It was only at this point, after the *Anschluss*, that Fascist Italy began to be an ally of Nazi Germany in any real sense. Mussolini did not see it as being in Italy's interest that Austria, its neighbour, should become part of the German State and he supported the patriotic Austrian Fascists against the Austrian Nazis, who were for unification with Germany. But he was not prepared to act alone, without the co-operation of the other Versailles authorities. When Hitler crossed the Austrian border without the permission of Britain, France, or Geneva, and Britain did nothing, he took it that a new order of things had come into being in Central Europe and accepted it as the *status quo*.

In the Autumn of 1938 British collaboration in enhancing the power of Nazi Germany went far beyond the breaching of Versailles conditions. The Sudetenland region of Czechoslova-

kia had never been part of the German State. It had not been taken from Germany by the Versailles Powers in 1919. The only basis of a historic German claim to it was through the merger with Austria, which was itself a breach of the Versailles conditions. The integrity of Czechoslovakia was guaranteed, not only by the Versailles Treaty, but by a subsequent Treaty between Czechoslovakia and France. There was also a Treaty between Czechoslovakia and Russia which would be activated if the Czech Treaty with France was activated.

Furthermore, Czechoslovakia had a strong arms industry, and a range of hills between the Sudeten region and Germany gave it a defensible frontier. But, when Hitler indicated that he would like to add the Sudeten region to the German State, Britain used its influence to give it to him. It discouraged the French from standing by their Treaty with the Czechs, and browbeat the Czech Government into handing over the Sudeten region to Germany.

Czechoslovakia was a country of national minorities, thrown together by Britain and France when they decided to destroy the multi-national Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. After the Sudeten region was torn from it by Britain in 1938, the rest of it fell apart. Poland seized the Teschen region. The region populated by Hungarians went to Hungary. And the Slovak region declared itself independent. The unviable Czech remnant was then made a German Protectorate, without resistance, in March 1939.

It was later said that the German occupation of the Czech remnant showed Britain that Hitler could not be trusted and determined it to make war on him. That is the language of simpletons, or of bad apologetics, inappropriate to power politics—and Britain was the most powerful state in the world.

Britain made no attempt to police its Munich Agreement with Hitler, and to hold Czechoslovakia together minus the Sudeten region. It did not assemble the Versailles Treaty authorities (the League of Nations) to legitimise its agreement with Hitler on the Sudetenland. On any realistic reckoning that amounted to a repeal of the Versailles Treaty by Britain.

The fundamental weakness of the League from the start was that in the British view it was secondary to the British Empire. And in 1938 Britain openly marginalised the League and took its place as the legitimising authority in world affairs. That had been its tacit position since the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. It became explicit with the *Anschluss* and the Munich Agreement of 1938.

If the narrow Agreement with Hitler was not to be a signal for the disintegration of the rest of Czechoslovakia, decisive action by Britain was required. But Britain just let the disintegration happen. The Poles, Hungarians and Slovaks took apart the state which the persuasive Czech leaders had got the Versailles Powers of 1919 to establish for them, but over which they then failed to establish effective hegemony.

Germany then occupied the Czech remnant of the state, encountered no resistance, and declared it a Protectorate. No Czech resistance worth speaking of developed, even when Britain later declared war on Germany, and Churchill embarked on the policy of *"Setting Europe Ablaze"*. To create the semblance of a Czech Resistance, a terrorist group was parachuted in to assassinate the German Governor. But the Protectorate carried on peacefully producing arms for Germany—and then in 1945 made amends by the slaughter or ethnic cleansing of the defeated Germans. If Britain in its many Occupations had met with a response similar to the Czech response to the German Protectorate, it would have declared that a peaceful Union had taken place by general consent.

Britain did not declare war when the Czech remnant became a German Protectorate, but the story is that that is why it decided to make war on another pretext. The other pretext was Danzig.

But Danzig was an authentic and practically unsustainable anomaly left behind by the Versailles Treaty. It was a German city alongside the East Prussian section of the German state. It was notionally part of Poland, though an anachronistic 'Free City' under League of Nations supervision, and actually governed by a representative, and therefore German City Government. It was a pre-national arrangement within a European system whose medium was both officially and substantially nationalistic.

When making the Danzig arrangement Britain reverted momentarily to mediaevalism. It was hoped that Poland would do likewise and use Danzig as its port. Poland refused to regress into a Hanseatic time-warp in this particular while remaining intensely nationalistic in general. When it failed to Polonise Danzig, it built a port under its own authority, Gdynia, and began to boycott Danzig. This was the anomaly that Britain decided early in 1939 to use as a pretext for making war on Germany.

The Guarantee to Poland

In 1934 Germany made a Treaty with Poland to settle the border issue. None of the democratic German Governments had accepted the border arrangement with Poland as legitimate. They had not accepted the Corridor—the stretch of Poland that separated East Prussia from the rest of the German state—as legitimate. Hitler gave up the German claim on the Corridor in the 1934 Treaty, but left aside the Danzig anomaly for future settlement.

Early in 1939 he suggested that the time had come for a final settlement, and proposed the transfer of Danzig to German sovereignty by transferring it to East Prussia, and the connecting of East Prussia with the rest of Germany by means of an extra-territorial road across the Corridor. That was when Britain chose to offer Poland what seemed to be a watertight military alliance with a Polish finger on the trigger—and France followed suit.

The Guarantee could only have been intended to encourage Poland to refuse to negotiate a settlement. When Poland accepted the Guarantee, Germany treated that act as a Polish engagement in a military alliance hostile to Germany (which the Poles took it to be, and which it would have be in substance as well as in form if Britain had been in earnest about it) and declared it revoked the German-Polish Treaty of 1934.

The outcome was the German/Polish War of September 1939, in which Britain did not intervene, but used as an occasion for declaring general war on Germany.

The only serious action in the British war on Germany in September 1940 was naval action. The Royal Navy again, as in August 1914, stopped the seaborne trade of Germany, but the effect was not as serious as in 1914 because this time Germany had a Non-Aggression Treaty with Russia. The Royal Navy did not, despite its great superiority over the German Navy, attempt to occupy the Baltic, which might have had a considerable effect on the German/Polish War. The stopping of German trade other than with Scandinavia had no effect on the Polish War.

The major action of Britain on the Western Front of Germany was the bombarding of Germany with millions of leaflets by the RAF. The text of the leaflet was given in *The People's History Of The 2nd World War: September 1940-December 1940* by Harold Wheeler, published by Odhams Press. The book has no publication date, but the content indicates early 1941. That was while Britain still *"stood alone"* in the war which it had launched alone, having lost the ally which it had intended to do the main part of the fighting, France. After the serious fighting began six months

later, it was felt that this miserable effort was best forgotten:

"During the night [of 4th September 1939] Royal Air Force machines made reconnaissance flights over Northern and Western Germany and dropped 6,000,000 leaflets headed, "Warning: A Message from Great Britain".

"Britain's Propaganda Leaflet

"The information scattered from the clouds ran as follows:

"German men and women. The Government of the Reich have, with cold deliberation, forced war upon Great Britain. They have done so knowing that it must involve mankind in a calamity worse than that of 1914. The assurance of peaceful intentions the Fuehrer gave to you and to the world in April have proved as worthless as his words at the Sportpalast last September, when he said. 'We have no territorial claims to make in Europe.' Never has government ordered subjects to their death with less excuse. This war is utterly unnecessary. Germany was in no way threatened or deprived of justice.

Was she not allowed to re-enter the Rhineland, to achieve the Anschluss (reunion with Austria), and take back the Sudeten Germans in peace? Neither we nor any other nation would have sought to limit her advance so long as he did not violate independent non-German people. Every German ambition—just to others—might have been satisfied through friendly negotiation. President Roosevelt offered you both peace with honour and the prospect of prosperity. Instead, your rulers have condemned you to the massacre, miseries and privations of a war they cannot even hope to win. It is not us, but you they have deceived. For years their iron censorship has kept from you truths that even uncivilized peoples know. It has imprisoned your minds in, as it were, a concentration camp. Otherwise they would not have dared to misrepresent the combination of peaceful peoples to secure peace as hostile encirclement. We had no enmity against you, the German people.

This censorship has also concealed from you that you have not the means to sustain protracted warfare. Despite crushing taxation, you are on the verge of bankruptcy. Our resources and those of our Allies, in men, arms and supplies are immense. We are too strong to break by blows and we could wear you down inexorably. You, the German people, can, if you will, insist on peace at any time. We also desire peace, and are prepared to conclude it with any peace-loving Government in Germany."

"...The wordy sermon consumed thirteen tons of paper, but did not bring about a revolution..." (p101-2).

In mid-September, when the Polish Armies were defeated and the Polish Government had left Warsaw, the Soviet Union occupied and annexed Eastern Poland. If the British purpose in going to war had been to secure the independence and integrity of Poland, that purpose could then only have been achieved by making war on Russia as well as Germany. It did not declare war on Russia. But a few months later it engaged in some very ambiguous activity which might have led to war against Russia. That was in the context of the Russian-Finnish War.

Russia gained Germany as a neighbour as a result of the German-Polish War. It then set about securing its position by Treaties with the Baltic States, where there was considerable sympathy with Germany, and with Finland where public opinion was also well-disposed towards Germany. When the Finns refused the concessions demanded, Russia invaded. The invasion was held by an effective Finnish defence for a couple of months and Britain and France began to make preparations to engage in the Finnish War while doing nothing on the German frontier in the West in their declared war.

Finland

A book called *Finland's War Of Independence*, by J.O. Hannula, was published in London in late 1939, with a Preface by General Sir Walter St. G. Kirke. I was puzzled by the title as I understood that Finnish independence had been conceded without war by Russia in 1917. What the book was actually about was the Finish Civil War of 1918. When the Bolsheviks recognised Finnish independence in 1917, it was not in negotiation with a body which could be taken to be the effective Government (as Sinn Fein could be taken to be by Britain in 1919, but was not). Finnish government remained to be determined, and there was Civil War between Whites and Reds. The Whites won.

It was in accordance with the spirit of the time in London that the Civil War, in which Russia did not intervene, should be represented as a War of Independence against Russia.

Another book published in London in 1940 about the 1918 Finnish Civil War had the title *Finland Breaks The Russian Chains.*

Early in 1940 *The Epic Of The Finnish Nation*, by Stephen De Ullman, was published. It ranged over the centuries, with subtitles such as *"Peter The Great And Stalin"*:

"Finland is fighting for all we believe in and stand for; she is one of a small number of fine, sound, noble and civilized nations which have benefitted mankind by their material and intellectual efforts, so that their downfall, besides being a tragedy in itself, would be a most serious blow to civilisation... What would have happened if, at the decisive moment, Finland had backed down and given in, or if she had succumbed at once in her heroic struggle? Nothing would have stopped the Soviet, that mixture of Romanov imperialism and Marxistic world-revolution, from going ahead with its victorious campaign while the rest of the world was engrossed in the Western War..." (pp120,123).

About a year and a half later Finland took part in the attack on Russia as an ally of Germany. And, in January 1940, the rest of the world was not *"engrossed in the Western War"*. It was intent of keeping out of that war. And Britain and France, which had declared that war, also seemed to be intent on keeping out of it. Having declared war—and having thus abrogated such international law as existed—they let the declaration lie. There was no fighting—or hardly any—and yet there was war.

By declaring war, Britain effectively legitimised whatever it chose to do towards the enemy, or towards third parties as a means of getting at the enemy. And of course it also legitimised whatever the enemy chose to do towards it.

When Russia invaded Finland, the possibility of a British-German alliance was mentioned in Parliament. The Government declared that no such alliance was contemplated. But the actions of the British and French Governments suggest an awareness that there were many ways the cookie might crumble. The old cookie of 4th September 1939 was still intact when the Russian action in Finland on December 1st set up a new cookie, and there were indeed many ways the new one might crumble.

Neutral Ireland

Ireland declared itself neutral in the war and the Government accordingly established a newspaper censorship to curb war propaganda. It is said by people who hold authoritative academic positions, as well as by people who ought to know better out of their own experience, that the censorship went as far as preventing The War from being called The War.

"This was the society we who were born in the thirties inherited. We were told that we were the sons and daughters of revolutionary heroes and that our role now was to be one of gratitude... What they expected from us now was a new kind of heroism, heroic obedience. In the 40s, while Europe was tearing itself to pieces, Ireland, neutral, drifted even further from the reality of the outside world. We weren't even allowed to call it a war. Officially it was The Emergency" (Peter Lennon in his 1968 film *Rocky Road To Dublin*, which was restored by the Irish Film Board and issued as a DVD in 2004.)

In BBC's *Mastermind* a couple of years ago the right answer to the question: *What was the official name of the Second World War in Ireland?*, was *The Emergency*.

Professor Ferriter of UCD has given his *imprimatur* to the

nonsense, establishing it as a sort of official truth sixty years after the event.

And yet there is not a shadow of doubt that in Ireland during the 2nd World War the name it was called both in public and in private was the Second World War. A few years after 1945 Britain called its war in Malaya *The Emergency*, so that it would not be subject to the new laws of war proclaimed at Nuremberg. In Ireland the term was applied exclusively to a state of readiness in case either party to the World War decided to force Ireland into it.

The War was called The War. I am just old enough to remember the start of it. It was marked for me by the disappearance of two items: Johnny Cakes, made from maize meal, for which I had acquired a taste, and mechanical toys from Japan, of which I remember particularly a marvellous aeroplane. My mother explained to me that these things could not be had for a while because it seemed that England had to have a World War every twenty years.

The Emergency was the condition in which Ireland was placed by being cut off from the world by England's War and by the strong possibility that England would try to take over Ireland for its War. It is now fashionable to suggest that Ireland was virtually a participant in the War on the English side, and that what was apprehended was a German invasion. That is not what I remember, and I know of no evidence that it was the case. In the enforcement of its neutrality Ireland had, of course, to bend more towards England, because part of Ireland was in the British state, and that part was armed to the teeth with the most modern weapons. A small detachment of the British Army might cross the Irish Border with no more difficulty than it would encounter in a mere practice manoeuvre and throw the state into turmoil. Irish frontier defence against Britain was a non-starter. All that was possible was harassment following Occupation. And the probability of guerilla resistance on a scale which was a multiple of the resistance of 1919-21 was the only deterrent.

The revisionist critique of Irish neutrality suggests that it could not be authentic because the Irish state had neglected to acquire the means of frontier defence. That critique does not probe the reasons for which the Irish state was virtually unarmed. What we call its Army was called a Defence Force—and that was in the days before Britain went in for euphemism and changed the name of its War Office.

Britain now has *"Defence Forces"* which make war thousands of miles beyond the British frontier. The Irish Defence Force could not have sustained an hour-long battle on its frontier if a battalion of the Army across the frontier was ordered to invade.

It was not even a Defence Force. Or, to put it another way, the last thing it was allowed to be was a Defence Force, because the Army across the frontier was the Army of the State which had set it up. And Britain, when setting up the Free State in the 1922 'Civil War' in Ireland, was not so imprudent as to allow the Free State to have a military force geared towards defending its land frontier against the only enemy that might have come across that frontier, which was itself.

This Irish Defence Force might conceivably have been transported to other parts of the world to help as a minor adjunct of the British Army in one of those aggressive moves that Britain calls 'defence', but it was not intended that it should be able to defend the frontier of its state against the creator of that state.

It was set up in 1922 as a kind of internal paramilitary force, whose task was to break the Republican Army that had fought Britain to the negotiating table in 1919-21. In the 1930s De Valera tried to develop it into an Army, but his efforts were thwarted at every turn by the influence of Britain, which was determined that the Irish state should remain defenceless against it. Then in 1939-40 it demanded that this state, which it had kept in an unarmed condition, should make war as its ally. But what kind of alliance could there be between a militaristic Great Power and a small neighbouring state, which it had kept in an unarmed condition, but one of subordination?

It is said that Britain behaved handsomely towards Ireland during the War, protecting it from Germany and ensuring that it got some tea despite the blockade. But the only danger to Ireland from Germany arose from Britain's decision to wage a long, slow World War against Germany, in which control of the seas by the Royal Navy played the major part, instead of making good its Guarantee to Poland in September 1939 by a sharp attack on Germany by air, land and sea.

The *"German expansionism"* after 1939 occurred in the context of Britain's World War approach, and consisted of defensive actions against British interventions here and there. These effective defensive actions were extrapolated by the British propaganda into a plan of world domination—the kind of thing that no James Bond film can do without. But the dominant world power was Britain, and the ham-fisted duplicity of Britain in the conduct of its world power led Germany from being a middling European state in 1937 close to controlling Europe from the Pyrenees to the Urals and the Mediterranean to the Baltic in 1941.

My understanding of the War is no doubt influenced by the fact that I read about it in its last years in the newspapers of Emergency Ireland with the propaganda filtered out, and heard it discussed by people who, despite the Censorship, knew very well what the British propaganda was and gave it some consideration. The Censorship did not 'isolate' Ireland. What it meant was that the newspapers had to concentrate on hard military information about the World War, which, despite Professor Ferriter *et al*, was *never* called The Emergency.

I suppose that early influence encouraged objective habits of mind which saw The War in its distinct military parts—and war after all *is* a military event—and discounted propaganda ideology in the explanation of crucial events when the course of a military event itself left no need for it, e.g., the Fifth Column in the Fall of France.

Many distinct military events, which were distinct in the experience of the peoples engaged in them are rolled together in the propaganda concept of the World War of 1939-45: the German-Polish War; the Norwegian War; the Italian/Greek War; the Anglo-French war against Germany; the war of England against France; the German-Serb war; the German-Greek war; the German-Finnish war against Russia; and the American/Japanese War. It was not until the last two that there was something like a world at war.

The Russian/Finnish War of 1939-40 was not part of The War. I suppose that is why it could be commented on freely by the Irish papers.

The *Irish Times*—a British newspaper in Ireland—has recently been accorded the status of *"the Irish newspaper of record"* by the Government, so it must be given pride of place. Here is its editorial for 1st December 1939:

"War In The Arctic

"Yesterday occurred another of those heartless assaults by a strong nation upon a weak neighbour which are honoured nowadays by the name of wars... There is no reason to suppose that Russia will have a walk-over. The Finns can place 600,000 men—from the hardiest stock in Europe—in the field against them, and their country is so compact of mountains, lakes and morass that the invader's difficulty will be enormous. Nevertheless, if the contest is confined to Russia

and Finland, there can be no doubt of the result... It is not yet certain what the Russians propose to do. Perhaps they will be content to seize the districts which they demanded from the Finns; perhaps they will follow Herr Hitler's example in regard to the Sudetenland, and will take the whole country. Whatever their purpose may be, they have committed an act which disgraces them in the eyes of the whole world.

"Both the French and German Governments have expressed their horror. The Americans, who have a sentimental regard for Finland as the only European nation that has continued to pay its war debt in full, make no secret of their anger and disgust. General Franco has been quick to condemn. The Italians, whose faith in the solidity of the Rome/Berlin "axis" was severely shaken by the German alliance with Russia, are ablaze with anger... Herr Hitler cannot condemn the Soviets' conduct... but must be profoundly uneasy. It was bad enough that he should wage a campaign against Poland in order that Russia might obtain the lion's share of the spoils without the loss of a single man; and now he is compelled to watch the Russians adding another huge slice of territory to their empire while he himself is locked in mortal struggle with two powerful enemies.

"Great Britain and France, having expressed their abhorrence of Russia's conduct, remain ominously quiet. Their quarrel for the time being is with Germany..."

It might be that in sophisticated Ireland revisionism has made *"factism"*—Senator Harris's name for factual accuracy—*passé*, but I have never been able to rise to the higher truth. I am tethered to fact. And it was not a fact that Hitler took the whole of Czechoslovakia. Poland took the Polish part; Hungary took the Hungarian part; and the Slovaks set themselves up in a state of their own called Slovakia.

The *Irish Times* of December 1st also published the editorial of the London *Times* of December 1. And its *London Letter* began: *"Mr. Stalin is copying carefully the example of Herr Hitler in his dealings with the Finns."*

The *Irish Times* editorial of December 2nd said:

"History affords no precedent to this unspeakable crime... Cold-blooded cynicism could go no further; even Germany's attack on Poland has been outdone.

"One cannot but wonder how Russia's savage attack on Finland is being regarded in Germany. When Herr von Ribbentrop made his famous pilgrimage to Moscow last August neither he nor his august master in Berchtesgaden can have foreseen the consequences of his fateful mission, and we should not be surprised if the Nazi leaders have been spending sleepless nights of late. Russia's invasion of Finland is a direct threat to Germany's influence in the Baltic. It has already acquired naval bases in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, and if she succeeds in her nefarious plans, Finland will become a mere Soviet colony. Not only will Germany's influence be cancelled in the Baltic; Sweden and Norway will be in imminent danger. The whole civilised world is aghast at this latest example of *Realpolitik*; but the civilised world at the moment is helpless, more is the pity. Great Britain and France are engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Germany, whose Government opened the doors of Western Europe to the Bolshevist horror... The ideals for which free men have been willing to die throughout the ages are being launched to scorn, and the tyrant seems to be triumphant everywhere. No man can tell how the present war will end. Great Britain and France are alone against the forces of German totalitarianism... Russia's intervention has changed he whole aspect of the war. Who will deliver mankind from the oppressor?"

But there was one bright spot. The Nazi accommodation with Russia, which opened the doors of Western Europe to the Bolshevist horror, undermined the Nazi-Fascist alliance. This was explained in the editorial of December 9th:

"Italy's Outlook

"...The axis wobbled and broke when Herr Hitler overnight announced the conclusion of his treaty with Soviet Russia. Fascist Italy, at least, has been consistent in her hatred of Communism, and we are ready to believe that her conscience genuinely was revolted by Germany's barefaced disregard of all her previous professions. It is most unlikely that Italy would have come into the war in any event; but whatever small chance existed of her participation was shattered once and for all in those last days of August [i.e., when the German/Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was signed]. We do Signor Mussolini the further credit to believe that he was shocked by the invasion of Poland. It is true that Italy had carried fire and sword to Ethiopia and Albania, but she had given notice to the former, at least, and she had not disclaimed any intention of harming them up to the very last moment [i.e., as Russia had done towards Finland]. Doubtless Signor Mussolini was relieved. Germany's action provided him with an admirable opportunity to evade the consequences of the axis partnership. It is questionable whether, in any case, he could have fulfilled his obligations, if any, to Germany. The Abyssinian campaign was not an easy or an inexpensive one... More lives were squandered upon the reinforcement of General Franco's revolt in Spain, and Italy was in no position to face the cost of the European war... Thus it is that since the war began Italy has been playing the part of an interested onlooker rather than that of a potential belligerent. Mr. de Valera has been no more assiduous to stress the neutrality of the 26 counties than the Fascist Press has been to stress the neutrality of the Italian Empire.

"Since then the whole trend of Italian policy has been towards friendship with the democratic Powers—not, perhaps, because she loves them more, but because she loves their enemies less. The Fascist Grand Council shows itself to suffer from no delusions. It has re-asserted the nation's neutrality... The Grand Council makes no secret of its real concern—which is the Balkans. Italy foresees—and who shall challenge her belief?—that Russia has abandoned her former "pre-purge" policy. The Bolsheviks no longer are content to safeguard themselves against any danger of attack from the other Powers: they want territory and empire..."

Editorial, December 18th:

"Nothing in modern times has shocked the world's conscience so widely as the Russian invasion of Finland. When Germany attacked her neighbours, she could argue, at any rate, that she needed territory for the expansion of her own people—however tenuous that excuse may have been. Russia had no shadow of justification for her conduct..."

The *"world's conscience"* today is the USA and the UK. In 1939 it was the British Empire (and France). The great multitude of other states might feel other consciences budding within them, but they are stifled in the bud by the conscience of the big battalions. Perish the thought that I should be suggesting that Right is an attachment of Might! But one cannot help noticing the coincidence that they are invariably found together. Every big battalion which knows that it is powerful also knows that it is Right. And, when one of them is comprehensively defeated by another, its sense of having been Right somehow falls away from it.

In the military, narrowly conceived, the moral sense is developed along with the sense by which the drill directs the feet. In militarism more widely conceived it is developed, maintained, and amended as required, by the daily newspaper editorials, which in foreign policy matters are a kind of drill.

The *Irish Times* formed part of the *"world's conscience"* in 1939. It had suffered the trauma of being cut off by Britain from the close family of the Empire in 1921, but, like Job, it remained faithful: *"Though he destroy me yet will I believe in him"*. And therefore it was profoundly disconcerted by the turn of world events from August to December 1939. It had the feeling that the wrong war was being fought, but could not see a way of getting into the right war.

"Who will deliver mankind from the oppressor?| What a question to be asked, in a despairing tone, by a moral institution of the British Empire! A British newspaper! The answer should have been so obvious that it prevented the question from being

formulated. The Knight In Shining Armour will deliver mankind yet again. And of course the *Irish Times* believed—but it was with a kind of forlorn belief. It knew from its own experience that Britain was not what it used to be. Within three years of crushing Germany and adding large tracts of the world to an Empire which was already the greatest the world had ever seen, it managed to lose Ireland—or to lose the civilised part of it where Anglo-Ireland lived. And now, only 21 years after the glorious Armistice, it seemed as if the world of which it was the conscience was slipping away from it.

Since August the Bolshevik horror had moved into Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, without firing a shot, while Britain was fighting Germany—or was not fighting it, though at war with it. And now Bolshevism was attacking Finland, and Britain had to remain ominously quiet because it was (not) fighting Germany.

Since Britain was not actually fighting the state it was at war with, there was a possibility that it might fight the state it was not at war with. And some attempt was made towards doing that. But the possibility of it lay in too great an abstraction from current actuality to be functional.

The British predicament followed from its conduct between March and August. In its own mind it had kept all its options open as between Germany and Russia, while at the same time setting up a German/Polish conflict by means of the Polish Guarantee in March 1939, which ended the active collaboration with Germany.

This has some similarity with 1914, when Britain had kept all its options open while making diplomatic arrangements conducive to a Franco-Russian war against Germany and Austria. It had done this while making hard military arrangements with France after 1908 to take part in its war with Germany. But there was nothing on paper that France could hold it to if it did not make good on the tacit alliance. And the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary had repeatedly told Parliament that Britain was free of Continental engagements.

Its 1939 position was the reverse of this. It made a public alliance with Poland under which the Poles had—or thought they had—their finger on the British trigger. But it made no military arrangements with Poland, as its Treaty ally, of the kind it had made with France without a Treaty, or a public undertaking of any kind. And when Germany, finding itself within a military encirclement but seeing that the major Powers in that encirclement were making no active preparation for war, struck at Poland when the Poles refused a Danzig settlement, Britain and France declared war but did not wage war, except at sea (at a moment when war at sea could have no immediate effect).

Britain decided early in 1939 that it would probably have another big war fairly soon, and it brought in a Conscription Act in preparation for it. But it did not know what war it would be. Or, to put it another way, it did not know which war it would inflict on the world and call a just war.

British morality

I have been intrigued by British morality ever since I read Churchill's history of the 1939 War in the early 1950s. I concluded that the British view was that what Britain did in the world was moral because it was Britain that did it—rather than the converse, i.e. that Britain did what it did because it looked at the matter from all sides, established what the objectively moral position was, and chose it.

I never expected that conclusion to be confirmed by an authoritative British source. But I find that it was established as the only realistic position three hundred years ago by Archbishop King of Dublin, who played a part, as Dean of St. Patrick's, in the Glorious Revolution, and was rewarded for it by William with the Bishopric of Derry in the first instance and then with the Archbishopric of Dublin. Southern Ireland was the most difficult location for a Protestant Ascendancy revolutionary between the landing of William in England in 1688 and his victory at the Boyne in 1690.

King was imprisoned for his revolutionary activity during that period, and was stimulated to think things out on the basis of First Principles in a way that philosophers in the safety of William's entourage did not do. And his conclusion was that the world is far too complicated a place for the good and bad of it to be worked out by objective exercise of the understanding as the precondition of moral action. Nevertheless the will is impelled towards action. And effective exercise of the will is experienced as good.

Goodness is the triumph of the will. That was Archbishop King's view of the matter, and it corresponds with British experience of the following two centuries. (See *Church & State* 98 for King's argument.)

Then in 1939 the will was puzzled and evil followed—as the great Elizabethan cynic saw would be the case when the will is indecisive, the scruples of understanding set in, and *"conscience makes cowards of us all*".

Britain found in 1939 that, as a consequence of the way it handled its victory of 1918-19, two major obstacles to its will had arisen. Against all expectations, Bolshevism had not only survived in Russia but had become a substantial military and industrial power in its own right, and it had in addition a strong basis of ideological support in other European states. And Germany had become the dominant power in Central Europe, with active British encouragement and support until March 1939.

In 1918-19 Churchill had suggested that Britain should scotch the Bolshevik development in alliance with Germany, instead of plundering and humiliating Germany and campaigning to Hang The Kaiser. But the War Coalition let Bolshevism be. It concentrated on 'making the Germans pay'. But, almost as soon as the damage was done in Germany, it realised that there was a danger of France becoming the hegemonic Power in Europe, and it set about disabling France and bringing on Germany as a counterweight, but without amending the Versailles conditions on Germany.

At the same time Fascism developed as an effective European counter to Bolshevism, and it was explicitly supported by Churchill on that ground and tacitly supported by British ruling circles in general. The consolidation of the Italian state, and of the post-war flux, by the Fascist movement counted for little in the British reckoning of things. But, when Fascism was applied in Germany, Churchill took alarm—though not because it was Fascist but because it was restoring the effectiveness of Germany.

Imperial Churchill

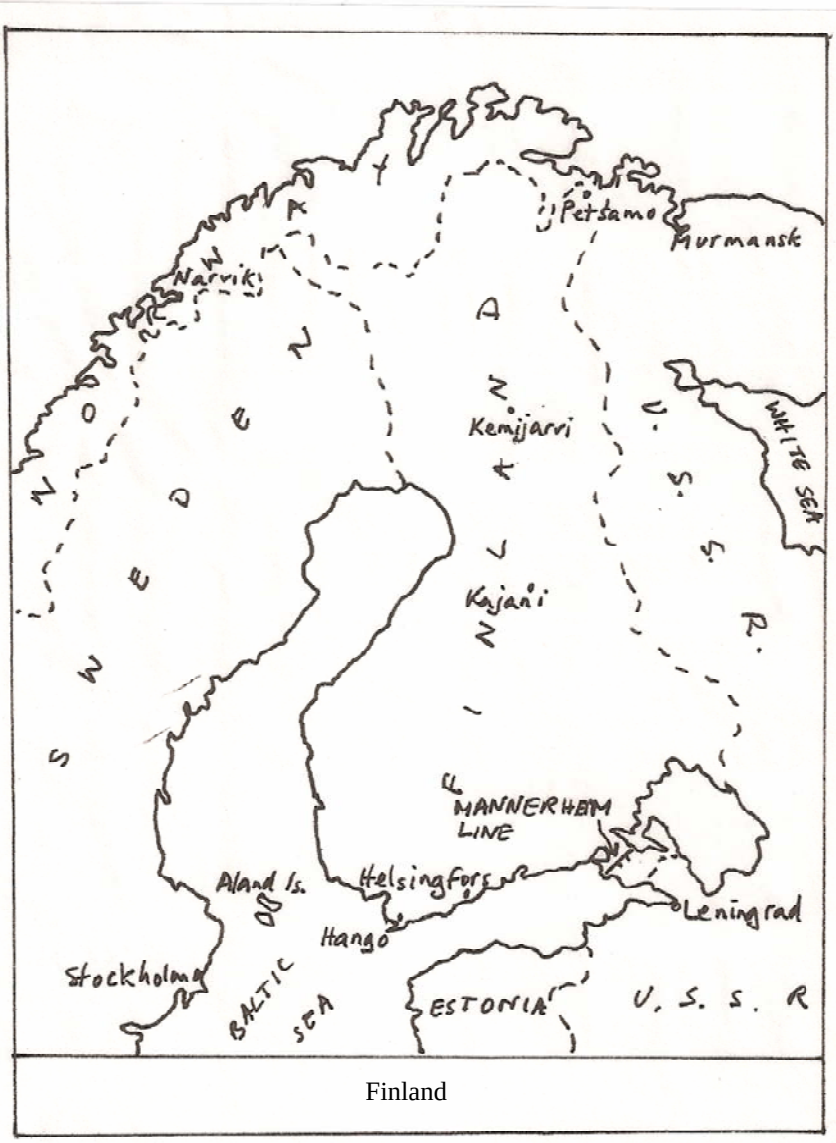
Churchill's concerns were Imperial. His opposition to appeasement had nothing to do with Germany or Fascism at the start. The first enemy against which he took an *"anti-appeasement"* stand was Indian nationalism. He resigned and went into the wilderness over a mild measure of Indian local government. He was an admirer of Hitler at first, and said that, if England had been put in the position in which Germany was put by the Versailles Treaty, he hoped that somebody would have arisen to do for it what Hitler was doing for Germany. But, when the Hitler regime began to make Germany strong again, Churchill's 'balance-of-power' instinct—which he described as the *"wonderful unconscious instinct"* that guided British foreign policy—was triggered.

Churchill chose Germany to be the enemy in the mid-thirties—and grossly exaggerated its military strength in his propaganda. He did not cease to regard Bolshevism as the enemy of

civilisation, but he saw a strengthening Germany as the more immediate enemy of the Empire.

It was an awkward fact that the force which had saved European civilisation from Bolshevism had in the process made Germany once again a powerful state, and a rival of Britain by virtue of that fact. But, if the Empire was to be preserved as the Great Power in the world, it was necessary that the force which had saved European civilisation should be subjected to the traditional balance-of-power treatment. British freedom of action in the world required that Europe be kept at odds with itself.

Churchill did not allow his will to be puzzled. He chose Germany as the enemy that counted—the immediate enemy—and urged alliance with the basic enemy of civilisation against it. And then—— well, it was the destiny of Britain to wage one great war after another, and therein lay its greatness. Churchill pursued no will-o-the-wisp of Perpetual Peace. Although he had played an active part in the Great War of 1914, he was completely untouched by the delusions which were peddled by the state in order to militarise the masses, while it seems that many of those who were running the state in the 1930s acted in the shadow of those delusions, and could neither make war nor organise peace.



Finland

The National Government formed in 1931 had perhaps warded off a more explicit Fascist development during the recession by suspending actual party conflict while maintaining a semblance of it within a Parliamentary form, but in the late 1930s it was incapable of making a decisive choice of an enemy (and an ally) and acting on it purposefully. It toyed with two conflicting courses of action—with Germany against Russia, and with Russia against Germany—possibly hoping to be relieved of its dilemma by a German/Soviet War arising out of the Polish issue. It ended up declaring war on Germany over Danzig (while assuring everybody that neither Danzig nor Fascist Poland—as it was generally seen—was the issue) without any serious intention of waging it, and then made an effort to get into an actual war relationship with Russia in Finland.

It seems extremely improbable that there would have been any war in Europe in 1939 if Britain had made appropriate military preparations to implement its Polish Guarantee, with or without an agreement with Russia. And it seems unlikely that there would have been a Russian-Finnish War, or even a Russian occupation of eastern Poland, if Britain and France had actually waged war on Germany early in September 1939.

When Churchill took over in May 1940 he made no secret of his intention to spread the war by any and every means. But the war he was intent on spreading was war against Germany. The Chamberlain Government did not, as far as I know, have an explicit policy of spreading the war, but its actions were conducive to spreading it. And it was not committed by actual engagement to Germany as the definite enemy.

Russia, seeing how the wind was blowing in the Summer of 1939, made a Non-Aggression Treaty with Germany when Britain dragged its heels on the making of an agreement against Germany. And it made a conditional arrangement over Poland, which it put into effect when Germany attacked Poland and Britain did not deliver on the Guarantee and the Polish state collapsed.

Russia then insisted on military agreements with the Baltic states, where there was pro-German sentiment. And a couple of months later, with Britain still sitting on its heels and keeping all its options open, Russia proposed an exchange of territory with Finland in order to strengthen its defences against all-comers from the West. It demanded that the Finnish frontier be moved back beyond artillery range of Leningrad, and that it should have possession of islands in the Baltic and the port of Hanko in the Karelian isthmus in order to control access to the eastern Baltic, and the port of Petsamo in the North as a defence of Archangel. When the Finns refused to concede Hanko, Russia took it by force.

Was the Russian-Finnish War part of The War, or was it something altogether apart from The War, which should be judged in an exclusively Russian-Finnish context?

The War was Britain's. Britain started it, and still claims it as its own. And the application of British morality to it determines that, if the Russian/Finnish War was part of it, the Finns were not entitled to the outraged feelings of violated sovereignty to which they gave expression—and which the *Irish Times* echoed. In The War neutrals which were invaded as a move against Germany were required to relativise their feelings and see themselves morally in the larger context, and to deliver judgment against themselves.

Churchill, who was clear in his mind about The War—that it was against Germany—saw the Finnish War as a Russian move against Germany. And it was only if war against Russia was still in contemplation in Britain—as it was—that it could be seen as something else. And in any case it was never realistic to see it as an isolated war occurring in a separate Russo-Finnish space.

Churchill saw it in the context of the war against Germany, but he was obliged to contribute to the outcry against Russia in order to retain the foothold on power which he had just regained after a long absence. He made a radio broadcast on the lines of the *Irish Times* editorials—as he had been obliged to make a Hang The Kaiser speech in the 1918 Election in order to save his seat. In a democracy it is sometimes necessary to do disgraceful things. (But the *Irish Times*, a detached piece of Britain in Dublin, was under no such democratic compulsion.)

Churchill's position on Finland will be dealt with in a future article, as will the Norwegian affair. The eight months between the British declaration of war on Germany and the German response to it, during which Britain engaged in no meaningful action against Germany, was not a period in which nothing happened. It was a period when Britain did what was in it to do.

Extracts from *The Gathering Storm.* Winston Churchill. *History of the Second World War,* London,1948.

[Churchill explains why the Soviet Union invaded Finland in November 1939.]

"Meanwhile the Scandinavian peninsula became the scene of an unexpected conflict which aroused strong feeling in Britain and France, and powerfully affected the discussions about Norway. As soon as Germany was involved in war with Great Britain and France, Soviet Russia in the spirit of her Pact with Germany proceeded to block the lines of entry into the Soviet Union from the West. One passage led from East Prussia through the Baltic States; another led across the waters of the Gulf of Finland; the third route was through Finland itself and across the Karelian Isthmus to a point where the Finnish frontier was only twenty miles from the suburbs of Leningrad. The Soviet had not forgotten the dangers which Leningrad had faced in 1919. Even the White Russian Government of Kolchak had informed the Peace Conference in Paris that bases in the Baltic States and Finland were a necessary protection for the Russian capital. Stalin had used the same language to the British and French Missions in the summer of 1939; and we have seen in earlier chapters how the natural fears of these small States had been an obstacle to an Anglo-French Alliance with Russia, and had paved the way for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement.

Stalin had wasted no time; on September 24 the Esthonian Foreign Minister had been called to Moscow, and four days later his government signed a Pact of Mutual Assistance which gave the Russians the right to garrison key bases in Esthonia. By October 21 the Red Army and Air Force were installed. The same procedure was used simultaneously in Latvia, and Soviet garrisons also appeared in Lithuania thus the southern road to Leningrad and half the Gulf of Finland had been swiftly barred against potential German ambitions by the armed forces of the Soviet. There remained only the approach through Finland.

Early in October Mr. Paasikivi, one of the Finnish statesmen who had signed the peace of 1921 with the Soviet Union, went to Moscow. The Soviet demands were sweeping; the Finnish frontier on the Karelian Isthmus must be moved back a considerable distance so as to remove Leningrad from the range of hostile artillery. The cession of certain Finnish islands in the Gulf of Finland; the lease of the Rybathy Peninsula together with Finland's only ice-free port in the Arctic Sea, Petsamo; and above all, the leasing of the port of Hango at the entrance of the gulf of Finland as a Russian naval and air base, completed the Soviet requirements. The Finns were prepared to make concessions on every point except the last. With the keys of the Gulf in Russian hands the strategic and national security of Finland seemed to them to vanish. The negotiations broke down on November 13, and the Finnish government began to mobilise, and strengthen their troops on the Karelian frontier. On November 28 Molotov denounced the Non-Aggression Pact between Finland and Russia; two days later the Russians attacked at eight points along Finland's thousand-mile frontier, and on the same morning the capital, Helsingfors, was bombed by the Red Air Force. pp 425

[Churchill describes the end of the conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union]

The honourable correctitude [i.e. not going through Norway and Sweden without their permission] which had deprived us of any strategic initiative equally hampered all effective measure for sending munitions to Finland. We had been able so far only to send from our own scanty store contributions insignificant to the Finns. In France however a warmer and deeper sentiment prevailed, and this was strongly fostered by M. Daladier. On March 2, without consulting the British Government, he agreed to send fifty thousand volunteers and a hundred bombers to Finland. We could certainly not act on this scale, and in view of the documents found on the German major in Belgium, and of the ceaseless Intelligence reports of the steady massing of German troops on the Western Front, it went far beyond what prudence would allow. However, it was agreed to send fifty British bombers. On March 12 the Cabinet again decided to revive the plans for military landings at Narvik and Trondheim, to be followed at Stavanger and Bergen, as a part of the extended help to Finland into which we had been drawn by the French. These plans were to be available for action on March 20, although the need of Norwegian and Swedish permission had not been met. Meanwhile on March 7 Mr Paasikivi had gone again to Moscow; this time to discuss armistice terms. On the 12th the Russian terms were accepted by the Finns. All our plans for military landings were again shelved, and the forces which were being collected were to some extent dispersed. The two divisions which had been held back in England were now allowed to proceed to France, and our striking power towards Norway was reduced to eleven battalions. p. 453

[Consequences of the collapse of Finland]

The military collapse of Finland led to further repercussions. [...] On the 19th of March Mr. Chamberlain spoke in the House of Commons. In view of growing criticism he reviewed in some detail the story of British aid to Finland. He rightly emphasised that our main consideration had been the desire to respect the neutrality of Norway and Sweden, and he also defended the Government for not being hustled into attempts to succour the Finns which had offered little chance of success. The defeat of Finland was fatal to the Daladier Government, whose Chief had taken so marked, if tardy, action, and who had personally given disproportionate prominence to this part of our anxieties." p. 454

The Rwandan Catastrophe
Review: *Noires fureurs, blancs menteurs. Rwanda 1990-1994.* by Pierre Péan (Black Furies and White Liars), Paris, 2005.

by John Martin

This book is about much more than Rwanda. It is an indictment of the selective nature of the West's humanitarian "concern" as well as an exposé of how easily the media can be manipulated.

The author begins with the assassination in 1994 of Juvénal Habyarimana, the President of Rwanda, and Cyprien Ntaryamira, the President of Burundi at Kigali airport in Rwanda. Both of these leaders were from the Hutu tribe. The author describes the event in detail. They were flying back to Rwanda from a conference in Zaire. Two missiles were launched from an area of the airport controlled by the minority Tutsi tribe and which was supervised by Belgian troops. One of the missiles was a direct hit with the inevitable result. The author is in no doubt as to who was the culprit and adduces overwhelming evidence from an official French investigation to support his thesis.

The missiles were transported from Uganda by the military wing of the *Front Patriotique Rwandais* (FPR) whose aim was to restore Tutsi power in Rwanda. Its leader Paul Kagame hoped that the elimination of the leadership of the Hutu Government would disable the latter from defending itself against the massacre which the Tutsis had planned, which was a precursor to seizing State power.

Having focussed on this key incident in this story of massacre the author steps back and gives a historical perspective. Rwanda was originally a German colony in which the aristocratic Tutsi tribe held all the key administrative posts and dominated the majority of the population. The Belgians took over following the First World War and continued to use the Tutsis as agents of colonial rule. The author quotes from a Belgian Minister for the Colonies who in 1938 justified this system on the grounds of the "intellectual superiority" of the Tutsis. When the colonial power began the process of leaving in the 1950s, the Tutsis, who represent about 10% of the population, attempted to maintain themselves in power. However, the Hutus, who represented the vast majority of the rest of the population (about 85% of the total) were not content to remain the downtrodden race and rose up in a social revolution in 1959.

The Catholic Church in Rwanda supported the Hutus and accordingly the Tutsis blamed imperialism (!) and the Catholic Church for encouraging the Hutus to rebel. In its propaganda the Tutsis claimed that the Rwandans were one people and demands for Hutu rights were a legacy of the colonial policy of "divide and rule"! However the Tutsis were unwilling to put this proposition to the test. When Rwanda achieved internal autonomy in 1960 the Tutsis boycotted the first democratic elections. There was also mass emigration by the Tutsis in the 1960s following full independence in 1962. There is no evidence that this exodus was caused by ethnic cleansing. On the contrary, the reason was that the Tutsis were deprived of what they believed to be their rightful place as rulers of Rwanda. The Tutsi émigrés set up political bureaux in countries such as Egypt and Uganda with the aim of restoring Tutsi power.

From the 1960s a campaign of destabilisation was waged within the borders of Rwanda and also from outside. Tutsi émigrés were among the most militant opponents of Hutu rule and tended to look down on not only the Hutus but the Tutsis who remained in Rwanda who they considered to be little better than collaborators.

The Tutsi tribe extends beyond the borders of Rwanda and therefore the émigrés from Rwanda received a sympathetic hearing. This was particularly the case in Uganda where the Tutsis native to Uganda and the Rwandan ÈmigrÈs had a determinant influence in Ugandan politics and the military. Both these groups were prominent in the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1980. The Rwandan émigrés supported Yoweri Museveni but the latter received an insignificant vote in the subsequent democratic elections. Museveni never accepted the verdict of the Ugandan people and in 1985 a military coup overthrew the democratically elected leader Milton Obote. The following year Museveni acceded to power. Such was the influence of Rwandan Tutsis on Ugandan politics that Museveni had an incentive to supply them with military aid. If they did not gain power in Rwanda, there was a danger that they would continue to de-stabilise Ugandan politics; this time at the expense of Museveni himself.

The *Front Patriotique Rwandais* (FPR) was founded in 1987 by Rwandan Tutsi exiles based in Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Zaire. But its international links extended beyond the Continent of Africa. The author says that 75% of its funding came from the United States under the aegis of—and get this—the *American Committee for Refugees!* In 1988 this Committee organised a conference for Tutsi émigrés—or "refugees" —in Washington. By the end of the conference the FPR felt that it had been given a blank cheque from the US, which was also a supporter of the Museveni regime.

The campaign of destabilisation escalated into a full-scale war in October 1990 when 7000 FPR troops invaded Rwanda from Uganda. The author does not think it a coincidence that this invasion took place at precisely the time that Habyarimana was initiating democratic reforms. It is probable that the FPR feared that if it waited any longer to attack Rwanda the government would have achieved greater legitimacy. The Tutsi army occupied large tracts of land and there was widespread ethnic cleansing of Hutus.

At the beginning of the war there were disagreements within the FPR. Its leader Fred Rwigema was assassinated by his own troops. The author is a little vague as to the reason, but suggests that Rwigema was less hardline than other leaders. However, the Army seems to have been so faction ridden that nobody within it was capable of seizing the reins of power. The next most senior leaders—Bayingana and Bunyenyezi—were put in charge on a caretaker basis.

At the time Paul Kagame was head of military intelligence and was studying in Fort Leavenworth, a US military college. President Museveni recalled him and attempted to impose him as leader. However when Kagame arrived in FPR occupied Rwanda, Bayingana rejected him on the grounds that he was "physically and mentally unfit to lead the people". He was told to go back to Uganda and ask Museveni to put a native Ugandan in charge to transcend the factionalism. Kagame departed for Kampala and returned with Ugandan soldiers and senior personnel from the Ugandan army. On the same day Bayingana and Bunyenyezi were killed and from then on Kagame was the undisputed leader.

Although the APR, the military wing of the FPR, was smaller than the army of the Rwandan Government, it was far better equipped and trained. The "international community" played an unwitting role in this. The IMF gave loans to Uganda on condition that she reduce her Army. Uganda easily complied with this by allowing the substantial Rwandan Tutsi proportion of the Ugandan Army to join the APR.

It was clear from the outset that the Rwandan war was going to be particularly vicious with a danger of it escalating into neighbouring countries and so it proved. President Habyarimana appealed to Francois Mitterrand for military aid. The French President was sympathetic to the Hutu leader's plight, but he realised that helping the Rwandan government would leave him open to criticism in France, not least within his own party. It could be perceived as being French imperialist interference.

A second difficulty was the nature of the Rwandan Government. Rwanda was a reasonably successful State notwithstanding its political problems. It had a higher income per capita than neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Burundi, Zaire and Tanzania. The government was quite popular among Tutsis living in Rwanda to the extent that some Hutus accused Habyarimana of favouring them. However, it could not be considered a democracy. General Habyarimana had been in power since 1973. Therefore Mitterrand was open to the charge of not only French Imperialism but of propping up an African dictator.

Thirdly, Mitterrand could not justify the interference on the grounds of French national interest. Rwanda had never been a French colony.

Mitterrand decided to supply the Rwandan government with arms and training. However, he made this aid conditional on it moving towards greater democracy including the participation of the Tutsi minority in Government.

The author of this book is sympathetic towards Mitterrand as this reviewer is. But the movement towards greater democracy, which Mitterrand encouraged, might have caused greater political instability. If the politics of the Tutsi opposition had an internal basis, the sharing of power with the Hutus might have led to peaceful coexistence. But the driving force behind the Tutsi opposition was external and was largely based in Uganda. As indicated above the Tutsi leader Paul Kagame had his base in that country. He was educated in America and according to the author looked down on the French speaking Tutsis in Rwanda. Since Kagame's political base was outside Rwanda there was no pressure on him to deliver peace. He had no interest in compromise and saw power sharing only as a means to achieve political dominance.

The road to Rwanda's hell was paved with good intentions and of all those with good intentions Mitterrand was the least culpable. The Tutsis had a sophisticated political network in Europe, which ensured that their political views were well represented in the media and political circles. Also Tutsi women are particularly beautiful, which was a factor that the FPR did not hesitate to deploy to influence media and political figures.

In Belgium the Tutsis' most influential advocate was Jean Gol. The author makes the point that in Belgium the division between secularism and Christian Democracy is as significant as the Flemish/Walloon divide. Gol was an implacable opponent of the Catholic Church and its role in Rwanda. In his youth he was a Trotskyist but in later life moved towards the right and became President of the Liberal Party. Throughout his life he was a passionate advocate of Zionism. His grandparents were killed in the Second World War and his parents emigrated to Britain during the war. The author describes Gol's political orientation as "Atlanticist" (i.e. pro American). He believed that the Tutsis were the "Jews of Africa" and he was supported in this view by secular Jewish organisations in Belgium. Gol was also a prominent Freemason. (Unlike in this country, I have noticed that it is taken for granted that Freemasonry is a factor in Continental European politics and is often stated in a matter of fact manner with no imputation that the person remarking on it is in the grip of a paranoid delusion. There is also less of a taboo against identifying a politician's religion).

In France the leading exponent of the Tutsi cause was Jean Carbonare who was active in French Protestant religious organisations. The French Catholic Church was sceptical of Tutsi propaganda because its missionaries were well aware of the facts on the ground, but the Protestant Churches were much more receptive to Tutsi influence.

Other sectors of French society that were receptive to Tutsi propaganda were the Left and charitable organisations such as *Médecins sans Frontieres*. The Left was more than willing to believe that French policy in Rwanda was motivated by imperialism in spite of—or maybe especially because—a socialist President was in power. One of Mitterrand's most virulent critics was his socialist rival Michel Rocard, who also happens to be a Protestant.

Bernard Kouchner was another vigorous critic of Mitterrand's Hutu sympathies. Kouchner, whose father was a Jew and mother a Protestant, was a co-founder of *Médecins sans Frontieres*. He is a former Communist Party member and was also a member of the Socialist government in the 1990s. Recently, he was touted as a possible socialist candidate for President. He is widely seen as sympathetic to American foreign policy and opposed to Gaullism as evidenced by his support for the American invasion of Iraq.

With this array of political influence ranged against him, it was difficult for Mitterrand to sustain his policy of critical support for the Rwandan government. His response was an attempt to encourage greater United Nations involvement. However this proved disastrous. The author suggests that part of the reason was the sympathy of the US and Belgians for the Tutsis, which ensured that UN involvement would be ineffective in restraining the FPR's rise to power.

The author quotes from a CIA document showing that the Americans had no illusions about Tutsi ambitions. However, the war between the Tutsis and Hutus developed the character of a conflict between Anglophone and Francophone Africans since the driving force behind the FPR were Rwandan Tutsi exiles who were based in former British colonies. In such circumstances the Americans were always likely to support the Tutsis.

It is quite remarkable that the general perception of Rwanda is that the victims were the Tutsis and the perpetrators of "genocide" were the Hutus. The author does not deny that there were massacres perpetrated by Hutu extremist elements. However, the massacres had a different character. Those perpetrated by the Hutus tended to be spontaneous, disorganised and indiscriminate. The Hutu perpetrators had scant regard for international opinion and tended to exaggerate the number of their victims so as to appeal to their own community who felt under siege. The massacres perpetrated by the Tutsis, on the other hand, were planned centrally. They were targeted at the educated section of the Hutu population and appear to have been designed to deprive the Hutus of its actual and potential leadership. The Tutsis were extremely sensitive to international opinion and often denied acts of massacre that they had committed. Sometimes, even though the victims were Hutus, they blamed the massacres on the Hutu population.

The author estimates that during the war over 1 million Hutus were killed and about 280, 000 Tutsis perished. Not all the Tutsis were killed by Hutu forces. The FPR killed many Tutsis whom it deemed to be collaborators of the Hutus. The enormity of these figures is almost impossible for the reader to grasp. The author describes the row upon row of corpses lining roads; the stench of burning flesh following efforts to dispose of the rotting dead; and the thousands of corpses floating down rivers poisoning the water supply.

The so-called victims of the genocide, the Tutsis, ended up in power. But the war did not end with their victory. The Tutsis used their State power to destabilise and dismember neighbouring Zaire.

Bernard Kouchner is now a Minister of Foreign and European Affairs in Sarkozy's government and is currently trying to reopen diplomatic relations with Rwanda, which is still led by Paul Kagame.

The author of this 500 page book, Pierre Péan, is one of France's most distinguished journalists. This well researched, forensic analysis would put our own attitudinising journalists to shame. The book is about much more than Rwanda. It is an indictment of the selective nature of the West's humanitarian "concern" as well as an exposé of how easily the media can be manipulated. It is a pity that an English language edition is not in print as an antidote to the American view of this tragic country, view which tends to dominate the English-speaking world.

Thatcher on the Reunification of Germany

[This is a translation of 'France opens her diplomatic archives 5 years early' in *Le Point* 28.10.09]

France opened her diplomatic archives on the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification, which confirm British hostility and French lack of enthusiasm towards these momentous events. A sample of these 1989 diplomatic archives was shown to the press before the presentation of the whole on November 9, anniversary of the Fall of the Wall. The government opened the archives five years earlier than is the normal procedure. Several diplomatic reports show that Paris was late in understanding the imminence of reunification. In October 1989, a report on 'the German Question' prepared by the Quai d'Orsay [Foreign Office] indicated that reunification was not at the moment 'a realistic proposition'.

In a telegram of March 13, 1990, the French ambassador to London, Luc de La Barre de Nanteuil, relayed the words of Margaret Thatcher at a dinner at the residence. 'Kohl is capable of anything. He's changed, he's beside himself, he sees himself as masterful and is beginning to act like that' she said, according to the ambassador. 'The combined action of the United States, France and Great Britain regarding this problem has shown the way to go; this 'entente' has worked well', she said according to the same source. These French documents corroborate the substance of the British archives declassified last September. 'The reunification of Germany is not in the interest of Great Britain and Western Europe' Margaret Thatcher said to Mikhail Gorbatchov during a meeting in Moscow in September 1989, according to transcripts of this interview clandestinely removed from the Kremlin two years later.

BOOKS

From Cologne To Ballinlough
A German and Irish boyhood in World War II and post war years, 1946 - 49

by Herbert Remmel,
Aubane Historical Society 2009

This refreshingly unusual book is mainly about rural Ireland in the 1940s and it is full of fun, enjoyment, insights and sheer delight in everything about that society. It describes everything that the current literary establishment refuses to admit existed in that place at that time. But this author has no axe to grind, no agenda to follow.

Herbert Remmel's objectivity derives from the fact that he was an outsider who found himself in the middle of the society and writes straightforwardly about what he experienced and the impressions made on him, and writes with great talent for vividly painting a variety of people and situations in a few sentences.

Herbert Remmel was one of the German children who were brought to Ireland after World War II by the Red Cross. His book begins with wartime life in Cologne and there is a graphic description of War and everyday life in a suburb of Cologne and further afield as experienced by a small child, his family and neighbours.

The rest of his book is a child's eye view of Ireland as he found it just after the War, and as such is a joy to read and a welcome release from current dogmas about the awfulness of life in rural Ireland then and since. It makes one want to invite more Germans here to spend some time and write about us because to paraphrase Kipling they would hopefully, like Herbert Remmel, come to know the real Ireland so well because they more than Ireland know.

The Arms Conspiracy Trial
Ireland, 1970: The Prosecution Of Charles Haughey, Captain Kelly and Others

by Angela Clifford
Athol Books 2009

The Arms Trial is the central point of the Arms Crisis of 1969-70—an event in Irish political life provoked by British misgovernment in Northern Ireland.

At issue was whether Irish Governments were to actively assist the defence of a beleaguered Northern minority, or leave Catholics to fend for themselves under the shock of the assault made on them in August 1969.

Taoiseach Jack Lynch delivered a speech promising not to "stand by" on 13th August. If that speech was not to be followed through with active assistance to the Nationalist minority, then it was irresponsibly inflammatory.

Lynch ordered his Army to do what it had never done before—to envisage incursions into the North and make preparations for them. Representatives of the Army established working relationships with the Northern Defence Committees which brought together a wide spectrum of Catholic opinion in the North.

Then, suddenly in May 1970, Lynch shocked the countryby sacking two senior members of his Government without explanation and charging them with conspiracy against the State a couple of weeks later. An officer in Military Intelligence, who had done no more than carry out orders, within the chain of command, was also charged with conspiracy. It was denied that the Government policy from August 1969 to May 1970 had ever been Government policy.

But official documents have come to light which gave the lie to Lynch and supported the Defence pleading and the Jury verdict.

In particular, it pointed to a Government Directive to the Army of 6th February 1970 to assist Northern defence—a document since released and reproduced in this book.

Colonel Michael Hefferon, Captain Kelly's commanding officer and the Director of Military Intelligence, was listed as the premier Prosecution witness. If he had given the evidence expected of him, it is possible that the Defendants would have been given long jail sentences. In the event, he found he could not perjure himself and told enough State secrets in Court to confirm that the attempted Arms Importation was indeed conducted under Government auspices. Hefferon's original police Statement, which implicated Defence Minister Gibbons in the operation was doctored for the Trial. It was released under the 30-year rule, and

(Continued p.33)

The invasion of Iraq: the basic facts

by David Morrison

There is a widespread feeling in Britain that Prime Minister Tony Blair was, to say the least, economical with the truth in the lead up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, in particular, that he expressed a certainty about Iraq's possession of "weapons of mass destruction" that was unwarranted by the intelligence evidence available to him at the time.

However, the story of how in the 12 months prior to the invasion he engineered the UK's participation in a war to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime is not widely known, even though the basic facts have been in the public domain for many years.

The basic facts of the matter can be found in a series of pamphlets and a series of articles I wrote before and after the invasion, all of which are available on my website [1]. The pamphlets are:

Iraq: Lies, Half-truths & Omissions (1st Edition, Nov 2003) [2]
Iraq: Lies, Half-truths & Omissions (2nd Edition, May 2004) [3]
Iraq: How regime change was dressed up as disarmament (Dec 2005) [4]
The Attorney-General's legal advice was sound (Mar 2006) [5]
Iraq WAS a US ally in "war on terror" (Nov 2006) [6]

Also, in June 2003, I made a submission to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry into the decision to go to war in Iraq [7] and in November 2003 I wrote a critique of the Committee's report, which the Committee published [8].

In the following, I set out some of the basic facts, and indicate where further information can be found in my earlier writing.

Blair backed regime change in March 2002

On 31 October 1998, "regime change" in Iraq became the official policy of the US. On that day President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act, Section 3 of which states:

> "It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime." [9]

By March 2002, President Bush had decided to invade Iraq to put this established policy into effect. From the British point of view, the most significant fact about the invasion is that, by March 2002, Prime Minister Blair had given the President a commitment to support him in this endeavour.

However, for the next 12 months, the Prime Minister kept this from the British public and pretended that his objective was limited to the disarmament of Iraq of its "weapons of mass destruction", in accordance with Security Council resolutions. For example, a few weeks before the invasion, on 25 February 2003, he told the House of Commons:

> "I detest his [Saddam Hussein's] regime – I hope most people do – but even now, he could save it by complying with the UN's demand. Even now, we are prepared to go the extra step to achieve disarmament peacefully." [10]

Before the invasion, it was widely suspected that the Prime Minister was determined upon regime change by military means, despite his protestations to the contrary. But unambiguous evidence did not emerge until September 2004, when 6 official documents from March 2002 were leaked to the Daily Telegraph and came into the public domain. Facsimiles of them can be read on my website here [11].

One of these was a memo to the Prime Minister, dated 14 March 2002, from his Foreign Policy Adviser, Sir David Manning. The memo reported on Sir David's discussions in Washington with Condoleezza Rice, who was then the President's National Security adviser. The key sentence in this is:

> "I said [to Condoleezza Rice] that you would not budge in your support for regime change but you had to manage a press, a Parliament and a public opinion that was very different than anything in the States." [12]

In other words, in March 2002 the Bush administration was given an assurance that the Prime Minister was unflinching in his commitment to regime change in Iraq, and not merely to its disarmament in accordance with Security Council resolutions, as he told the British public.

This Prime Minister's commitment was confirmed by another leaked document, this one in a memo from Sir Christopher Meyer, the British Ambassador in Washington, to Sir David himself. This reported on a conversation with Paul Wolfowitz, the US deputy Defense Secretary, on 17 March 2002. The next day, Sir Christopher wrote to Sir David, as follows:

> "I opened by sticking very closely to the script that you used with Condi Rice. We backed regime change, but the plan had to be clever and failure was not an option. It would be a tough sell for us domestically, and probably tougher elsewhere in Europe."n[13]

Later, in November 2005, Sir Christopher published an account of his time in Washington as British Ambassador in a book called, *DC Confidential*. In it, he wrote:

> "By this stage, Tony Blair had already taken the decision to support regime change, though he was discreet about saying so in public." (p241)

The stage in question was prior to the meeting between Bush and Blair in Crawford, Texas, in early April 2002.

So, there is no doubt that, by March 2002, Blair was committed to supporting Bush in taking military action to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. But, in the words of Christopher Meyer, there had to be a "clever plan" to sell the project domestically in Britain. As we will see, the essence of the "clever plan" was to dress regime change up as disarmament.

Disarming Iraq

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the Security Council passed a series of resolutions, beginning with 687 passed on 3 April 1991 [14], which required Iraq to give up its "weapons of mass destruction" and imposed severe economic sanctions, which were to remain in operation until the disarmament process was complete.

In reality, the process was complete in a few years – within months, Iraq unilaterally destroyed the vast bulk of its chemical and biological weapons and related material (see Iraq Survey Group report [15], published on 6 October 2004, Chapter 1, page 46) and UN inspectors destroyed the rest in the next year or two. However, the Security Council refused to accept that disarmament was complete and the economic sanctions remained in place. The US made it clear that it would not countenance sanctions being lifted as long as Saddam Hussein was in power.

UN inspectors left Iraq in December 1998. They were not thrown out, as the Prime Minister constantly stated in the run up to the invasion of Iraq. They were withdrawn at the request of President Clinton, because the US and the UK were about to launch Operation Desert Fox, a bombing campaign to punish Iraq for its alleged non-cooperation with the weapons inspectors. (This wasn't true – see Appendix D of my pamphlet *Iraq: Lies, Half-truths & Omissions* [2]).

Understandably, Iraq refused to allow the inspectors back in again and, in March 2002, there had been no inspectors in Iraq for over 3 years and sanctions were still in operation.

The "clever plan"

So, how were Bush and Blair going to justify invading Iraq to the world? In March 2002, they differed on how this should be done.

On the one hand, Blair wanted to make the case in terms of disarming Iraq as laid down in Security Council resolutions. His "clever plan" was to persuade the Security Council to pass a resolution demanding that Iraq re-admit the inspectors, but on terms that would make it impossible for Saddam Hussein to accept. In that event, there would be a reasonable possibility that the Security Council would authorise military action, ostensibly to disarm Iraq of its "weapons of mass destruction", and, as a byproduct, the Iraqi regime would be overthrown. This was the plan he sought to put into operation in March 2002 in order to dress up regime change as disarmament.

However, in March 2002 Bush was opposed to the issue being put on the agenda of the Security Council. He had taken a decision to overthrow Saddam Hussein by military means and didn't see the need to ask the Security Council for authority to do it. It was an unnecessary complication that could do more harm than good by stirring up international opposition to the project. However, in September 2002, he agreed to the Prime Minister's pleas to take "the UN route", having been persuaded that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for Britain to join with the US in an invasion without focusing on the issue of "weapons of mass destruction".

The impression given to the British public at this time was that Blair had persuaded Bush to modify his position from regime change to disarmament under UN auspices. In reality, from the outset, he shared the President's objective of regime change, but he persuaded the President to co-operate in dressing this objective up as disarmament under UN auspices.

Evidence for the "clever plan"

What's the evidence that the Prime Minister had a "clever plan" to persuade the Security Council to make Saddam Hussein an offer on inspection he couldn't accept?

There's a clue in Sir David Manning's memo to the Prime Minister, where he writes that "renwed refused [sic] by Saddam to accept unfettered inspections would be a powerful argument" for military action [12].

In similar vein, Sir Christopher Meyer reported in his memo to Manning that if the US "wanted to act with partners, there had to be a strategy for building support for military action against Saddam". He continued: "I then went through the need to wrongfoot Saddam on the inspectors ... " [13]

The leaked minutes of a high powered meeting on Iraq in Downing Street on 23 July 2002 provided further evidence. There, Blair is recorded as saying:

> "...it would make a big difference politically and legally if Saddam refused to allow in the UN inspectors. ...If the political context were right, people would support regime change." [16]

Those are not the words of a person dedicated to the disarmament of Iraq in accordance with Security Council resolutions, a process that required UN inspectors to be on the ground in Iraq. On the contrary, as I've said, Blair's plan was to put conditions on the re-entry of inspectors so that they would never be allowed in again.

Consistent with this plan, when on 16 September 2002 Iraq stated its willingness to allow the inspectors back in, the US and the UK blocked their re-entry. It is worth noting that, around this time, he told the House of Commons:

> "... [Saddam Hussein's] chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programme is not an historic left-over from 1998. The inspectors are not needed to clean up the old remains. His weapons of mass destruction programme is active, detailed and growing." [17]

Yet he (and Bush) prevented inspectors going in to "clean up" either the "old remains" or the current "active, detailed and growing" programmes.

The "clever plan" fails

On 8 November 2002, the Security Council passed resolution 1441 [18] unanimously. It stated unambiguously that Iraq was in breach of the disarmament obligations laid down by the Council, but gave Iraq a final opportunity to mend its ways, co-operate with inspectors and disarm properly.

The British Government portrayed the passing of this resolution as a triumph for British diplomacy. In fact, it represented a major defeat for the US/UK – because Saddam Hussein agreed to allow UN inspectors to operate under its terms.

Resolution 1441 was based on a draft proposed by the US/UK [19], which was designed to set terms that Iraq couldn't accept. For example, it allowed (a) the US/UK and other permanent members of the Security Council to be represented on any inspection team with external armed protection and (b) the establishment of no-fly/no-drive zones, exclusion zones, and/or ground and air transit corridors, enforced by external armed force. And, in the event of Iraq refusing to admit UN inspectors on those terms, which no self-respecting sovereign state would accept, the draft resolution authorised member states "to use all necessary means to restore international peace and security in the area".

So, if the draft resolution had been passed by the Council, and if Iraq had refused to accept inspectors on the terms laid down in it, the US/UK would have been unambiguously authorised by the Security Council to take military action against Iraq forthwith.

But, the US/UK draft resolution wasn't passed. Instead, at the instigation of France, it was amended to remove the terms that would have been unacceptable to Iraq. The explicit authorisation of military action was also removed. This amended resolution was passed as resolution 1441 on 8 November 2002, and UN inspectors returned to Iraq. The "clever plan" to "wrongfoot Saddam on the inspectors" had failed.

Another excuse – non-cooperation

So, the Prime Minister had to manufacture another excuse to justify taking military action against Iraq. It had to be that Iraq was not co-operating with the inspectors, in the manner required by resolution 1441.

It was difficult to convince the world of this, since the inspectors were being allowed unfettered access. All of the sites named in the September dossier as possibly being used for agent/weapons production were visited by inspectors in December 2002 and January 2003 and the inspectors found no evidence of current, or recent, production activity. Other sites, nominated to the inspectors by the CIA and MI6, were also visited with the same result. Iraq even allowed the destruction of its Al Samoud missiles that had a range that was marginally (if at all) beyond the 150km permitted by Security Council resolution 687.

Faced with this lack of evidence that Iraq possessed proscribed weapons, Blair's response was to publish the largely plagiarised February dossier, entitled *Iraq - its infrastructure of concealment, deception and intimidation* [20], the purpose of which was to explain to the world that the inspectors' failure to find any proscribed material was due to Iraq's hiding it, rather than to its non-existence.

(For further information, see my pamphlet *Iraq: How regime change was dressed up as disarmament* [4]).

Use of force "legal", says Goldsmith

On 17 March 2003, in a written answer in the House of Lords [21], the Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, declared that the UK had the authority of the Security Council to use force against

Iraq. A UK invasion of Iraq would be "legal".

How did he come to this remarkable conclusion, given that there was no explicit authorisation for the use of force to disarm Iraq in resolution 1441 (nor in any earlier Security Council resolution), and, as we will see, US/UK attempts to persuade the Council to pass a further resolution failed miserably? This is discussed at length in my pamphlet *The Attorney-General's legal advice was sound* [5]. I summarise here.

The argument used by the Attorney-General was a variant of one that had been used on several occasions by the British Government to justify taking military action against Iraq in the 1990s, for example, for the bombing of Iraq in December 1998 in Operation Desert Fox. At that time, when Robin Cook was Foreign Secretary, the Government claimed that the bombing was authorised under resolution 678 passed on 29 November 1990 [22], which approved the use of force for the very different purpose of expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

The Government's argument, for what it's worth, is based on the notion that the first disarmament resolution 687, passed on 3 April 1991, set out the terms of a ceasefire and suspended, but did not terminate, the authority to use force in resolution 678. As a consequence, if at any time the Security Council found Iraq to be in breach of the terms of 687, then the Security Council authority in 678 to take military action against Iraq instantly revived – and every state in the world had Security Council approval to attack Iraq.

The US went one better, taking the convenient view that, if any state in the world was of the opinion that Iraq was in breach of 687, then the authority in 678 instantly revived. In other words, at any time since April 1991 the US (or, for example, Iran) could have attacked Iraq with the authority of the Security Council, providing it was of the opinion that Iraq was in breach of 687.

How 678 revived, allegedly

In early 2003, when there was no hope of the Security Council explicitly authorising military action to enforce disarmament, the Government had to fall back on the 678 revival argument. To give its own version of the revival argument a semblance of validity, the Government required a clear statement by the Security Council that Iraq was in breach of its disarmament obligations. This is what the Government tried to get in the so-called "second resolution" [23]. The draft of this had one operative paragraph, which said:

> "[The Security Council] Decides that Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity afforded to it by resolution 1441(2002)"

Voting for that meant agreeing with the proposition that Iraq had failed to comply with its disarmament obligations in 687 and subsequent resolutions. But, only 4 out of the 15 members of the Security Council agreed with that proposition when the resolution was taken off the table just prior to the invasion. The rest believed that the UN weapons inspectors should be allowed to continue with their work. The British version of the 678 revival argument was therefore inoperative.

Undaunted, the Government called upon the American version of the revival argument, which merely required that the UK be of the opinion that Iraq has failed to comply with its disarmament obligations in order to revive the 678 authority to take military action against Iraq.

So, as explained in the Butler report [24] (paragraphs 383-5), on 14 March 2003 the Attorney-General wrote to the Prime Minister to ascertain the UK's opinion on this matter. He sought confirmation that

> ". . . it is unequivocally the Prime Minister's view that Iraq has committed further material breaches as specified in paragraph 4 of resolution 1441"

to which the Prime Minister replied the next day, saying:

> ". . . it is indeed the Prime Minister's unequivocal view that Iraq is in further material breach of its obligations, as in OP4 [Operative Paragraph 4] of UNSCR 1441, because of 'false statements or omissions in the declarations submitted by Iraq pursuant to this resolution and failure by Iraq to comply with, and co-operate fully in the implementation of, this resolution'."

No doubt the Prime Minister was up all night anguishing over this reply.

As a result, the Attorney-General was able to assert in his written answer in the House of Lords on 17 March 2003:

> "It is plain that Iraq has failed so to comply and therefore Iraq was at the time of resolution 1441 and continues to be in material breach."

and to conclude that 678 authority had revived. So, the use of force against Iraq in March 2003 was "legal", having been authorised by the Security Council in November 1990.

Attorney-General's conclusion nonsensical?

On the face of it, the Attorney-General's argument and conclusion is nonsensical. At the time he published his conclusion, 11 out of 15 members of the Security Council were opposed to military action against Iraq and wanted the inspection process to continue. Nevertheless, he declared the use of force against Iraq in March 2003 to be authorised by the Security Council in a resolution passed over a decade earlier, authorising the use of force for an entirely different purpose, namely, the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

But, there is no judicial body in the world in a position to declare that the Attorney-General's conclusion was nonsensical and that the UK's use of force was "illegal". Since the UK has a veto on the Security Council, the Council itself is not in a position to challenge the Attorney-General's view that in November 1990 it authorised the UK's use of force in March 2003. So, the UK can be as imaginative as it can get away with in arguing that the Council has authorised its military action (and the same is true of the other veto-wielding members of the Council).

In practical terms, all military action by the UK is a priori "legal", since the UK is immune from conviction and punishment by the Security Council for carrying it out, and there's only a very small chance that any other body will bring the UK, or its political leaders, to book. The statute of the International Criminal Court doesn't include the crime of aggression, so the Prime Minister can rest assured that he won't be indicted for it.

Of course, wherever possible, the UK likes to say that its military action has been authorised by the Security Council, in order to justify its actions domestically and internationally, and the more clearly the Council has given authority for military action the better the justification it provides. On this occasion, it required a considerable stretch of the imagination to reach the conclusion that authority had been granted.

Ideally, the Prime Minister wanted a resolution overtly authorising military action against Iraq to disarm it of its "weapons of mass destruction". That's what he tried, and failed, to get with the draft resolution that eventually became 1441.

Alternative: continue inspections

Of course, even if one accepts that the ridiculous proposition that the military action was authorised by the Security Council, the political decision to proceed was a separate matter. In his "address to the nation" on 20 March 2003, as British forces went into action, the Prime Minister justified this decision as follows:

> "For 12 years, the world tried to disarm Saddam .... UN weapons inspectors say vast amounts of chemical and biological poisons, such as anthrax, VX nerve agent, and mustard gas remain unaccounted for in Iraq.
>
> "So our choice is clear: back down and leave Saddam hugely strengthened; or proceed to disarm him by force. Retreat might give us a moment of respite but years of repentance at our weakness would I believe follow." [25]

But, if one was committed to disarmament rather than regime change, the alternative to military action in March 2003 was not "to back down and leave Saddam hugely strengthened": it was to continue inspections. Even if one believed that Iraq had an arsenal of proscribed weapons and was manufacturing more, there was no need to invade Iraq, and overthrow the regime, in order to disarm it.

Inspection could have continued indefinitely and it stands to reason that, while inspection and other forms of surveillance were going on, Iraq's ability to manufacture agents and weapons and deploy them, assuming it had a mind to, would be greatly inhibited.

The bottom line was that the continuation of inspections was not an effective alternative for a Prime Minister who refused to budge in his support for regime change. And the US military timetable dictated that regime change should begin.

Intelligence "sexed up"

The most fundamental aspect of the Prime Minister's deceit on the road to war with Iraq was to pretend that his objective was disarmament, when from the outset it was regime change.

Another aspect was the exaggeration of the known intelligence about Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction", notably in the dossier, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government* [26], published on 24 September 2002. The purpose of this was to portray Iraq as a grave threat to its neighbours and the world in general in order to work up public enthusiasm for taking military action against it.

I set out the extensive evidence of this exaggeration in my pamphlet *Iraq: Lies, Half-truths & Omissions* published in November 2003 [2] and my evidence to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in November 2003 [8].

The Government's dossier made extravagant claims, not only that Iraq possessed chemical and biological weapons and weapons-related material, and various delivery systems, left over from before the Gulf War, but also that it had re-established facilities to produce these weapons, and was trying to re-establish its nuclear weapons programme. So, it was not just a matter of getting rid of remnants manufactured before the Gulf War: Iraq was producing more weapons in September 2002, and therefore the threat from Iraq was increasing all the time.

The Government claimed that all this was soundly based on the existing intelligence. Unambiguous evidence to the contrary came into the public domain in September 2003, with the publication of the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC)'s report, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments* [27]. Evidence given to the Hutton Inquiry around the same time about the compilation of the document cast grave doubt on whether it gave a reliable summary of the existing intelligence.

45-minute claim

Here is one of the many examples of the gross manipulation of intelligence that the Government got up to. Famously, the dossier stated that Iraq was "able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within 45 minutes of an order to do so". A year later, the ISC report confirmed that this claim, which appeared not once but four times in the dossier, was of very little significance.

The intelligence that led to the claim, such as it was, referred to the deployment of battlefield weapons, not to strategic weapons, capable of hitting Cyprus. But, the dossier didn't make that clear.

The ISC report revealed (paragraph 49) that the claim was derived from an MI6 report dated 30 August 2002, allegedly based on information from an Iraqi military officer, who was in a position to know, received by MI6 through a third party.

The information was that on average it took 20 minutes to move chemical and biological munitions into place for attack (the maximum response time was 45 minutes). But the information didn't identify the munitions to which the 45-minute claim was supposed to apply, nor from where to where the munitions could be moved within 45 minutes (ibid, paragraph 52).

On this slim foundation the 45-minute claim was included in the dossier not once, but four times. Of the claim, the ISC said:

> "The fact that it was assessed to refer to battlefield chemical and biological munitions and their movement on the battlefield, not to any other form of chemical or biological attack, should have been highlighted in the dossier. The omission of the context and assessment allowed speculation as to its exact meaning. This was unhelpful to an understanding of this issue." (ibid, paragraph 112)

Objectively, the 45-minute claim amounted to very little. As the ISC said:

> "That the Iraqis could use chemical or biological battlefield weapons rapidly had already been established in previous conflicts and the reference to the 20–45 minutes in the JIC Assessment added nothing fundamentally new to the UK's assessment of the Iraqi battlefield capability. " (ibid, paragraph 56)

So, a claim which "added nothing fundamentally new" appeared four times in the dossier – and appeared each time in a form that didn't make clear that it referred to battlefield weapons. And it was widely misreported in the press on 24/25 September 2002 with frightening headlines, as referring to strategic weapons capable of hitting Cyprus.

The Evening Standard headline on 24 September was *45 Minutes From Attack*. The Sun headline the next day was *BRITS 45 mins FROM DOOM*. Many people formed the opinion that Iraq was capable of striking London with a nuclear weapon. The British public was grossly misled.

And the Government did nothing to dispel these frightening impressions that were not justified by the intelligence. Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, admitted to the Hutton Inquiry, that he was aware of the misreporting, but did nothing to correct it. And nor did anybody else in the Government. Hoon told the Inquiry:

> "... I was not aware of whether any consideration was given to such a correction. All that I do know from my experience is that, generally speaking, newspapers are resistant to corrections. That judgment may have been made by others as well." [28]

The proposition that Ministers did not attempt to correct the misleading press reports because the press would not carry such a correction is risible. A Downing Street press release carrying a correction would have been headline news, not just in Britain, but around the world, and would have destroyed the credibility of the dossier at a stroke – which may account for the absence of a correction from Downing Street.

Lies about France

Another serious example of the Government misleading the public concerned France's stance at the Security Council. The Prime Minister lied to the House of Commons about this on 18 March 2003 in the debate about taking military action. The resolution endorsing military action, passed by the House on that day, had the same lie embedded in it.

The lie was that, in a TV interview on 10 March 2003, President Chirac had said that France would always veto Security Council authorisation of military action against Iraq. In fact, he said that, if a vote was called on the "second resolution" then before the Council,

> "France will vote 'no' because she considers this evening that there are no grounds for waging war in order to achieve the goal we have set ourselves, i.e. to disarm Iraq" (see English translation of interview [29])

However, he also made it clear that France would support military action if UN inspectors told the Security Council:

> "we are sorry but Iraq isn't cooperating, the progress isn't sufficient, we aren't in a position to achieve our goal, we won't be able to guarantee Iraq's disarmament".

In that case, he said:

"... it will be for the Security Council and it alone to decide the right thing to do. But in that case, of course, regrettably, the war would become inevitable. It isn't today."

There, the President was merely restating the consistent French position that disarmament through inspection should be replaced by disarmament through military action only if inspectors reported failure, and then only with the authority of the Security Council. It was a position held by 11 out of 15 members of the Council.

The motion before the House of Commons on 18 March 2003 said:

"That this House ... regrets that despite sustained diplomatic effort by Her Majesty's Government it has not proved possible to secure a second Resolution in the UN because one Permanent Member of the Security Council made plain in public its intention to use its veto whatever the circumstances;" [30]

In proposing the motion, the Prime Minister identified the Permanent Member as France, which, he said, had undermined support for a second resolution:

"Last Monday [10 March], we were getting very close with it [the second resolution]. We very nearly had the majority agreement. ...

"Yes, there were debates about the length of the ultimatum, but the basic construct was gathering support. Then, on Monday night, France said that it would veto a second resolution, whatever the circumstances." [30]

That is a lie.

Iraq and al-Qaida

Unlike the US administration, the British Government did not give the impression that Saddam Hussein's regime supported al-Qaida,. (For US lying on this, see my pamphlet *Iraq WAS a US ally in "war on terror"* [6]). However, a major part of the Prime Minister's case for taking military action against Iraq was that there was "a real and present danger" that chemical and biological weapons would find their way from Iraq to al-Qaida or associated groups.

For example, on 18 March 2003, he told the House of Commons:

"The key today is stability and order. The threat is chaos and disorder—and there are two begetters of chaos: tyrannical regimes with weapons of mass destruction and extreme terrorist groups who profess a perverted and false view of Islam. ...

"The possibility of the two coming together—of terrorist groups in possession of weapons of mass destruction or even of a so-called dirty radiological bomb—is now, in my judgment, a real and present danger to Britain and its national security." [31]

When he said that, the Prime Minister was aware that the intelligence services had no evidence that Iraq had considered using chemical and biological agents in terrorist attacks or had passed such agents on to al-Qaida. He was also aware that, in the judgment of the intelligence services, a collapse of the Iraqi regime would increase the risk of chemical and biological warfare technology or agents finding their way into the hands of al-Qaida or associated groups, whether or not as a deliberate Iraqi regime policy.

This information was made public in the ISC report (paragraphs 125-127). But the Prime Minister chose not to divulge any of this information to Parliament prior to the invasion, understandably so, since it would have undermined an important part of his case for military action.

The intelligence services also judged that al-Qaida and associated groups continued to represent by far the greatest terrorist threat to Western interests, and that the threat would be heightened by military action against Iraq (ibid, paragraph 126). The latter view was advanced by most opponents of military action against Iraq. The Prime Minister chose not to divulge to Parliament that the intelligence services shared their view.

Terrorist threat to Britain

Most likely, the bombings in London on 7 July 2005 would not have taken place if Britain hadn't been a party to the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Two of the London bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan [32] and Shehzad Tanweer [33], made videos prior to their deaths and they both stated clearly that it was British intervention in the Muslim world, and Iraq in particular, which motivated their action.

Nevertheless, the political establishment in Britain was more or less unanimous that British intervention in Iraq played no part in bringing about the bombings.† Instead, we were told that Western democracies are all under threat from Muslim extremists, who want to destroy our way of life (whatever that means) and it was simply Britain's turn on 7 July 2005.

This stance was maintained even though in July 2005 the MI5 website said in a page headed *Threat to the UK from International Terrorism*:

"In recent years, Iraq has become a dominant issue for a range of extremist groups and individuals in the UK and Europe."

This straightforward message remained on the MI5 website for the next couple of years.

A few months earlier, in April 2005, a Joint Intelligence Committee report, entitled *International Terrorism: Impact of Iraq*, was even more explicit about the motivating effect of the invasion of Iraq.† The following extracts from it were published in *The Sunday Times* on 2 April 2006 in an article, entitled *Iraq terror backlash in UK 'for years'*:

"Iraq is likely to be an important motivating factor for some time to come in the radicalisation of British Muslims and for those extremists who view attacks against the UK as legitimate."

"There is a clear consensus within the UK extremist community that Iraq is a legitimate jihad and should be supported. Iraq has re-energised and refocused a wide range of networks in the UK."

"We judge that the conflict in Iraq has exacerbated the threat from international terrorism and will continue to have an impact in the long term. It has reinforced the determination of terrorists who were already committed to attacking the West and motivated others who were not."

"Some jihadists who leave Iraq will play leading roles in recruiting and organising terrorist networks, sharing their skills and possibly conducting attacks. It is inevitable that some will come to the UK." [34]

This was the considered assessment of the British intelligence services a few months before al-Qaida struck in London.† Clearly, British military action against Iraq was an outstanding success in putting Britain firmly on al-Qaida's hit list.

(See my pamphlet *The London bombings: Britain's blood price* [35]).

Humanitarian intervention?

179 British military personnel were killed and 315 seriously wounded during the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

At least a hundred thousand Iraqis, and perhaps a great many more, have been killed, as a result of the US/UK invasion and the destruction of the Iraqi state. Many more have been injured. About 2 million Iraqis are refugees in Syria and Jordan, and perhaps another 2 million are displaced internally.† All this, thanks to US/UK intervention.

We will never know how many Iraqis have been killed, because, in the famous words of General Tommy Franks, the US commander of the invading forces: "We don't do body counts".† If the bodies are Iraqi, he should have added to be accurate.

The estimates of Iraqi deaths that exist have been put together by organisations other than the occupying powers.† From the outset, the Iraq Body Count (IBC) organisation has compiled a

count of Iraqi civilians killed from media reports of incidents.† This count is inevitably an underestimate since not all incidents in which Iraqis die are reported in the media.

As of 7 January 2010, the IBC estimate was in the range 94,939 to 103,588 [36] (and the death toll is rising again). The IBC view is that the actual number could be double that. Other estimates have been much, much higher.

But, a murderous tyrant has been removed and is no longer in a position to murder innocent Iraqis? This was the message the Prime Minister gave the House of Commons on the eve of the invasion (19 March 2003):

> "Of course, I understand that, if there is conflict, there will be civilian casualties. That, I am afraid, is in the nature of any conflict, but we will do our best to minimise them. However, I point out to my hon. Friend that civilian casualties in Iraq are occurring every day as a result of the rule of Saddam Hussein. He will be responsible for many, many more deaths even in one year than we will be in any conflict." [37]

The message was clear: left alone, Saddam Hussein would kill more innocent Iraqis in a year than will be killed in the upcoming conflict. Ultimately, more lives would be saved by taking military action to overthrow him.

So, on 19 March 2003, how many innocent Iraqis would one have expected Saddam Hussein to kill in the next twelve months, if he were left alone? Presumably, the Prime Minister had a figure in his head when he spoke. Scores would seem to be a reasonable estimate: Amnesty International estimated that "scores of people, including possible prisoners of conscience, were executed" in 2002, a similar number in 2001 and "hundreds" in 2000 [38], and nobody can accuse Amnesty International of being soft on Saddam Hussein.

Saddam Hussein would have had to remain in power for thousands of years to match the carnage unleashed by the US/UK in overthrowing him.

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A Socialist View Of The Ottoman Empire

By Pat Walsh

Our understanding of the Ottoman Empire is deeply coloured by the British Great War propaganda of Wellington House, a secret department of the British State, established to wage ideological war on the enemy—whoever that enemy might be. In November 1914 the British war took on a new enemy—the Ottoman Empire. Propaganda was necessary to cultivate hatred of the Turk to put the masses in uniform. And because the Liberal war discounted compulsion, even to save civilization, propaganda had an essential function in volunteering.

This propaganda was designed to counter the view that "the Turk is a gentleman" —a view promoted by England when the British State wished to justify its support for the Ottoman Empire in the face of the hostility of Gladstonian Christian morality.

The Ottoman Empire was characterized in this propaganda as a decrepit and ramshackle affair—the "sick man of Europe." The origin of this phrase is older than Wellington House, dating back to the time of the Crimean War. Czar Nicholas attempted to convince Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, that the Ottoman Empire was on the point of collapse. The Czar told the Ambassador, "we have a sick man on our hands, a man who is seriously ill; it will . . . be a great misfortune if he escapes us one of these days, especially before all the arrangements are made." (Cited in Alan Palmer, *The Banner of Battle; the Story of the Crimean War*, p.56)

The "arrangements" the Czar had in mind were for the sharing out of the Ottoman Empire by the European Powers. But at this time England was most unwilling to see the Russians down at Constantinople and instead of a sharing of Ottoman spoils they went to war with Russia in the Crimea the following year to resuscitate the "sick man of Europe."

But a half century later there was a dramatic turnabout and the Ottomans became the "sick man of Europe" —an empire of Armenian massacres, peopled by a lazy race of bloodthirsty Turks, incapable of governing themselves, let alone others, who destroyed everything they touched and retarded progress everywhere they had conquered. The Turks were "a merciless oppressor," "a remorseless bully," "pure barbarians," "degenerate," and had "strewn the earth with ruins." (These are some phrases used about Turks in *The Clean-fighting Turk, a Spurious Claim* by Mark Sykes. But they could have come from a hundred similar publications from the period)

The message was that the demise of the Ottoman Empire was inevitable and far too long in coming.

And yet the Ottoman Empire was an amazingly successful and durable construction. This fact was well argued by—A.S. Headingley in *The British Socialist*, Vol. 2., No. 5. May 15, 1913, (pp. 193-202.)

The article was published just after the conclusion of the peace in the First Balkan War.

The First and Second Balkan Wars were two wars in South-

Eastern Europe during 1912-1913 in the course of which the Balkan League of Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, encouraged by Russia, attacked and conquered the Ottoman territories of Albania, Montenegro and most of Thrace—and then fell out over the division of the spoils—leading to Turkey recovering Eastern Thrace up to Adrianople.

The Balkan Wars came about as a result of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. This Agreement represented a settling of accounts on England's part with the Russians in order that the "Russian steamroller" would be enlisted for a future war on Germany. It ended the Great Game between England and Russia.

The Great Game had an Asian aspect around Afghanistan but it also had a European aspect. The European aspect involved blocking Russia in the Balkans through support of the Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against Russian expansionism. But with the 1907 Agreement, and without the restraining forces of England and France, Russia saw itself as having a free hand in the Balkans and initiated the first steps of its movement down to Constantinople.

The Balkan League was largely a creation of Izvolski, the Russian Foreign Minister, who hoped to use it as an instrument to finally drive the Austrians from the Balkans and the Turks from Europe. It was aided by certain agents of the British State who were let loose to sow the seeds of chaos in the Balkans, in the interest of destabilizing the region and making it a barrier to German links to Asia. And all restraints were removed from the various Balkan nationalisms by this activity.

In the course of writing a book about the Great War on Turkey I came across a socialist argument against the reorientation of British policy which was driving Europe to war. It is very interesting in what it says about the character of the Ottoman State, its success, Islam and the implications of British policy for the area. Below then is the socialist case for the Ottoman Empire, and its preservation, in the interests of peace and stability in the region, and the world, from A.S. Headingley in *The British Socialist*, Vol. 2., No. 5. May 15, 1913, (pp. 193-202.):

> "In ordinary history, we read of the Oghuz Turks driven out of Central Asia in the earlier part of the thirteenth century and establishing themselves in Armenia, where, after varying fortunes, they found a great leader in the person of Othman or Osman. He invaded Byzantine territory, and after him is named the Ottoman Empire which he founded. But what we want to know is the why and wherefore. How came this Empire to spread so far over Europe, subjugating Christian countries, and why did so many Christians gladly abjure their creed to embrace the faith of Islam? Already other Mohammedans had swept Christianity clean out of Egypt and all the northern coasts of Africa. In Spain, in Italy, in the south of France, and from the East right up to the walls of Vienna, in the centre of Europe, the victorious tide of Islam rose irresistibly. Why? Historians say but little about this.
>
> They talk of the generalship, of the warlike qualities of the Mohammedans, as if half Europe could be conquered by generalship and the discipline and training of troops. Neither Julius Caesar nor Napoleon could have invaded the greater part of Europe if they had not brought with them something the invaded countries desired. With Julius Caesar came all the advantages of a much higher civilisation, with Napoleon the aureole of the Revolution, the advent of democracy, the destruction of inherited privileges. When, however, it became evident that Napoleon was betraying the cause he had represented, Europe, instead of submitting, rose against him and he was defeated.
>
> To-day, then, of all time, is the chosen moment for explaining why Islam triumphed in Europe, and why at present it is no longer able to hold its own. We are not going to bring about the Socialist millennium by standing in the gutter and crying out to busy men and women that they should pause and pity the sorrows of the poor working man. The workers who will forward the cause of Socialism are the historians and the scientists who can grip hold of every current event that does attract the attention of the great mass of the people and point out its economic and moral cause, its economic and ethical remedy. All great events lend themselves to such interpretations, and certainly this is the case with the Eastern question.
>
> Why did Christian countries offer so feeble a resistance to the conquering sword of Islam, why was Christianity so easily replaced by the newer religion? Because the tiller of the soil had a better opportunity of earning his living under the laws that were based on the Koran than under the laws established by the feudal lords in Christian countries. Because Islam was comparatively and in practice far more democratic than the Christian forms of government. Under Islam all who embrace the faith are really equals, and both in Egypt and India even slaves have become Sultans. The European serfs were more cruelly downtrodden than the poorest children of Islam.
>
> Further, and what is too readily forgotten, Christians fled from Christian countries, sought refuge under the Crescent, so as to enjoy religious freedom. Thus the Nestorians were saved from total extinction by seeking asylum in Mohammedan countries. Even to this day, thousands and thousands of pilgrims and tourists go every year to the Holy Land where they unwittingly pay homage to the tolerance showed by the Mohammedans. When the Saracens conquered Jerusalem they respected the holy places of a religion in which they did not believe. When did a victorious Crusader show any respect for a Mohammedan mosque? When did a Christian sect refrain from persecuting another Christian sect if it was strong enough to satisfy its resentment?
>
> To-day, at Easter, at Jerusalem, it is the Turkish troops who, with fixed bayonets, prevent the rival Christian sects from tearing each other to pieces. Let those who cannot afford to travel so far and see for themselves get some photographs of the Easter festivities. Thus, from the first, Christians fled from fellow Christians to find freedom and safety among the children of Islam. Thus we get our first lesson. It should be fully elaborated with much historical evidence in support; then we would realise that the Moors, the Saracens and the Turks triumphed in Europe because they were more tolerant, because they granted more freedom, because their social institutions permitted greater social equality, and because their economic laws rendered it easier for the willing worker to earn his living.
>
> If we Socialists are one day to rule the world we must study what were the causes that facilitated the great changes wrought in history. We cannot, of course, blindly imitate those who were successful in the past, but many of the elements that contributed to such success would still constitute a force in a modern movement. Now, above all, Islam represented the cause of Education. Christianity had obliterated the science, the philosophy, the literature, the arts of the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations, and had plunged Europe into what the Christians themselves described as the Dark Ages. The Saracens had the great works of the ancient Greeks, notably Aristotle, translated into Syriac and Arabic, they encouraged learning by every means possible. 'Go,' says Mohammed, 'and ask everywhere for instruction, even, if necessary, as far as China.' A verse in the 'Hadice,' or 'Words of the Prophet,' says, 'He who seeks after instruction is more loved by God than he who fights in a holy war.' While the Christians forbade all the sciences and burnt the scientists at the stake, Mohammed proclaimed, with a voice of thunder, that: - 'It is a sacrilege to prohibit science. To ask for science is to worship God, to teach is to do an act of charity. Science is the life of Islam and the pillar of our faith.'
>
> And finally we have this sublime sentence: - 'He who instructs the ignorant is like the living among the dead.'
>
> There, then, we have our moral: just as the Saracens and the Turks routed the Christians so shall the Socialists rout the Capitalists when the Socialists prove that they have attained a higher standard of living in the sciences, in the practical application of democratic principles and in the realisation of economic progress.
>
> It may be objected, however, that I am writing as if the Turks had been victorious instead of defeated in the recent war. That shows I suffer from the usual frailty of preferring the agreeable to the disagreeable, and it is more pleasing to describe how obscurantism was humiliated than to relate why those to whom we owe so much are now well-nigh driven out of Europe.
>
> Here, again, we have an illustration of a need of a Socialist Press, instead of only a capitalist Press and a Press devoted to the religions of capitalism. This Press, nevertheless, must think we are very blind and very ignorant. It gives various reasons why the non-Moslem populations of the Balkans are now dissatisfied with Ottoman rule, but why were they not dissatisfied before? During centuries no complaints were heard. It is only within the last eighty, or at most a hundred years, that the various peoples under Ottoman rule began to agitate and to rebel. For centuries they seem to have been fairly

satisfied, and the Socialist will at once note that the development of dissatisfaction coincides with the development of modern industrialism. It may also be observed that in England the anti-Turk feeling is strongest among the Party and section of the people who are most intimately associated with industrialism and commercialism. Thus, just as the Socialist was a pro-Boer, so is he likely to be a pro-Turk. And, just as the Boer and the Turk were not in the swim of modern cosmopolitan high finance, so are they both likely to go under—at least till the Revolution comes.

There are, of course, many factors affecting the alteration of the position; but steam power and modern machinery may be considered as having the most potential. As such facilities of international communication as railway lines and steamships increased, the Ottoman Empire was placed at a disadvantage in its relations with the rest of the world. So long as the Empire's business could be carried on by the small handicraftsmen and by small tradesmen, the Ottoman Empire held its own. With its guilds to maintain a living wage for all the workers there was no widespread dissatisfaction. But railways brought in cheap machine-made articles that sapped the trade and labour of the handicraftsman. They and the steamships also rendered an invasion much easier; and we know that, from the time of Catherine the Great, it has been the traditional policy of Russia to endeavour to seize Constantinople. On the other hand, Austria, defeated by Prussia, has been forced to relinquish its former position as a Germanic Power, and therefore directs its ambition in the opposite direction—namely, towards what used to be the Ottoman Empire. Salonica, in the hands of Austria, would probably replace Brindisi as the nearest port to the Suez Canal for the overland route to India. Already Austria has annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and has frequently threatened the military occupation of the Sanjak of Novi Bazar. Neither Austria nor Russia, therefore, had any desire to see the Ottoman Empire consolidate itself. The more disorder the greater the opportunities for interference and for annexations. Thus it is that agents were sent to foment discord between the rival races and creeds.

Disturbances were all the more easy to produce as the economic situation was becoming more and more unfavourable to the inhabitants. The Mohammedan religion forbids usury; therefore most of the banking is done by Armenians, Greeks and Jews. This did not matter so much in the handicraft days; but now that most enterprises need large capital the Turk is placed at the terrible disadvantage of having to seek the aid of those who do not belong to his race, or creed, when it is necessary to obtain a loan. It is the Armenians and other non-Moslems who have been chiefly instrumental in creating the Ottoman Debt. Now the Turk demands that the Armenian should respect his life as a citizen and not break down his guild and his living wage.

When a business is sold it is the Armenian who outbids the Turk; then he undercuts the other Turks who are in the same business. The usurious Armenian contrives to inveigle the Turk into borrowing money, and makes him sign papers the meaning of which he barely understands. Patiently he waits till the Turk is away, serving his time in the army. The usurious Armenian then swoops down on the estate and takes more than his due when there are only relatives present to defend the rights of the absentee. Also it is quite probable the soldier will die while in the army, and never return to put matter to rights. Thus the impoverished widow and orphan children grow up to hate the Armenian. Usury, so widely practised by Christians, is an abominable crime in the eyes of the simple-minded, unenlightened Mohammedan. It is the cause of many murders, particularly if the usurer is an Armenian and the borrower is a Kurd. Yet in England we have been led to believe that the massacre of Armenians was due to religious fanaticism.

A Turk explains the situation in his way:-'I and my son are bakers and barbers. You and your sons are lapidaries and gardeners. But if you bid one of your sons to be a barber, a second to be a baker, a third a lapidary and a fourth a gardener, all is confusion, and how can good come of it?'

'Furthermore, he is no barber nor baker who does not belong to the Guild of Barbers and the Guild of Bakers. If your son go not to the Peshkadin and rank himself among the apprentices; next to the Tchavosh, to bid him inscribe his name on the rolls; then to the Kihaya, to pay him toll, how would he be a member of the Guild? Ask the Sheik if I have not spoken well.'

Thus the occasional massacre of Christians by Turks is no more due to religious fanaticism than the Luddites' riots in England, or the Trade Union outrages Broadhead organised many years ago against the blacklegs in Sheffield. But it suited the politicians, who were in search of a pretext for attacking the Turk and robbing him of his possessions, to ascribe this regrettable violence to his religion. There again we need a Socialist Press to expose the economic basis of current events. The British Nonconformists have been especially eloquent in the misrepresentation of what has happened in Turkey. Pozzo di Borgo, former Russian Ambassador, was far more frank, for he openly confessed that as the Russians were nearly beaten by the unreformed Turks, they were not going to allow them to reform. Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha nobly strove to make the paper reforms, drawn up after the Crimean War, real and effective reforms. We know that it was the intrigues and pressure of Russia that caused the exile of Midhat Pasha and thwarted his constitutional schemes. Disorder has been systematically maintained in Turkey, and good administration rendered impossible, by foreign, especially Russian, provocating agents. Is it conceivable that Russia would allow orderly constitutional government to be established on its frontiers, either in Turkey or in Persia, while keeping the Russians themselves under the tyrannical and cruel rule of the Czar?

All this underhand, murderous, and criminal intriguing has now come to a head. The Turkish Empire has been dismembered and exists no longer as an important European Power. The natural consequence is that the thieves are quarrelling over the spoils. Already there has been a good deal of unofficial fighting between the Bulgarians, the Servians, and the Greeks as to their respective shares of the newly-acquired territories. But they are mere pawns in the game. The real contest that imperils the peace of Europe is between Austria and Russia. Bulgarians, Servians, and Montenegrins being, broadly speaking, of the same Slav race and the same religion, have throughout been backed by Russia, and are, in practice, mere outposts of the Russian Empire. Through them Russia hopes ultimately to become a Mediterranean Power.

On her side, Austria seeks to check this Russian expansion and prepare the way for her own growth. Therefore she has conceived the idea of creating a new Principality by giving the Albanian race a national existence of their own. For the moment, therefore, the struggle is between Russia, which endeavours to make this new Principality as small and as weak as possible, and Austria, which, on the contrary, would have Albania stand forth as a powerful buffer State. Where our interest as Socialists comes in should now be clearly defined; and here, once more, we need a wealthy Socialist Press, able to employ learned specialists, with local experience, to elucidate the problem. Is Russia to advance and advance till, as Napoleon said, Europe becomes Cossack and the Holy Orthodox Church dominates the world from Constantinople? Or is Austria to expand till she reinstalls the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church at St. Sophia's, so that, from Constantinople, Europe may come under the heel of the Jesuit?

This is a prospect that places us between the Devil and the deep sea. But these are the practical politics of to-day, and our future depends to a large extent on the solution of these problems. As the knowledge of these dangers extends, there will be a better appreciation of the service rendered to the cause of peace by the Ottoman Empire, and greater regret that by its disappearance the dogs of war have been let loose. It is true that, for the moment, the more acute causes of quarrel have been removed, but the situation is inherently dangerous, and is likely to remain so for a long time to come. The Socialist Party has, I sincerely believe, largely helped to preserve the peace so far. It is the knowledge that there is a revolutionary party at home keenly watching for its opportunity that has so alarmed the various Governments concerned as to make them fear to embark on foreign wars. But we cannot rely on this for all time, and therefore greatly need information and guidance as to the economic bearing of all these complications, and how the difficulties the capitalist Governments have brought about should be handled by Socialists. We have to prove our superior statesmanship before we can expect communities to entrust us with the reins of government."

Review

Marxist approaches to Irish history writing
L'Ecriture marxiste de l'histoire irlandaise
By Romain Ravel
MA dissertation 2007 University of Reims, France

by Cathy Winch

This is a 570-page dissertation written (in French) by Romain Ravel, a student at a French university, about Marxist writing of the history of Ireland. It begins with three quotes, from James Joyce, Karl Marx and the BICO:

'History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' James Joyce,'*Ulysses*

'The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.' Karl Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

'In Ireland, history is propaganda.' BICO, *The Economics of Partition*.

The BICO features prominently in the dissertation: it is mentioned at some length in at least 57 separate occasions throughout the dissertation, with numerous quotes; the organisation is often mentioned at the end of the various sections, as if given the last word on all questions.

Because of the way the work is structured, however, you do not get a clear idea of what the BICO is or what the author thinks of it: Ravel does not analyse each author or group one after another, instead he examines what each author or group has to say under a (large) number of different headings.

Romain Ravel begins with an overview, or catalogue (his word) of the writers of Irish history (not all of them Irish) who have had some connection at some point with Marxism; then he looks at important events in Irish history and for each event or period describes what each writer had to say about it. So the views of the BICO are not explained all in one go but piecemeal, in connection with various events, and the same goes with all the other authors.

Ravel starts with the classics, Marx, Engels, Connolly and Lenin, then continues with those who would say that they are followers of Marx e.g. C. Desmond Greaves, David Reed, and those who have read Marx but do not consider themselves Marxists. (Chapters 1 and 2). The bibliography follows this division: the main sources are 'Marxist' and include the BICO *The Economics of Partition*, *The Two Irish Nations*, and BICO articles published between 1971 and 1979. The next section lists non-marxist writers connected in some way to Marxism, and includes later BICO publications. Ravel however mainly uses early publications, principally *The Economics of Partition.*

Ravel does not set out the events in chronological order, but in order of ideas: first the founding theme of Marxist history writing on Ireland (Chapter 3), second, the modes of production in Ireland (Chapter 4); third, the (national) revolution (Chapter 5); then the last part (Chapters 6 and 7) is devoted to Northern Ireland.

The founding theme of Marxist history writing in Ireland is the Union to the Crown 1801-1921. The items dealt with here are Grattan's Parliament, the Famine, the Land League, Young Ireland, movements like the Ribbon Society, the Fenians, the Home Rule movement, and the Land Acts.

Chapter 4 leaps back to the Gaels to discuss modes of production in Ireland: primitive communism, feudalism, the conquest, development or not of capitalism. Grattan appears again, the Volunteers, the United Irishmen, Robert Emmet and 1803.

With this enormous amount of material, Ravel cannot also explain Irish history; he directs the unsure reader to a French history of Ireland by Jean Guiffan or to Roy Foster's *Modern Ireland 1600-1972.* (Ravel believes that history is always written with a purpose, yet he is seduced by the 'objective' authoritative historian who has done research and has become the ultimate reference.) Neither does he have the space to comment on the views of his authors; as he says himself, he lets the texts speak for themselves. But to keep track of his various authors Ravel puts markers on them: for example, the 'Trotskyite' Lysaght, the 'academics' Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, the 'CP member' T.A. Jackson, and those are labels which the recipients would not deny. Other markers, such as the 'Stalinist/Unionist' BICO/ Brendan Clifford and the 'anti-khruschevite' Angela Clifford are controversial and not explained, originating probably from unquestioned hearsay.

This is a very comprehensive work; it considers professional historians, and also militants and others whose writings can be seen as historical. Ravel says he has only read works in English and French and so probably missed out on important research from Russia and Poland for example which has not been translated. However, 138 works are listed at the end as primary sources, 60 more as additional sources, then newspapers from 1898 to 1941, then interviews and written answers to a questionnaire Ravel sent to his authors. An interview with A. and B. Clifford in 2006 is acknowledged.

After that there is a huge bibliography under six headings (On Marxism, On Ireland, On disciplines other than history, Websites, etc); the seventh heading 'What should also have been read' contains other books by authors already mentioned. You get the impression that the author has read the books. One book he is unfair about—*The Great Hunger* by Cecil Woodham-Smith, an 'over simplistic best seller' according to him—he does not list as one he has read; he must have picked up this comment in Mary Daly's *Revisionism and Irish history, the Great Famine,* and adopted it (he acknowledges his debt to Mary Daly in his treatment of the Famine).

Because he is writing an academic thesis he has to start with the questions he intends to answer by the end of the work. He presents two questions:

1) What is the role of Marx's ideas in the battle of ideas in Ireland? 'Socialists in all countries have always followed Ireland's struggle against its oppressors with the greatest of sympathy' (Kautsky) but socialism and Marxism have had few echoes in Ireland.

2) What does it mean to represent oneself as a Marxist? And what is the connection between historical interpretation and political practice?

For each writer he wants to find out his tradition, his political identity, and also his intentions in terms of politics or relations with other history writers, and, in the light of both his past and his future, to analyse his present writing. Rather an ambitious plan: to do that for one author would have been plenty.

The dissertation actually begins with a lengthy discussion of history writing, Marxism, and the Marxist treatment of the

national question, with Ernest Gellner and Tom Nairn, then 'Ronald', Lenin, Kautsky, Otto Bauer, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek, Trotsky, and more.

Ravel remarks that Marxism is past its heyday. Marx is dead. This decline of Marxist thinking has consequences for history writing.

According to Ravel, there is no accepted definition of 'Marxist'; the frontier between Marxist and non-Marxist is not well defined. Marx himself said he was not a Marxist. Ravel will call 'Marxist' the founding fathers and their continuers; also authors who tried to understand the problem raised by the history of Ireland through concepts taken from Marxism, e.g. mode of production and class struggle, without necessarily thinking of themselves as Marxists, for example: Peadar O'Donnell, Andrew Boyd, and Ian Lustick.

Ravel makes general comments about history writing: it is never an 'immaculate conception'. History has been written for political purposes, starting with the British colonial power, putting out the idea that there was no trace of civilisation in the island before the conquest. Today it is always influenced by the personality of the writer, his political or academic objectives, even his career objectives. However Ravel does not always keep this caveat in mind; he has a tendency, as I mentioned above, to refer to 'historians' as authorities who have the last word against the squabbling politicos. For example: 'To-day's historians agree that 'value-free' history is a naive idea.' 'Historians agree that the Irish Celtic past is a myth'; 'Historians (here in the shape of Richard English in *Irish Freedom*) agree that 'During the Great Famine and the following decades the character of the Irish rural population changed from predominantly proletariat to predominantly bourgeois.''

Ravel explains to his French audience the meaning of the term 'revisionism' in Irish history writing: it started in the thirties but became significant in the seventies due to the growing tensions in Northern Ireland. It is an attempt to overcome the division of historical practice in two rival camps: unionism and especially nationalism. It is an effort to promote the dialogue between researchers and students of the two communities. Ravel quotes a specialist of the question, Paraskevi Gkotzaridis, who, in an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, sees revisionism as susceptible of several definitions: first it can be seen as coming from a nation tormented by the question of its identity, secondly, as a late intellectual reply by the descendants of the old elite against the winners on the political and economic level of the earthquake of 1916-1921-23; it is thirdly, and more plausibly, an understanding that the global solution to the misfortunes of the island cannot be a unilateral nationalism which did not take into consideration the aspirations of the protestant community.

These three views of revisionism are presented with the only comment that the third definition is probably the best. The third definition denies all political bias, except a benevolent one: revisionist history writing will help to solve the country's problems. Ravel calls Connolly a precursor of neo colonialism theory, by which he refers to the question of the relationship between the erstwhile colonial power and its former colony. However, he does not pursue the idea or see that it might be central to the question of revisionism in history writing. He thinks revisionist history is a good thing in terms of peace and reconciliation and does not enquire further.

Ravel discusses practically the whole of Irish history, and he describes so many views of it by so many authors, that he cannot judge which interpretation fits the facts better; in order to do that, he would need to have a strong view himself on interpretations, and be able to defend his interpretations. This is not his purpose, but this approach leaves the reader with a feeling of an incomplete work with a disappointing conclusion. His conclusion does not go beyond the idea presented in the introduction that the Marxist standpoint in history writing is outdated and no more than 'conceptual dressing up'. Strangely, he had also given a preview of this conclusion half way through the book when mentioning Brendan Clifford's words: 'I stopped writing as a Marxist thirty years ago'.

The conclusion however does not do justice to the work. Ravel has given a very comprehensive panorama of Irish history and of history writing about Ireland. To get an idea of his achievement let us look at his treatment of one event, the Famine, and in annex, one author, James Connolly. First, the Famine.

After remarking that 'The Famine is the only universally known event in Irish history' Ravel starts with Marx's treatment of the event then that of Connolly, Kautsky and nationalist history writers. Then he comes to the 'revisionist' view.

Marx's standpoint, while clothed in scientific language, was fundamentally moral in origin. The famine according to Marx was an economic war launched against the Irish people.

Marx wrote in the New York *Daily Tribune* of 1853: 'The needy Irish tenant belongs to the soil while the soil belongs to the English Lord.' The famine was a gigantic expropriation. This is also the view of nationalist history writing, e.g. D. George Boyce.

When reading Marxist writing about the famine, one feels a sort of weight of the past, a rage; e.g. T.A. Jackson, D. Greaves, Erich Strauss, Terry Eagleton (the Irish Auschwitz).

In the nationalist version of events, the causes of the famine are free trade and the market economy, the decline of the economy since the end of protectionism and Grattan's Parliament; Connolly thought that there was enough food on the island to feed twice the number of people, an idea found in John Mitchel and taken up by Canon John O'Rourke in 1874. Kautsky does not mention the famine, Ravel surmises that this is perhaps because he had welcomed the 1921 treaty and did not want to stress English Irish differences.

Erich Strauss thought that 'the dependence of Irish agriculture on foreign markets, which contrasted so strangely with the crude subsistence farming of the mass of the people, was the necessary result of Ireland's colonial status.'

Cecil Woodham Smith also gave a nationalist account.

After this nationalist history of the Famine came a revision which according to Mary Daly started in the 1960s with the precursors Louis Cullen and a Marxist, Raymond Crotty. For Crotty, the famine was not a break in the history of Ireland, but a continuation and a consequence of the economic situation created by the end of the Napoleonic wars, i.e. the end of high demand for Irish agricultural produce.

Crotty considered the long-term economic cycles; he studied the increase in population, due according to him to increased demand for food, in particular wheat, in England from 1760; the victory of 1815 meant that European markets were opened to England, and the price of wheat fell. Rents in Ireland however did not fall. That meant that large holdings for cattle rearing, as opposed to wheat growing, were the only ones that could be viable financially. This meant turning the peasants from the land where wheat was cultivated. The famine contributed to this expropriation, but it would have happened anyway. The historian Louis Cullen is in agreement. According to Mary Daly, this removed the Famine from its central position in Irish history.

This was not new according to Ravel: Connolly and communist authors also saw the year 1815 as determinant.

The BICO approved of Crotty's analysis.

The aftermath of the famine was an improvement in the standard of living of the surviving farmers, and a decline in the number of the landlords. This goes against Marx and Connolly, who insisted on the poverty of the masses after the famine, with the repeal of the Corn Laws. The BICO however approved of this development, in a cold-blooded manner:

'But there can be no doubt that, in terms of class development, it was the peasantry who benefited from it [the Famine]. The landlords individually did not starve during the famine, as did the peasantry. But the Famine brought the old landlord class to ruin, while it speeded up the economic development of, and legal emancipation of, the peasantry.' *The Economics of Partition*. Ravel says that it is undeniable that peasants who survived and did not emigrate had a more secure life, and that free trade signed the death warrant of aristocratic domination. Here Ravel indulges in a little commentary on the BICO: describing this change coolly in terms of 'class development' could only be done by someone 'who takes ownership of the crimes of Stalin'. Well, if you keep calling a group 'Stalinist' without knowing why you do so, you have to do something with that label and this must have seemed an opportunity too good to pass.

Ravel had presented revisionism as favouring reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. However he says that the revision of the history of the Famine centres round the question of whether the Famine marked a watershed in Irish history. *The Economics of Partition* looks at that question and says 'It depends what is meant by watershed' and points out that the changes that were necessary after 1815 did not occur in a controlled manner but in a catastrophic manner, and in that sense the Famine marked a drastic change. The catastrophe does not lose its character as a catastrophe for having its roots in the past.

The passage in *The Economics of Partition* that Ravel is referring to, in his 'stalinist' criticism, continues with a discussion of the uses of Marxism for good history writing; a critic of *The Economics of Partition* had accused it of not being Marxist on one crucial point: 'Whither Marxism!' was the exclamation of the critic. The reply to that criticism quoted from Marx to the effect that capitalist development did not follow a set pattern, adding that once capitalist development had occurred in some countries—that is, historically, in Britain and Holland—this would ensure that it would not be able to occur in the same way in other countries, e.g. Ireland. Here is an example of use of the original Marxist text, and of Marxist ideas, together with a demonstration that you need to look at what actually happened, which Ravel might have taken notice of.

Revisionism in history writing

Ravel mentions the importance nationalists and unionists both attach to history, and cites the marches that both groups indulge in. It seems to him therefore that a history that did not take sides would reconcile the two groups.

Thus, in his view, revisionism is a good because it aims at reconciliation, and reconciliation can only be a good thing, especially when the quarrel was not fundamentally serious. For him the parties that need reconciling are Catholics and Protestants, not the Irish and the British.

I have the impression that for Ravel the quarrel in Ireland is essentially religious, and therefore pointless. I wonder if his French background influences him in this. The French don't see Catholics as special, the word 'Catholic' to them is almost synonymous with 'Christian'; being Catholic is their way of being Christian; Protestants have had a very low profile in France. They feature in French history (and recent films) in guilt-inducing stories of the St Bartholomew massacre, the repeal of the Edict of Nantes and the subsequent mass exodus of the 'Huguenots'. The essayist Montaigne, who lived during the Wars of Religion, is remembered and celebrated as advocating tolerance between the religions. The Wars of Religion are remembered as a shameful episode of senseless violence.

In chapter four Ravel makes a connection between European religious wars and Irish wars: wars in Ireland in the 17th century, he says on p 314, were religious conflicts 'inherited from the European religious wars of the 16th century'. He is aware that Cromwell etc waged wars of conquest, but does not draw any conclusions from that.

Ravel has a title in his fourth Chapter: "Religious tensions between Catholics and Protestants in the 18th Century" which makes you think he does not have the measure of the situation.

I wonder if Ravel is influenced by Connolly on this, as well as by his own background; he says that Connolly wrote in order to reduce differences between the two communities. The quotations Ravel chooses from Connolly to describe the Penal Laws for example do minimise their anti-Catholic character:

> "Those laws, although ostensibly designed to convert Catholics to the Protestant faith, were in reality chiefly aimed at the conversion of Catholic-owned property into Protestant-owned property."

Connolly said the Penal Laws of 1690-1720 were not implemented, because they were "too horrible" (in *Labour in Irish History*); Ravel comments that the Penal Laws had a limited impact, except symbolically. And again here he relies on a "real" "objective" historian, who has the last word, R. English in *Irish Freedom*, who corroborates Connolly on this. This does not stop Ravel from saying one sentence later that the Irish were excluded from owning property and that some went into commerce instead, which seems quite a result from laws that were not implemented.

The special case of the 'revision' of the history of the Famine.

When Ravel talks about the revision of the history of the Famine, all he sees is that later, 'revisionist' historians shifted the focus from 1845-47, the Famine years, to the years before the famine, whereas earlier historians had focussed on the role of Britain during the Famine. He does not draw the conclusion that since the economic situation of Ireland was entirely dependent on her relationship with Britain, saying that this situation had been going on for years does not change the character of British actions during the Famine. It is not as such a revision of history, because both accounts complement each other and are not contradictory.

Annex: James Connolly

What follows is Ravel's description of Connolly's ideas, under a series of headings as set out in the dissertation, together with Ravel's few comments. Ravel says that Connolly is in many respects the greatest revolutionary that the British Isles have produced; he is perhaps also the most original Marxist thinker among English speakers.

Many think his magnum opus, *Labour in Irish History* (1910), a compilation of articles from the newspaper *Workers Republic* from 1898 ought to occupy a more prestigious place in the world Marxist corpus.

The directing thread in this work is that capitalism was imported into Ireland by the English, and the Irish working class is the only force capable of knocking down British domination. In 1896 Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party in

Dublin to establish an Irish socialist republic, founded on the public ownership of land and the means of production, distribution and exchange. The conquest of power would be via the ballot box. Transport and banks would be nationalised; social security increased, access to education widened and universal suffrage established, including for women.

Connolly then went to America where he became involved in trade union struggles. Back in Ireland in 1910, he admired the work of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, the trade union of James Larkin, which was bold in the face of employers and independent vis a vis British trade unions.

Labour in Irish History rejects most bourgeois historians. 'Irish history has ever been written by the master class—in the interests of the master class.' Ravel notes that *Labour in Irish History* rests almost entirely on reading bourgeois, in particular nationalist, books. Its originality, more formal than real, is in its attempt to throw light on the producers, the humble Irish people. One book Connolly praises is the nationalist work of Alice Stopford Green. Connolly declares that his own book can be seen 'as part of the literature of the Gaelic revival'. He wants Ireland to return to the Gaelic principle of communal property of the sources of food and sustenance.

According to Ernest Gellner, the revivalist ideology 'claims to defend popular culture whereas in fact it is creating high culture; it claims to protect an ancient popular society whereas it contributes to the construction of an anonymous mass society'. In other words, these Gaelic revivalists were (unconsciously) part of a movement useful to the economic needs of the country, which required the cohesive component of a nationalist ideology.

Anglo Irish literature has given false ideas about the Irish character and the history of Ireland. This idea makes Connolly the first theoretician of neo colonialism.

The Irish question is a social question'; the capitalist system is the most foreign thing in Ireland. Socialism on the other hand is not a foreign idea, since the Irish William Thompson was a precursor of Marx in Ireland. Political independence is a vain objective, since England will always dominate Ireland economically (unless Ireland becomes socialist); 'England would still rule you ... through her capitalists, the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country.' Here Connolly again anticipates neo colonialism.

The middle classes are irremediably linked to England by economic ties. They cannot therefore lead the struggle for independence.

Terribly disillusioned by the failure of the Dublin lock out in 1913-14 and the rout of the internationalist socialist movement with the outbreak of the first world war, Connolly took part in the 1916 Rising, a movement not led by the working class and with 'a quasi imperceptible socialist colour'.

The first chapter, on the main texts of Marxist history writing on Ireland, concludes that Marx, Engels, Connolly and Lenin formed the theoretical foundation of Irish communism and more generally the Marxist approach to Ireland for the following half-century.

We find Connolly again in Chapter Three, when Ravel contrasts the views of Marx and of Connolly on the Act of Union. According to Marx, the Act of Union destroyed Irish industry by abolishing the protectionism established by the Irish Parliament. On the other hand, according to Connolly, the fact that the Union placed all Irish manufactures upon an absolutely equal basis legally with the manufactures of England is usually ignored; the idea that the fleeting prosperity of Ireland was caused by the Grattan parliament is not true

It was an idea propagated by Redmond and the IPP.

Connolly did not believe in the possibility of an independent capitalist Ireland: if Ireland were capitalist, it would be still dependent on England, as we saw above. He did not want to consolidate the capitalist class. 'The act of Union was made possible because Irish manufacture was weak, and, consequently, Ireland had not an energetic capitalist class with sufficient public spirit and influence to prevent the Union. Industrial decline having set in, the Irish capitalist class was not able to combat the influence of the corruption fund of the English Government, or to create and lead a party strong enough to arrest the demoralisation of Irish public life.' (from *Labour in Irish History*). This was a bold idea for the time and represented a break with orthodox Marxism, according to Ravel.

Ravel leaves Connolly there and examines Marxists who judged the Grattan parliament positively before looking at Marxists who developed Connolly's views, viz Crotty and then the BICO.

The next topic to be considered is O'Connell. According to Connolly, O'Connell was the instrument of the Westminster liberal politicians and enemy of trade unions; he hoodwinked the people, another betrayal of the Irish people by the middle classes.

The Famine.

Connolly interprets it as confirmation of eternal bourgeois betrayal. '[The start of the famine] brought to a head the class antagonism in Ireland, of which the rupture with the trades was one manifestation and again revealed the question of property as the test by which the public conduct is regulated, even when those men assume the garb of revolution'; 'those men' are the majority of the supporters of Young Ireland. According to Ravel, Connolly follows the nationalist tradition about the famine, in the sense that he supports the thesis of English guilt: 'it is a common saying amongst Irish Nationalists that 'Providence sent the potato blight; but England made the famine'. The statement is true, and only needs amending by adding that 'England made the famine by a rigid application of the economic principles that lie at the base of capitalist society''(*Labour in Irish History*). However,

Connolly also saw 1815 as a turning point in Irish history.

The next topic is the agrarian struggles 1848-1867. Connolly strongly criticises the leaders of Young Ireland: they were 'cursed by the fatal gift of eloquence' and they missed the revolutionary opportunity that existed then; James Fintan Lalor and John Mitchel were exceptions. On the other hand Connolly approves terrorist agrarian movements of the time.

The Fenians.

Connolly quotes abundantly Marx's remarks on the Fenians. He approves of the Fenians: 'Fenianism was a responsive throb in the Irish heart to these pulsations in the heart of the European working class which elsewhere produced the International Working men's Association.' Ravel comments that Connolly is trying to place the Irish movement in an international context in order to give it validity. Connolly also thought that, although, normally, objective conditions should be ripe for a movement to succeed, the Fenians gained some success despite the conditions not being right, from a Marxist point of view.

The Home Rule movement for self-determination and the agrarian question 1870-1903. Connolly thinks that 'the partial success of the Land League has effected a change in Ireland, the portent of which but few realise.' He says about the very end of Parnell's career: 'It was the real and the true-hearted workingmen of Ireland who sprang to his side and fought his battles.'

The management of the crisis by Britain: the Land Acts 1870-1909.

According to Connolly, the Land Acts 'opened a way for fundamental reorganisation of the social life of the community'.

Lenin was less naive than to think that; for him reforms were useless: without revolution the ruling class kept its privileged place.

Chapter 4 leaps back in time to the Gaels, in order to examine the succession of the different modes of production: primitive communism, feudalism, the conquest, and the beginnings of capitalism until 1798.

Without James Connolly the theme of primitive communism in Ireland would not exist in Marxist history writing on Ireland. Connolly situated his own work within the Gaelic renewal, as we saw above. Ravel thinks that Connolly read Engels on the early history of Ireland. For Connolly the Irish clan system 'was founded upon common property and democratic social organisation' and this form of primitive community survived longer and with greater vitality than anywhere else in Europe. The Irish, having known a certain democratic Golden Age, have never assimilated feudalism and capitalism. England and Ireland 'held fundamentally different ideas on the vital question of property in land.' Connolly was influenced in that by Lewis Henry Morgan (himself admired by Marx and Engels) and by Alice Stopford Green. His vision is idyllic, but false. This Golden Age is a myth. Today's historians agree that Celtic Ireland never existed. Later Marxists stress that Connolly's point was to make a contrast with Britain and thus to attack Britain by putting forward certain values and a critique of individualism.

The conquests.

Connolly is polemical rather than didactic when dealing with this topic, indignation is the dominant factor.

For Connolly the defeat of the rebellion of 1641 meant the end of Irish civilisation; the Confederation of Kilkenny was defeated because of its hybrid composition, a mixture of clan chiefs and Anglo-Irish nobles.

The Williamite conquest.

Connolly was not a Jacobite; James II represented the old aristocratic ruling class and William of Orange represented the bourgeoisie allied to Parliament, and their clash had no appreciable consequence for the ordinary people. They were 'the forces of two English political parties fighting for the possession of the powers of government'. The so-called Patriot Parliament was in reality, like every other parliament that ever sat in Dublin, merely a collection of land thieves and their lackeys.

Connolly's views are valid, according to Ravel; furthermore, he consistently endeavoured not to take sides: 'The unfortunate tenantry of Ireland, whether Catholic or Protestant, were enlightened upon how little difference the war had made to their position as a subject class'. His objective was to build bridges between Catholic and Protestant workers of his time.

Connolly broke with Marxism in not wishing for the development of capitalism in Ireland as a necessary evil for the development of a working class as a vehicle of a socialist revolution; he did not believe in an independent capitalist Ireland.

Creation of secret societies in 1740.

Connolly approved of the Steelboys of Ulster

The Grattan Parliament

The Patriots were not really defending the poor but only using them. Grattan was 'the ideal capitalist statesman; ... he cared more for the interest of property than for human rights or for the supremacy of any religion'.

Chapter 5. The incomplete revolution.

Connolly's destiny marked the failure of socialism in Ireland, but his personality and his writings had a determining influence on the Left in Ireland.

This is a brief summary of Ravel's exposition of Connolly. The rest of the dissertation contains many more mentions of

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Tonight with Vincent Browne: WW1 Commemorations
TV3— Thursday 6 November 2009

with Eunan O'Halpin, Frank Callanan, Pat Walsh and Sean Murphy

Should we be wearing the poppy to commemorate the Irish who died in the First World War? Or were the people who encouraged them to die no better than war criminals? Trinity College Historian Eunan O'Halpin, Barrister and Historian Frank Callanan, author Pat Walsh and Sean Murphy of the British Legion join Vincent.

VB. Next Sunday is Remembrance Sunday; in the words of the British Legion, to remember those who have given their lives for the peace and freedom we enjoy today. Today we discuss whether the commemoration is appropriate since it is argued by many that those who died in the First World War died not for the freedom and peace we enjoy today but in the cause of the imperial ambitions of the major European powers of the time.

Pat Walsh, author of several books about the First World War, which have been critical of participation by Irish people in that war.

Pat Walsh, should the First World War be commemorated, should the memory of those who died in the First World War be commemorated?

Pat Walsh. Well, I think we should consider why it wasn't commemorated for many years; I think the reason for that is that, after the war, Ireland saw itself as having participated in a shameful act, and that it was conned into fighting a war for small nations and ultimately it was a war for imperialist expansionism and I think Ireland really felt a lot of shame about this and really decided to forget the Great War

VB. What is the evidence that Ireland felt a lot of shame about this?

PW. Well, they retreated from the imperial trappings that were associated with militarism.

VB. That's a different point; what is the evidence that Ireland felt shame?

PW. We can look at the histories, the war against Turkey for instance is almost completely forgotten; nobody bothered to write a history of it; large parts of the Great War were forgotten about; they were seen as a thing that an independent Ireland should not have considered participating in.

VB. But Ireland wasn't independent at the time.

PW. No, it wasn't independent; but the state that came after that, the Free State, and the republican element within the Free State obviously distanced themselves, and the historians that grew up around that, historians of independent Ireland for twenty or thirty years decided that this was an act, a massive act of political vandalism that was best forgotten.

VB. For the people who took part from all parts of Ireland, they behaved in many instances very courageously, risked their lives and then gave their lives for a cause that they believed in at the time, or were led to believe in at the time; now shouldn't that be commemorated?

PW. Now that is certainly correct these men were courageous but the Irish state was essentially founded in opposition to the power that encouraged these people to join up and to join Redmond as the recruiter of these people, so it would have been a vast contradiction for republican Ireland

VB. I asked you, should it be commemorated?

PW. Of course it should be commemorated by those involved, and privately so, but should it be a state occasion? I see a great contradiction in it being a state occasion when the state originated in the 1916 Proclamation which talked about our gallant allies in Europe who were effectively the Germans.

VB. And they certainly weren't gallant allies either.

PW. That was the view of Pearse and Connolly.

VB. That was a fiction.

PW. It wasn't.

VB. Of course it was a fiction; they did nothing except send a few guns in a boat with Roger Casement and nothing else.

PW. It's been written out of history that Connolly described the German state as virtually a socialist state and he welcomed the idea that Ireland might become an independent country

VB. That's another fiction

O'Halpin what do you think?

O'H. We are already very confused and we've barely begun. Remembrance Sunday isn't a state occasion, it's in a sense a private occasion; many people welcome the fact that the poppy has reappeared on Irish streets because part of the widespread acceptance of the peace process, of the legitimacy of different kinds of memory in Ireland; I take issue with Pat on several points; for instance after independence it's not the case that the poppy simply disappeared; the commemorations may have been more discreet, but at Trinity college in 1924 there were 74 000 people in College Green to mark Armistice day and so on; the danger is if you look at the detailed record of November 11 in Irish memory it is more complex, it is more visible, it may be less in your face perhaps.

VB. Should we commemorate?

O'H. In the 20s and 30s it certainly didn't go away and contrary to what people suggest it wasn't considered by the state to be particularly hostile or illegitimate and so on.

The British Legion was allowed to march; don't forget, so many thousands of Irishmen did die, the idea that they should be simply written off because they'd gone to serve a cause which one may think may have been wrong.

VB. What is a right one?

O'H. If you are trying to turn Redmond into Karadzic you are entirely mistaken; the terminology of war criminal was used by the producer before we came on; Redmond was in a very difficult position in 1914; on the one hand he believed in Empire and he wanted to demonstrate the loyalty of Ireland to the Empire; he wanted to demonstrate that potentially Home Rule Ireland wouldn't jeopardise the security of the British Isles and to show that nationalists just like unionists could be loyal.

VB. But loyal to what? The people he encouraged to give their lives, what were they giving their lives for?

O'H. Among other things A) as they saw it the qualified freedom of Ireland; and B) the defence of Ireland and the British Isles against what they saw as a hostile aggressive force that was operating in Europe.

VB. There was no aggression against the British Isles.

O'H. We are talking about a different war then; I'm talking about the First World War.

VB. Yes, at the beginning of the war there was no aggression

against the British Isles.

O'H. Because the Germans hadn't got there right.

VB. Britain engaged in the war not for the protection of Britain but for the protection of British imperial interests.

O'H. Why did they go to war in Europe then? It is a European war initially and primarily, not an imperial war; Germany does not present and never intended to present an enormous colonial threat, notwithstanding the early 1900s and so on, the Kaiser wanting his place in the sun; that's not what the war was about. It was the balance of power in Europe ...

VB. That's right, the balance of power in Europe had nothing to do with the freedom of Ireland.

O'Halpin. Irish national sensibilities... to some extent it was about little Catholic Belgium and so on.

VB. Yes, it's nothing to do with balance of power in Europe; little Catholic Belgium was a really vicious nasty state which had done appalling things in the Congo for instance.

O'H. It certainly had.

VB. And the idea of Irish people going to war in defence of a state that had committed such atrocities and war crimes in the Congo is absurd, isn't it?

O'H. John Redmond believed, ultimately hoped that Home Rule Ireland would move towards something like a dominion state, in other words he believed in the Empire; we don't have to say he was right.

VB. Frank, Redmond said it was Ireland's duty to go as far as the firing line extends in defence of right and of religion.

Wasn't that outrageous, essentially the war was about nothing and Redmond was encouraging people to give their lives for no cause; there was no cause?

Frank Callanan. Times were different, it is very difficult to recreate, though Eunan made a good fist of it, the sense of responsibility that there was, of piety, the identification with small European nations. In retrospect we'd be a little more sceptical about it; in our own times there have been terrible mistakes about wars; the horror of war that is so prevalent in our own time goes back to the first world war; precisely because of the horror of WW1, the scale of the slaughter is such that people's thinking about war has changed.

I have a certain difficulty with Redmond's position, which is a limited one.

The Irish Parliamentary Party had got into a somewhat false position; one area of rhetoric that I find quite unsettling, which is the argument that nationalist Ireland had to match loyalist unionist Ireland in the number of people it sent to the front ultimately in terms of casualties; that was a hopeless position for Redmond politically to have got into and, if there is a single issue which marks how far Redmond had travelled from his original Parnellism, it's that.

VB. Redmond is still commemorated by sections of ... for example John Bruton when he was Taoiseach had a painting or photograph of Redmond in his office but this was a man responsible for the slaughter of tens of thousands of Irish people with his encouragement to join this meaningless awful pointless war.

FC. We have a different set of values today; people were much more prepared to go to war; the idea that you could persuade people to go war today is absurd; it would not be successful; people's mind set was different; and we have the wisdom of hindsight; nobody believed the war was going to last.

VB. And Redmond continued to advocate people joining this war long after it became apparent that it wasn't going to be a short war.

Sean, what do you make of this?

Sean Murphy. When I was young and I read the Irish press, I would have been totally anti-Redmond but I think, as we mature and learn a bit more and consider his point of view, that

Redmond did what he saw to be right. Nationalist Ireland felt at that time that their involvement in the war would lead to Home Rule. If the war had finished before 1916 we would have had Home Rule.

VB. Should we commemorate; people were duped and we should attach odium to the memory of the people who duped them.

Sean Murphy. But they weren't duped.

VB. But they were told about peace and freedom, and Catholic Belgium ...

SM. That was the press of the day and you represent the press of today giving a message.

The man who came from my background wasn't duped, he joined for a shilling a day ... Redmond, God love him, did not foresee the slaughter, ...the poor bloody infantryman is required in numbers to win a war (as today in Afghanistan) and given that he is willing to do that he should be honoured ...

O'H. There is also a tradition; there is a strong Irish tradition of joining the armed forces, particularly for fit young men partly militarised already, with the rival volunteers groups in Ireland before the war,; there was a large element of young men joining because their mates were joining and there was a war on. Not for any higher patriotic motives; Tom Barry for example, the legendary guerrilla leader; he was fighting in Mesopotamia; lots of influential IRA figures even on the anti-Treaty side got their first military experience in the British army.

VB. But the portrayal of that war as somehow heroic is a travesty of the reality.

O'Halpin. You show me a war that is heroic where? I don't know what you expect, when somebody gets shot, that they get shot cleanly? That they don't get eviscerated? All wars for those who are doing the killing and are killed are horrific and they are ghastly.

VB. You can argue that for some wars there is an element of heroism in them but this was not a part of WW1.

Some wars are fought for just causes; this wasn't one of them.

O'Halpin. How can you say that? How can you say that the death of a soldier on the Western Front is more of less heroic than the death of a soldier who dies, I don't know, at Little Big Horn or anywhere else?

What was the just war in1939? What was the just cause on 1939? Why did Britain go to war in 1939? To defend Poland's frontier? What happened on 16th September when Poland's other frontier got attacked by the Soviet Union? What is a just war?

VB. Why are you asking me?

O'H. You seem to know everything; I thought you might able to ...

VB. You're a professor aren't you? It's professors know everything ...

O'H. That Vincent Browne knows everything, that's the one thing professors know.

VB. ... You resort to sneers rather than argument; it says something about the quality of your arguments.

Pat Walsh. I think the important thing about this war is that it is so catastrophic; we live with the results of it today; the vapour trails that went across the Atlantic on 9/11 they come from the First World War, that's where they stem from, the destruction of

the Moslem state, the Ottoman Empire etc etc, that's where they originate; the other thing is, just on Eunan's point there, I think what's very different about this war is that Redmond is the prime minister in waiting of Ireland, he's looking for an Irish army and essentially this is the first time in Irish history where Ireland is doing something international and people are being recruited as Irishmen as part of an Irish nation, albeit within the British army and that makes it significantly different from the economic conscription that happened in the years gone by, the battle of Waterloo and stuff like that; this is a marker for the future of Ireland, Home Rule Ireland, a junior partner in the imperial project right across the world and the important distinction here is that Redmond and the Parliamentary Party during the Boer war were on the side of the underdog as they were in Africa and other imperial projects but this new redmondism meant that they were going to be junior partners in imperialism ; this is what marks it out from previous Irish participations.

Frank Callanan. The First World War changes the way we think about war; everybody would be deeply intolerant of the level of casualties that arose out of the deadlock ... western democracies because of the First World War will not tolerate high level of casualties.

O'H. What you get as an alternative is the mass killing of civilians, is that any better?

Vincent Browne. Professor O'Halpin said at the outset of his remarks that it was a private occasion; but it isn't; you have Mary MacAleese going to St Patrick's cathedral on Sunday, you have the Taoiseach probably there, the Irish state is very much involved in the commemoration of this war and should we be commemorating this as something that was in anyway noble? Rather than remembering it as a crime against humanity? Those who encouraged people to join should be remembered with contempt.

Sean Murphy. We are all horrified by what happened in the war but we are not commemorating a war, but individuals; we take pride in the Wild Geese ...

VB. These poor people were encouraged to give their lives for nothing; the war should be remembered as something awful that happened in Irish history.

O'Halpin. Redmond was hoping for an improved version of Home Rule as a result of Irish involvement, rather than the uncertain and diluted version that was offered at the time.

VB. (to Pat Walsh) Another dimension of the commemoration is an acknowledgment that there are other traditions in this country who have other memories and the acknowledgment of the validity of these other memories is an important aspect of the reconciliation of the island as a whole; doesn't this argument carry some force?

Pat. Of course it does, but the way that John Redmond saw it was, that there was going to be a mutual blood sacrifice of nationalist and unionist on the western front to create a united Ireland, and that is a different thing from the current peace process that doesn't involve the killing of Germans or Turks to get Home Rule, and to unite Ireland, which I find an obnoxious project.

Sean Murphy. At the time our northern brethren showed no interest in a united Ireland; Redmond saw that nationalist Ireland joining the North in the war would persuade the unionists that throwing in their lot with southern Ireland would not be the bad thing they feared it would be. This joining together on the battlefield contributed in a small way to the peace we have today in Northern Ireland.

VB. Remembrance Sunday is also the anniversary of the appalling slaughter in Enniskillen on Remembrance Sunday in 1987 when 11 people were murdered at the Cenotaph; I suppose that's another reason why we should be respectful of the commemorations that happen; what do you think Pat?

Pat. I don't think there is any question of being disrespectful to unionists commemorating the Great War, they've always done so; I think what's emerged in recent years is a completely different thing; it's emerged within nationalist Ireland and it's part of a project that is trying to rehabilitate British militarism in Ireland; that is summed up in the book that RTE released last year, called *Our War*. It was commissioned by RTE and took ownership of the WW1 for Ireland and that's definitely a development, a strange development and it's a completely different thing from respecting unionists and nationalists commemorating former relatives or whatever in their ceremonies; there is a political project that is attached to this and that is the problem with the whole issue.

O'Halpin. Can I just say on that

I remember talking to Tod Andrews who is an anti-Treaty Republican and so on, my grand-parents and so on; he mentioned in his memoirs, in the early sixties he had been very keen on the project of building a bridge between Ireland Bridge and Phoenix Park, precisely to incorporate the Ulster dead and the nationalist dead in the wider theme of commemoration if you like of 1916 and so on and I don't think you can call Tod Andrews some sort of lily livered neo conservative pro British or pro empire type figure; his view and that of many including my republican grandparents was that both the unionists and the nationalists who died in WW1 of course deserved to be remembered; it's a different thing from arguing that the cause for which they fought was in fact the one they thought it was or that the outcome was the one which they felt had been promised to them. But the idea that you should ignore them or dishonour their sacrifice Ö Many IRA men, of course, were ex-service men; Tom Barry in 1919 was overseas ...

VB. My question is not about attitudes then but about attitudes now. Should we celebrate? Something to be remembered with pride or with outrage?

Frank Callanan. Celebrations are fairly sombre here; perhaps you can make an argument that in Britain they are shot through with triumphalistic overtones, something I have never perceived here; support for Redmond did not collapse until after post 1916, after the Rising. There was no huge nationalist outrage about Redmond's position in the war at the time, outside a fairly small nascent republican movement, outside Arthur Griffith, Sinn Fein, a small Irish left,

Sean Murphy. Contrary to what Pat says, commemorations started in the 1920s.

Ireland Bridge memorial gardens, the finest memorial site in these Islands built by ex-soldiers of the British army and the Free State army. They weren't supporting Britain; and those who engage in commemorative services today do not commemorate anything British.

Read *Ireland's Great War on Turkey 1914-1924* by Pat Walsh;Athol Books, 2009.

Interview with the Israeli ambassador to London, Ron Prosser, on Radio 4's 'Today' Programme. July 24, 2009.

[The item was introduced by reminding listeners that the Israeli ambassador to France has been carpeted yesterday about the continuing building of settlements in East Jerusalem. The same had happened with the Israeli ambassador in Washington last week.]

R4: Ambassador, have you been talked to by the Foreign Office here about this matter?

P: Always and we have constant talks all the time

R4: What have they said about the settlements in East Jerusalem specifically?

P: Like everyone else they pass some judgement about that but it is important for you to know that Jerusalem from an Israeli perspective is completely different both on the legal side, and on everything else; Jerusalem is the Eternal Capital of the Jewish people, for 4 000 years and it will stay the Eternal Capital. Jews live and will stay in the capital there, others are allowed to live there and in the final talks the status will be on the table.

R4: But you heard what Obama said in Cairo: "The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop." He was clear and unambiguous, no ifs and buts and Jerusalem was no different.

P: He also talked about the bond between the US and Israel being unbreakable which has many foundations. We don't see Jerusalem as a settlement.

R4: But everyone else does—that is the trouble

P: That's the trouble but the trouble also is, when was the last time anyone in the region articulated anything that would be done towards a compromise. What are they willing to do?

R4: That is part of the broader argument; this is a specific point which the US has made regarding settlements in East Jerusalem

P: There is an important difference, Jerusalem was the capital of the Jewish people when certain capitals including London were still a swamp. It is the capital and will stay the capital. Every Jew and every Israeli will have the right to live in our eternal capital of Jerusalem, it is and will always stay the Eternal capital.

R4: Having the right to live is not the same as building settlements on land taken in 1967 and which is occupied territory by international judgements.

P: Well, it is not by our judgement and the specific case talked about in Jerusalem, the present problem centres on the Shepherd Hotel which has been in Jewish hands since 1985, this is private property. Yes, there is a dispute about that. What I am saying is that a lot of progress is to be seen by the Netanyahu government, both in access and movements, and settlements, taking down checkpoints, lessened from 41 to 14, this is important and people should listen to that.

R4: People do listen but it cannot detract from the fact that what happens in Jerusalem is so important in terms of a long tern settlement and that what is happening runs in direct contradiction to what the US and everyone else wants to happen.

P: Now we will focus on how to move forward and have the Arab world made something tangible on their behalf and I have never seen what their vision is.

I have never heard Mahmoud Abbas say what they propose.

R4: Forgive me but you are escaping from focussing on this particular issue which you must accept is important and is an area of disagreement and most people see this as an obstacle to progress.

P: I feel that that this something the world must get used to, the fact that Jerusalem is the capital, the only capital of the Jewish people, it is not and never was a capital of any Arab country nor will it ever be. I was at Camp David [2000] when Ehud Barak put a lot on the table. But it was not taken up. I don't recall any Arab compromises made to their public. Yes Jerusalem is a different story, yes, this is disputed and we have a good reason.

R4: If we had a Palestinian talking he would say with equal conviction that Jerusalem will be the capital of a future Palestinian state and that it has enormous importance in Islam just as in Judaism.

P: I am sure they would say that but we look at it historically. Jerusalem was and is the Eternal capital of the Jewish people, never a capital in the Arab world. After Mecca and Medina maybe it comes out third and may be relevant.

R4: Mr Prosser, you know you are being dismissive in a way that is offensive to what is important to many Moslems.

P: Oh it is true, it must be repeated and if you say Israel must leave Jerusalem, this is our capital, this is the heart of the Jewish people; you can continue and say what you will but if compromise means Israel completely to leave the Holy Land and the capital of the Jewish people then we have a problem.

R4: Nobody is saying that.

P: I feel what is essential, when we are making progress and in the growing economy in the West Bank, whose assets have seen 7% growth in the past year. Probably the only bank whose assets have grown in the past year.....

R4: We must leave it there....

BOOKS (Continued from p.15)

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is reproduced in this book, along with the version submitted to the Court.

The second main witness was Gibbons, whose prevaricating performance in the witness box appalled all those eager to see convictions, including the British Ambassador to Dublin.

On the evidence placed before the Court, it was impossible to convict and the jury didn't. But interested parties immediately started to undermine that verdict and have continued to do so.

Using newspaper reports, this book provides an account of the Court case and sets it in the context of released official documents—many of them Top Secret—from both Irish and British Archives. It allows the principals to speak for themselves.

The Arms Crisis cannot be understood without knowing what happened in the Arms Trial—and that is what this book is about.

Also a pamphlet:

The Arms Crisis: What Was It About?
by Angela Clifford
Athol Books 2009

United Nations Deliberations on the Question of Palestine - The Khazars

[At the meeting of 18th October Mr Husseini of the Arab Higher Committee raised the question of the Khazar origin of the Jews of Eastern Europe; he said that 'the Jews of Eastern Europe, the Ashkenazim, had no ethnic connection with Israel nor, consequently, with Palestine; they were of Khazar origin. Yet they were largely responsible for the existence of the Zionist movement.' Mr Husseini quoted from the Jewish Encyclopaedia on this topic.

The matter was not an obscure detail in the history of the Jews but had been part of historical research especially in Russia/the Soviet Union and among Jewish historians.

According to the 2007 edition of Encyclopaedia Judaica (Macmillan Reference, USA, (Thomson/Gale) Keter Publishing House, the Khazars were a national group of general Turkic type, independent and sovereign in Eastern Europe from the 7th to the 10th century. During part of this time the leading Khazars professed Judaism. They were originally nomadic, and may have belonged to the empire of the Huns. Their precise racial affinities are not readily defined. Their conversion to Judaism may have occurred towards 740 CE. Their territory was around the Caspian Sea. They had little or no contact with the central Jewish organisation in Iraq. One mark of their influence is to be found in early Russian legal codes which contain traces of Mosaic and Talmudic legislation. The entry concludes: 'There seems to be a considerable amount of evidence attesting the continued presence in Europe of descendants of the Khazars.' The question of their numerical significance is left open.

Shlomo Sand in *The Invention of the Jewish People* (English translation 2009) points out that the question of the significance of the Khazars should be investigated further with archaeological research in particular, but that, for political reasons, no one at the moment is interested in furthering that research. He deals with that topic in his chapter entitled significantly 'Realms of Silence'. There was research by Jewish scholars in the nineteenth century on the Khazars, and in the Soviet Union and Israel up to the1950s. Since 1951 no work on that topic has appeared in Hebrew. The Soviet Union also played down the role of the Khazars in the history of Russia. But until the 1960s, the idea that

> 'the majority of the Yiddish people did not originate in Germany but in the Caucasus, the Volga steppes, the Black Sea and the Slave countries was an acceptable assumption, caused no shock, and was not considered anti-Semitic, as it was after the early 1970s.' p. 243

Arthur Koestler wrote *The Thirteenth Tribe* in 1976 about the Khazars. Sand quotes from that book:

> 'The large majority of surviving Jews in the world is of Eastern European – and thus perhaps mainly of Khazar- origin. If so, this would mean that their ancestors came not from the Jordan but from the Volga, not from Canaan but from the Caucasus, once believed to be the cradle of the Aryan race; and that genetically they are more closely related to the Hun, Uigur and Magyar tribes than to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Should this turn out to be the case, then the term 'anti-Semitism' would become void of meaning, based on a misapprehension shared by both the killers and their victims. The story of the Khazar Empire, as it slowly emerges from the past, begins to look like the most cruel hoax which history has ever perpetrated.'

Shlomo Sand writes:

> 'Koestler was not certain, in the 1970s, whether the non-Ashkenazi Jews were descendants of the Judeans, and if the Khazar conversion was an exception in Jewish history. Nor did he understand that his battle against anti-Semitic racism might deal a mortal blow to Zionism's principal imaginary. Or rather, he did and did not understand, and naively assumed that if he declared an unambiguous political position at the end of the book, he would be exonerated: [quotation from *The Thirteenth Tribe*]
>
> 'I am aware of the danger that it may be maliciously misinterpreted as a denial of the State of Israel's right to exist. But that right is not based on the hypothetical origins of the Jewish people, nor on the mythological covenant of Abraham with God; it is based on international law-i.e., on the United Nations' decision in 1947 ...Whatever the Israeli citizens' racial origins, and whatever illusions they entertain about them, their State exists *de jure* and *de facto*, and cannot be undone, except by genocide.'

But we have seen that the arguments put forward at the United Nations Deliberations of 1947 included the claim of a return to the original land. We have seen that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 only mentioned the establishment of 'A Jewish National Home' in Palestine but that, by the time of the Mandate after WW1, the wording had changed to 'The Jewish National Home'. Shlomo Sand says:

> '... it was no use. In the 1970s Israel was caught up in the momentum of territorial expansion, and without the Old Testament in its hand and the 'exile of the Jewish people' in its memory it would have had no justification for annexing Arab Jerusalem and establishing settlements in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and even the Sinai Peninsula.' (p. 240)

Jonathan Wittenberg, rabbi of the New North London Synagogue, writes in his review of *The Invention of the Jewish People* (The Guardian, 9.1.10) that

> 'Sand's key thesis that the bulk of modern eastern European Jewry owes its origins to the converted kingdom of the Khazars, has been widely debated, and rejected, especially in the wake of Arthur Koestler's famous book on the subject.'

But as we have seen, the thesis has not been rejected, it is still being studied and needing further research . The reviewer continues:

> 'Sand's allegation that this whole episode was hushed up because it vitiated the Zionist notion of Jewish ethnobiological continuity, cannot be maintained.'

Why can't it? Wittenberg also writes in the next paragraph that Sand examines Jewish history 'almost without reference to its religious life and literature'. But Sand ends his 'Realms of Silence' chapter on the Khazars with the words:

> '... the further we move from religious norms and the more we focus our research on diverse daily practices, the more we discover that there never was a secular ethnographic common denominator between the Jewish believers in Asia, Africa and Europe. World Jewry had always been a major religious culture.' P. 248

In other words, what connects Jews historically is religion. Far from ignoring the religious life of the Jews, Sand gives it a central place.]

Cathy Winch

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

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]

[The previous issue of Irish Foreign Affairs reproduced extended extracts from meetings up to 17 October 1947. Here are extracts from the final meetings.]

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.

In recent times, the land laws had operated to the disadvantage of both Jewish settlers and Arab agricultural development. It was important to remember that a large area of Palestine was classed as uncultivable. The Arabs had no incentive to develop it, while the Jews had not been given the opportunity. In a Jewish State it would be in the interests of the Jews to promote Arab prosperity as a market for Jewish industrial products.

The representative of Pakistan had objected to the inclusion of the predominantly Arab area of Negeb in the proposed Jewish State. The Negeb, however, comprised 45 per cent of the area of Palestine, although its population was less than 5 per cent. The choice lay between inclusion of the Negeb in the Jewish State and its consequent development by irrigation to the benefit of both Arabs and Jews, or leaving it in its undeveloped state. Mr. Shertok refuted, in that connexion, the allegation that Jewish development in Palestine was artificial.

Had the Government of the UK carried out its obligations under the Mandate, the whole area of western Palestine might have become, in the not too far distant future, through large-scale immigration and settlement, an independent Jewish State with a Jewish majority. That was no less than the Jewish people were entitled to claim and achieve. But the policy pursued by the Mandatory Power since the White Paper of 1939 had rendered such immigration impossible, and the Jewish Agency had in consequence been faced with the imperative necessity of seeking a short-cut to independence. The Jews of Palestine, conscious that they had outgrown tutelage and had become a nation, were convinced that statehood was both necessary and urgent...

[As for the allegation that 30,000 Jews had been refused permission to return to Germany and Austria, it was as untrue as it was unfounded...]

[Regarding the suggestion that European Jews should be the concern of the International Refugee Organisation, he said not one of the Arab states had joined that organisation. Regarding India's urging that states should offer harbour to refugees, not one had done so:]

The two issues, Jewish State and refugees, were inseparable...

[He did not consider economic union (as proposed by the Majority Report) as essential.]

[Regarding Arabs being included in the Jewish State:]

It was a decree of history that Arabs and Jews should continue to inhabit Palestine and it was impossible to carve out a substantial area for the Jewish State without including a considerable number of Arabs in that area...

[The area allocated to the Jews was] the indispensable minimum...

[A Unitary State was] categorically rejected by the Zionist movement. It would mean that Palestine would be an Arab State with a Jewish minority at the mercy of an Arab majority.

...In a unitary State, nearly 700,000 Jews would live in an Arab State. Under partition, between 400,000 and 500,000 Arabs would be included in the Jewish State. Secondly, in a unitary State, the Jews would feel crushed by an Arab majority, whereas the Arab minority in the Jewish State would find a guarantee for security among the neighbouring Arab States. Thirdly, in a unitary State a highly democratic minority would be forced down to the economic and social level of an Arab majority, whereas under partition the Arab minority would benefit from contact with the progressive Jewish majority. Fourthly, in a unitary state there would be no immigration into Palestine to solve the problem of the Jews of Europe, whereas the majority plan could provide a complete solution to the problem. Lastly, in a unitary State the Jewish people would be condemned to permanent minority status in Palestine as in all other countries of the world. Under partition, the Arab minority would be united by innumerable economic and cultural ties with the Arabs in the adjacent Arab States...

[If Arabs were against partition, why had they not objected to the setting up of Transjordan?]

Mr. Husseini (Arab Higher Committee)

wished to make a correction to the speech just made. The delegation of Iraq had documents which it could bring forward to confirm what he had learned while in Baghdad in 1940, namely, that the Government of Iraq had offered to join the UK in the Second World War by sending two divisions to Egypt or to Europe under British command, if the British were ready to implement the terms of the 1939 White Paper...

18th Meeting 18 October ***Mr. Husseini*** **(Arab Higher Committee):**

...the representative of the Jewish Agency had accused the Palestinian Arabs (4th meeting) of having flouted the United Nations. The Arabs had refused to collaborate with the Special Committee simply because its terms of reference did not provide that it should give due consideration to the interests of the inhabitants. Their opposition to any dismemberment of Palestine or to the granting of privileges to a minority was no more than self-defence within the meaning of the Charter. It was the instigators of aggression who were accusing their victims of flouting the UN...

The Jews of Eastern Europe, the Ashkenazim, had no ethnic connexion with Israel nor, consequently, with Palestine; they were of Khazar origin. Yet they were largely responsible for the existence of the Zionist movement.

He quoted a number of passages from the Jewish Encyclopae-

dia dealing with the Turkish origin of the Khazars and their kingdom in Russia, the religious and cultural influence of the Jews on the Khazars, the date of the Khazar conversion to Judaism, the importance of the Jewish population in Khazar territory between the 7th and the 10th centuries and the purely religious connexion between the Khazars and the Jews. Many other passages in the Jewish Encyclopaedia cast doubt on the existence of the Jewish race with historical associations with Palestine or with the people who had inhabited Palestine more than two thousand years before..."

[He cited Dubnow: *History of the Jews in Russia And Poland From The Earliest Times Until the Present Day* regarding the conversion of the Khazars, and *An Outline Of Jewish History*. In this he:] mentioned the ignorance of Jews in other countries regarding this Khazar Kingdom...

[In his *Popular History Of The Jews*:]

Graetz stated that the Jewish State had ceased to exist after the 13th century and that the Yiddish speaking Jewish population of the Khazar Kingdom had been absorbed in the Russian State...

[The last Jewish King of the Khazars fled to Spain in 1016]

[Roland B. Dixon, Prof. of Anthropology at Harvard, in *The Racial History Of Man*:]

Said that Anatolia, Armenia, the Caucasus and the steppes of central Asia were the cradle of the majority of contemporary Jews, who were Semitic by language only...

[Eugene Pittard, Professor of Anthropology, University of Genoa in *Race And History*:]

Recalled Renan's dictum that there were Jewish types but no single Jewish type. Pittard added that Zionism had brought Jews of widely different races to Palestine...

[Joseph Tenenbaum, in *Races, Nations And Jews*, said that there were often more differences between Jews than between Jews and Gentiles:]

As Dr. Silver himself had recalled in his book, *A History Of Messianic Speculation In Israel From The 1st To The 17th Centuries*, but not before the Committee, Professor Krause had suggested that the Ashkenazim were none other than the Khazars.

The Zionist case and the reasoning which had secured the Balfour Declaration rested on a myth: the Zionists wished to "repatriate" the descendants of the Khazars to a country where the Khazars had never set foot...

The representative of the Jewish Agency had questioned the historical connexions of Arabs with Palestine and had denied that the Palestinian Arabs were in fact of Arab origin. But the Arab population in Palestine had its roots in the soil and had survived every conquest; mostly Arab by blood, its language was Arabic and its traditions and culture were the same as those of the Arab conquerors of Palestine. But today Palestine was being submerged by new hordes, the Zionists, who hoped to supplant the Arabs.

Unlike the Zionists, the inhabitants of Palestine had no need to know historical or ethnical connexions: they were on the spot and when a people was on its own homeland the Charter was on its side.

[The Jewish Agency quoted condemnation of Arab atrocities by the High Commissioner in 1939. But a subsequent High Commissioner had ordered investigation by a committee of doctors, which reported that mutilations had been greatly exaggerated, and that the attack was made by a crowd infuriated by news of Jewish attacks on Muslims. The High Commissioner apologised to the Arabs.]

When a crowd was excited it lost all control. But the barbarity of the Jewish terrorists was calculated.

[On September 29, while Hussein had been speaking, there had been an explosion at Haifa police barracks killing 10 and wounding 60, including women and children.]

...the British Government's White Paper of July 1946 stated that, in the first place, the *Haganah* and the *Palmach*, controlled by official members of the Jewish Agency, had systematically undertaken sabotage and violence under the name of "Jewish Resistance Movement"; secondly, that the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* (National Military Organisation) and the Stern gang had co-operated with the *Haganah* in those operations during the eight or nine months preceding the publication of the White Paper; thirdly, that the illegal broadcasting station *Kol Israel* (Voice of Israel), under the general direction of the Jewish Agency, had supported the terrorists.

Zionism's friends and enemies alike had been obliged to confess to the British Parliament and the world Press that Jewish condemnation of terrorism was mere hypocrisy.

The Arab authorities, while refraining from condemning acts of legitimate defence, had used all their influence to put a stop to violence in 1936 and similarly in 1939.

Above all, the Arabs had fought rifle in hand and in the open, while the principal activity of the Jews had been blowing up civilian and government buildings with their occupants. As to motive, the Arabs had exercised their right of legitimate defence against foreign invaders and the administration which supported them. All the committees of inquiry had recognized that Arab violence had been directed against Jewish immigration and the loss of independence. But Jewish violence was aimed at forcing the British to agree to the continuation of immigration, in other words, of aggression; the Jews were attacking the very troops whose arms had shielded the growth of the Jewish National Home...

The Arabs who had benefited temporarily from the sale of their lands had dug their own grave. Several Arab villages had been wiped off the map.

[The average landholding had fallen to approximately 12 acres, while 28 were needed for economic viability.]

Contrary to the statements made by the representative of Guatemala (10th meeting) among others, the desert would remain a desert until heaven ordained otherwise...

[The Arabs were famous for citrus growing.] They owned 50% of the citrus groves.

Were the Arabs alone in the world to be the victims of slavery and discrimination?

[The Grand Mufti was attacked by Guatemala and others:]

The representative of Guatemala had accused the Mufti of being the originator of the plan for exterminating the Jews...

[The French Government offered him hospitality:]

Nations which had initiated or permitted anti-Semitism had no right to ask tiny Arab Palestine to pay by the loss of its rights for the mistakes of others. The fact that the Jews felt they had no country did not give them the right to usurp the land of others...

[The late Henry Morgenthau said Zionism was the greatest absurdity in Jewish history.]

In the days of the Ottoman Empire, the Jews of Bagdad, where 80,000 of them had lived, had needed no visa to go to Jerusalem. There had been no quotas then. Yet an infinitesimal number of them had immigrated to Palestine. The feeling of homelessness might be Zionist, but it was certainly not Jewish. The Zionists' love of Palestine might be more for the treasures of the Dead Sea than for the Promised Land. Most Zionists were not religious.

The Jewish Agency spokesman had asserted that neither the Arabs of Palestine nor those of other Arab countries had contributed to the war effort during the two world wars. Mr. Churchill, addressing the House of Commons on 27 February 1945 and Mr.

Bevin, speaking to the General Assembly on 14 December 1946, had both paid tribute to the part played by Egypt. On 18 February 1947, President Truman had recalled the contribution to the war effort made by Saudi Arabia. In 1942, Iraqi troops had been detailed to guard Allied lines of communication. At the end of 1942, the Iraqi army had been placed under the command of General Maitland Wilson, Iraq had come into the war and its Government had offered to send troops to the front. The British authorities, however, had asked the Iraqi forces to carry on where they were. As for the Jews in the Iraqi army, had they done anything else but serve their country in the same way as Jews in the U.S. or British armies?

In reply to Mr. Shertok (17th meeting), Mr. Husseini pointed out that in August 1940, Iraq had decided to put two divisions at the disposal of General Wavell if the White Paper of 1939 were put into effect. General Wavell, however, had explained to the Iraqi Foreign Minister that the Jewish Agency possessed great influence in the United States, and no reply had been given to the Iraqi offer.

Arab participation in the war effort had extended from Casablanca to Iraq. The peoples of North Africa had fought heroically beside the Free French Forces. The Palestine Arabs, though they had been at the time in revolt against the Mandate, had furnished the British with 12,446 volunteers.

Mr. Husseini quoted from the report of the military inquiry commission set up by the British in Jerusalem in 1920, which had stated that in 1918 recruiting had been successful among the Arabs, who had been convinced that the British Government would set up an independent Arab State which would include Palestine...

Mr. Husseini declared that King Hussein's appeal, to which Mr. Shertok had referred, had not related to Jewish immigration as such, but to the admission into Palestine of oppressed and homeless persons; which had had nothing to do with a Jewish State nor even with a Jewish National Home. King Hussein's refusal to agree to a Jewish National Home had in fact been the reason why the treaty which Mr. Churchill had instructed Colonel Lawrence to negotiate had not been concluded.

Replying to Mr. Shertok, Mr. Husseini pointed out that Iraq had never been represented at the N¸rnberg rallies. Moreover, the reason why many Syrian nationalists had been interned during the war had been their opposition to the French, not their leanings towards the Nazis.

The Arabs, being the indigenous population of Palestine and constituting the overwhelming majority, relied on the right of self-determination of peoples upheld by the Charter and earlier by the Covenant of the League of Nations. They could not subscribe to any commitment given by any Power whatsoever that would deprive them of that right, nor could they accept any interpretation designed to explain that sacred principle away...

The Arabs had been deprived of self-determination for a quarter of a century in order that a minority might be artificially created.

The Arabs were not prepared to suffer the fate of the American Indians.

A little Jewish State, a million strong, would have no chance of survival surrounded by hundreds of millions of defenders of the Arab cause. On the other hand, if sustained assistance from abroad enabled it to survive, then it would poison international relationships throughout the East.

Statement By Dr. Weizmann

[The former Chairman of the Jewish Agency For Palestine:]

Dr. Weizmann... said that the purpose of the Mandate had been to give the Jewish people a National Home, to enable them to become once more a nation among other nations and to set up institutions in conformity with their own genius and traditions...

[He praised President Wilson, Balfour, Lloyd George, Smuts, Masaryk and Cecil.]

For several years Dr. Weizmann had been convinced that the partition of Palestine, proposed in the first place by the British Royal Commission on Palestine, was the only possible way of emerging from the deadlock and reaching a practical compromise. The Mandate had envisaged a far more extensive territory for the Jewish State, eight times larger than that which was now proposed, and, as he had stated before the Special Committee, it was not easy for the Jews to accept such a compromise. That Committee had been composed of unbiased members and had studied the problem objectively. The principles of partition and immigration recommended by the majority were realistic and had been accepted by the representatives of the Jewish Agency. They had received the approval of a large number of the representatives of the *Ad Hoc* Committee, who were equally unbiased.

The establishment of a Jewish State was not a new idea; it arose out of the Mandate.

The Mandate had enabled the Jews in Palestine to create new social, cultural and economic values and to reach the threshold of independence. [...] [With a Jewish State] progressive social ideas would flourish in an area that had fallen behind the modern standards of life.

Nevertheless, as the USSR representative had said, historical and legal considerations were secondary as compared with immediate realities...

[There were 700,000 Jews in Palestine, with their own language, religion etc, confronted with another group which had reached a different stage of development.]

The idea of giving the Jews a minority status in an Arab State had been rejected by all the committees and by all impartial tribunals. It was morally impossible to subject the only Jewish national community to the domination of the Arab Higher Committee. It would be impossible even if the Arab Higher Committee were not hostile to the ideals of the Jewish people. It was not in order to become citizens of an Arab State that the Jews, on the strength of international promises, had made their home in Palestine. Certain minorities in Arab States could testify as to whether their status was agreeable; it was sufficient to say that that status did not correspond to the idea of the National Home and was unacceptable. A separate national community could not be forcibly subjected to another people in the name of majority rule. Dr. Weizmann endorsed the view of the Canadian representative (13th meeting) that unity could not be imposed without consent. It was by virtue of that principle that the representative of Pakistan, for instance, was present at the United Nations..."

As the US representative had pointed out (11th meeting), the Arabs had been able to create several independent States, extending over vast territories. The Jews were asking only for what the Arabs had already obtained on a larger scale. Emir Feisal had signed an agreement with Dr. Weizmann declaring that if the rest of the Arabs were free, the Arabs would concede the right of the Jews to settle in Palestine. The stipulated condition had been fulfilled in respect of the Arabs. The Jews had the same right to independence. The Arabs' desire to possess an eighth State could not eliminate the Jews' right to possess one...

[By intensive economic development the proposed Jewish State could provide for 1 million of the displaced Jews in Europe.]

For the Jews who had escaped massacre, Palestine was the only solution. To suggest that they should rebuild their ruined

homes or ask refuge of countries reluctant to receive them was mere mockery...

21 October Mr El-Khouri (Egypt)

Proposed the establishment of a further sub-committee to be composed of jurists which would deal with the question of the competence of the General Assembly to take and enforce a decision, and with the legal aspect of the mandate. If that sub-committee's report were unsatisfactory, then the question of reference of the whole matter to the International Court of Justice could be discussed.

Mr Mahmoud Fawzi Bey (Egypt)

had already challenged the competence of the UN to decide on the partition of Palestine (supported by Belgium).

Mr Chamoun (Lebanon)

Said it was essential to establish a sub-committee to study the proposal mad by Saudi Arabia and Iraq and endorsed by Syria, regarding the establishment of an independent unitary State in Palestine.

Mr Jamali (Iraq)

Said that conciliation between the Arabs of Palestine and the Jews in Palestine was very constructive and useful, but conciliation between the Arabs of Palestine and the Jewish Agency [i.e. the Jews of the world including those of USSR and USA] represented a serious problem.

21 November Mr Chamoun (Lebanon)

Raised the plan whereby the population of 54 villages would be separated from their agricultural lands [no Jewish village would be separated from its land].

22 November Mr Jamali (Iraq)

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'.

24 November Heykal Pasha (Egypt)

A million Jews lived in peace in Egypt and enjoyed all rights of citizenship. They had no desire to emigrate to Palestine. However, if a Jewish State was established, nobody could prevent disorders. Riots would break out in Palestine, would spread through all the Arab States and might lead to a war between the two races. Even certain pro-Zionist newspapers, such as the *New York Post*, feared that the partition of Palestine might imperil the Jewish resident in Moslem countries, and create hatreds which might last for centuries. [The partition of Palestine might create anti-Semitism in Muslim countries.]

Mr Mahmoud Fawzi Bey (Egypt)

Only about 55 000 Jews had been settled in Palestine for more than 20 years, others had come in and become Palestinian citizens, or not; then there were illegal immigrants. In total 250 000 Jews were Palestinian citizens; 350 000 Jews had entered in the previous ten years, most of them illegally and were not Palestinian citizens. [It was a Jewish invasion.] [The partition plan provided for large-scale immigration in the following months.]

Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan (Pakistan)

[Opposition to partition was certain to occur therefore the UN] must provide armed forces for its implementation.

Ownership in the citrus production area was approximately equally divided between Arabs and Jews, yet practically the whole of the area had been allocated to the Jewish State. 83% of irrigated land was allocated to the Jewish State, as well as 40% of Arab industrial areas, whereas only a small percentage of Jewish industrial areas would be in the Arab State. The Negeb Bedouins: their lands would be expropriated (with compensation) if they did not cultivate it a year after notice had been served.

Mr Shertok

Jews who lived in Palestine felt themselves to be as deep rooted in the soil of Palestine as their Arab neighbours.

24 November Mr Husseini

The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate had been drawn up without the knowledge of the indigenous population of Palestine. The UK was morally and legally bound to surrender the whole territory and the administration of the territory to a Palestine Government.

The USSR and the USA had disagreed about everything in the UN, except the partition of Palestine.

As a result of the Jewish terrorist campaign which had developed against the British, the Arabs asked themselves what they could expect at the hands of the Zionists as subjects or as neighbours if the Zionists were capable of being so bitter and ungrateful towards their greatest benefactors.

Vote on the partition of Palestine:

13 against: Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Siam, Syria, Turkey, Yemen.

25 for, including USA, USSR, Byelorussia, Ukraine.

17 abstentions, including Belgium, France, Netherlands, UK, Yugoslavia.

Note: There were 57 members of the United Nations in 1947 and all 57 countries were represented on the Ad Hoc Committee on the Question of Palestine. The General Assembly voted to accept the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on partition by 33 votes to 13 against and 10 abstentions (one absent) on 29 November 1947, four days after the Ad Hoc Committee vote with 25 in favour, far from the necessary two thirds majority.

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WHAT WAS THE POINT?

David Morrison reflects on Israel's offensive in Gaza a year on, and the need for recovery and reform

Palestinian women hold pictures of killed relatives during a demonstration marking the one-year anniversary of Israel's last winter war, in the northern Gaza Strip refugee camp of Jabalia yesterday

"Success is freeing the civilian population of southern Israel from the fear of an incoming Hamas rocket."

Those were the words of Israeli spokesman, Mark Regev, on January 9, 2009, two weeks into Israel's military assault on Gaza, which killed over 1,300 Palestinians, including over 400 women and children. 13 Israelis also lost their lives.

In reality, Israel achieved that success months earlier without spilling any Israeli or Palestinian blood. It did so by negotiating a ceasefire agreement with Hamas in June 2008.

Mark Regev confirmed the ceasefire's success in the same interview on January 9. When it was put to him that "there were no Hamas rockets during the ceasefire before November 4, there were no Hamas rockets for 4 months", Regev replied: "That's correct."

Under the agreement, brokered by Egypt, in exchange for Hamas and other Palestinian groups stopping the firing of rockets and mortars out of Gaza, Israel undertook to lift its economic blockade of Gaza and cease military incursions into Gaza.

Israel didn't lift the bockade of Gaza, but it did cease military incursions into Gaza until November 4, when the IDF entered Gaza and killed seven members of Hamas.

In retaliation, Hamas restarted rocket and mortar firing into Israel. Had Israel maintained the ceasefire, the civilian population of southern Israel would have continued to be free from incoming Hamas rockets, as they had been for the previous four and a half months. No Palestinians or Israelis needed to die in order to protect Israeli civilians from rocket and mortar fire out of Gaza.

The report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission, headed by Judge Richard Goldstone, into events in Gaza during the Israeli assault, presented evidence of "violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and possible war crimes and crimes against humanity" by Israel and of possible war crimes by Hamas.

The report has been harshly criticised by Israel and the US. Speaking for the US on September 17, foreign policy adviser and current US ambassador to the UN Susan Rice described it as "unbalanced, one sided and basically unacceptable".

However, critics have been slow to identify specific misinformation in the report.

Richard Goldstone told Al-Jazeera on October 22: "I have yet to hear from the Obama administration what the flaws in the report that they have identified are. I would be happy to respond to them, if and when I know what they are."

The report has been endorsed by the Human Rights Council and by the UN General Assembly (with the support of Ireland) and referred to the Security Council. The best way to proceed from here on would be for the Security Council to refer the matter to the International Criminal Court. Then, it would be for the Prosecutor of the Court to determine if any individuals should be indicted, taking account of all the available evidence, including that in the Goldstone report, and for the Court itself to determine their guilt or innocence.

Israel's military assault on Gaza a year ago came in the wake of an Israeli economic blockade, which had gone on for years with varying degrees of severity, bringing the Gazan economy to its knees and condemning the bulk of its 1.5 million people to grinding poverty.

During the assault, Israel destroyed around 3,500 houses completely and over 11,000 partially, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

In addition, considerable damage was done to Gaza's economic infrastructure, many factories and businesses being destroyed or damaged, apparently deliberately.

Since the assault, Israel has continued to impose severe restrictions on the import of goods into Gaza. In particular, materials for reconstruction have been almost completely banned. As for exports, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on December 10, one truckload of 30,000 carnations exited Gaza via the Kerem Shalom Crossing; this is the first export from Gaza since April 27, 2009.

The Irish Government has called repeatedly for Israel to end its blockade of Gaza and so has the EU. On December 15, Catherine Ashton, the new EU foreign minister, told the European Parliament: –"We are deeply concerned about the daily living conditions of the Gazan people: since the January conflict donors have not been able to do reconstruction work and serious issues persist like the lack of clean drinking water. Israel should re-open the crossings without delay."

Israel has ignored countless verbal appeals of this kind. It is unrealistic to believe that it is going to act on this one. If the EU is serious about getting the crossings open any time soon, it will have to bring pressure to bear on Israel, by, for example, partially suspending Israel's free access to the EU market for its goods under the Euro-Med Agreement.

That may cause Israel to honour its obligations to the people of Gaza – and would be a laudable foreign policy achievement for the post-Lisbon EU. Verbal appeals certainly won't.

*David Morrison works in political advocacy and is co-founder of Sadaka, the Ireland Palestine Alliance.

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