

Foreign Affairs

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

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Editorial

For Ireland to see the world from its own vantage point, it must first see England.

For more than two centuries before the modern Irish state was formed, Ireland was absolutely part of the English state in its official existence, with scarcely a thought of its own.

From 1914 to 1921 the forces making for the establishment of an Irish State—as distinct from strictly subordinate self-government within the English State—asserted an independent foreign policy orientation in the world. A section of the independence movement in 1922 bowed to the English Treaty ultimatum as an unavoidable submission to force for the time being and made war with English arms on their comrades who would not submit.

The Treaty War fought within the independence movement in 1922-3 was won by the side that was supported by Britain (as it complied with successive demands) and armed by Britain. Its military victory was conclusive, but in victory it did not quite know what to do with itself. The Treaty War is usually referred to as the Civil War. But it was like no other Civil War ever fought.

If the Sinn Fein Party, mandated to establish Irish independence, had succeeded in establishing independence—which would have happened if Britain had recognised the Dail Government set up under the General Election mandate of 1918—and had then fallen into such disagreement within itself about the affairs of the independent state that war resulted, *that* would have been a Civil War.

But such was not the case. The only issue in the Treaty War was whether or not to submit to the British demand that the Republic of 1919-21 should be dismantled and a subordinate government under the Crown be set up in its place, with the explicit threat that, if the British demand was not complied with, Ireland would be reduced to comprehensive subordination by the methods by which Britain had broken the will of the Boer Republics twenty years earlier—Concentration Camps, chains of blockhouses, and control over population movement.

These methods had been advocated by the genocidal English poet, Edmund Spenser, who had been given property in Ireland in the Elizabethan confiscation. That was in the late 16th century. But lest it be thought that this was ancient poetic fantasy and that, whatever Britain had done in the past, it was certainly not capable of doing it in the 1920s, after winning its Great War for civilisation, democracy and national rights, it must be said that this is what it did a quarter of a century later in Malaya after the Second Great War for civilisation.

The threat was taken seriously in 1921-2, when most people could still remember how Britain had won the Boer War. Some were willing to bow to the threat. Others were not. Britain obliged the former to make war on the latter.

The Treatyites made war on the anti-Treatyites so that something of the achievement of 1919-21 might be saved, being convinced that otherwise Britain would repeat the Williamite conquest and subjugation of 1690.

The basic argument of the Treatyites for bowing to the series of British ultimatums that led to the 'Civil War' was that, if they did so, Britain would authorise the retention of a separate apparatus of state in Ireland that would enjoy considerable freedom of action, though under Crown sovereignty, while otherwise the Irish apparatus of state established in defiance of British power in 1919-21 would be crushed and swept away in its entirety; and that the Treatyite apparatus of state would then take advantage of British difficulties to restore the Republican independence of Ireland.

So the Treatyites won the Treaty War with British arms. But the core body of the victorious Treatyites had no ideals that were different from those which they had shared in 1919-21 with the Republicans on whom Britain had compelled them to make war in 1922-23.

The opportunity to retreat from the Free State to the Republic by means of the "*stepping stones*" method advocated by Michael Collins occurred very soon after the final enactment of the Free State. It became evident after 1922 that the apparent increase in the power of the British Empire achieved by victory in its Great War against the German, Hapsburg, and Ottoman states was illusory. British possessions had grown but British power of control had diminished. Britain was not willing to maintain the vast armies by which it had gained those possessions, and the increase in possessions therefore proved to be weakening rather than strengthening.

The first defiance of the New World Order established by Britain after 1918 was made in Turkey. A Turkish nationalist movement rejected an imposed Treaty and the ensuing conflict led to the fall of the British War Coalition in the Autumn of 1922. A succession of weak party Governments followed in Britain until 1931, when the Coalition Government was restored under the name of National Government. But the National Governments were no stronger than the Governments that preceded them.

The Free State Government might safely have set out on Collins's *Stepping Stones* from 1923 onwards. It did not do so. This led in 1924 to the obscure affair known as the 'Mutiny of the Major Generals'. IRA leaders in the War of Independence, who had supported the Treaty on the strength of Collins's *Stepping Stones* undertaking, were made uneasy by the fact that the Government was settling down under the Treaty instead of taking advantage of opportunities to erode it.

The Mutiny was stifled by the die-hard Treatyites in the Government. As a consequence, the political dynamic of the state passed to the Anti-Treatyites, who won the General Election of 1932. They set about eroding the Treaty, and won every general election for the next fifteen years.

Treatyism was never a viable national ideology. It began as an expedient submission to British power but, as the threat of British re-conquest receded, the leaders of the submission seemed to forget what its purpose had been.

So the Treaty was undone. The Oath of Allegiance to the Crown, which was the issue on which war had been forced,

was repealed. But the damage done to the Irish body politic was lasting.

The Treatyite Party was out of office from 1932 to 1948. It returned to office in Coalition with a new Republican party, Clann na Poblachta, whose leader, Sean MacBride, had been Chief of Staff of the IRA in the 1930s. The Coalition then declared the 26 Counties state a Republic and formally ended the purely nominal connection with the British Empire, which Fianna Fail had left in place while ending the substantive connection.

The declaration by the Treatyite party that the state was a Republic, unconnected with the Empire, coming after the maintenance of Irish neutrality in the 2nd World War launched by the Empire, should have led to a distinct Irish foreign policy, along with the development of an agreed view of the so-called Civil War. But neither happened.

The maintenance of Irish neutrality in the face of British pressure and threats was a substantial act of independent foreign policy. But the wartime act of neutrality was not followed in the post-war era by a critical assessment of Churchill's mythology of the war which deluged the "*English Speaking peoples*".

The wartime scepticism about Britain's declarations about why it launched the war was well founded. It would have been a service to Europe if that scepticism had been worked out in an account of the War by the History Departments of the Irish Universities. Since that was not done, the other thing happened. There was a submission to the Churchill mythology. And, in the light of that mythology, there had to be either a condemnation of neutrality or a pretence that Ireland had not really been neutral at all, but was only pretending.

A bizarre academic appointment was made a couple of years after the War. T. Desmond Williams came straight from British Intelligence to the Chair of History at University College, Dublin.

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When Britain lost the 1918 General Election in Ireland it just ignored the election result in Ireland.

The Government lost the Irish election though it did not contest it. The parties of the British state had not contested elections in Ireland since the substantial broadening of the electoral franchise in the 1880s. The Irish representation,

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outside the Protestant regions of Ulster, was monopolised by the Irish Home Rule Party. British Governments then took a vote for the Home Rule party to be a vote for continuing British Government in Ireland.

Although it was not the purpose of the Home Rule party to provide a democratic fig-leaf for continuing British rule, that is what it did. Its elected members, for the most part, desired the independence of Ireland. But they knew that Britain would not concede independence to votes, but only to successful warfare, and they did not think that an Army could be raised in Ireland to dispute the matter with the Empire. For that reason they reduced their demand to something which they thought might be gained through voting, a degree of domestic self-government, of an indeterminate kind, called Home Rule. In the hope of gaining this they went to Westminster, and in order to take their seats pledged themselves to act in accordance with the authority of the Crown. The Ministers of the Crown could therefore claim that, in this roundabout way, they had an electoral mandate to govern Ireland.

The raising of an Army in Ireland, which the Home Rule party had not thought possible, suddenly became necessary within the Home Rule context in 1913-14. The Ulster Unionist resistance to the Home Rule Bill that was going through Parliament was supported by the Opposition at Westminster, even to the extent of raising a private Army to prevent the implementation of the Bill when it became an Act, and the Ulster Volunteer Force was prepared for battle by senior British military figures.

When supporters of Home Rule raised a counter-army in support of the Bill, the Irish Volunteers, the Government could hardly object. Without this development the subsequent course of events becomes inconceivable.

The presence of Armies which were not the Army of the state became the norm. Some of them joined the Empire in the Great War. Others fought their own war. And when, in 1918, the Irish electorate brushed aside the Home Rule party and voted for independence, and Britain took no heed of the vote, there was a war between the voters and the English state as the voters set up their own state.

We know of no British Government statement justifying its course of action in response to the Irish election in 1919 or 1920. In April 1921, however, the Prime Minister felt obliged to issue a reply to a group of religious leaders, both Anglican and Nonconformist, who expressed serious unease at the way the war was being fought.

There was in fact nothing unusual about the British methods used against the Irish. They were in fact very mild by comparison with what Britain had done to other peoples. But it was all very close to home. The little excesses of the Black and Tans were committed within sight of these British religious bodies, so to speak. It made them squeamish. And the revival of Christianity as Imperial ideology in the propaganda of the Great War, though spurious, made it advisable for the Prime Minister to head off the incoherent protest of these religious leaders. They wanted the unpleasantness to be removed from their sight. They did not suggest that the Government should give in to the democratic will of the Irish (either in the whole of the island or the greater part of it). They just did not want to have to relate to what they could not avoid seeing, and to put up with hearing it compared with the Hummishness against which they had preached so recently.

Protestant Protest And Call For Truce

The protest of Protestant religious leaders against conditions in Ireland was published in *The Times* under the heading *An Irish Truce?* The signatories were the Bishops of Chelmsford, Chester, Manchester, Peterborough, Southwark, and Winchester; Bishop Gore; the President of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches; the Chairman of the Congregational Union; the Presidents of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, the Primitive Methodist Conference, the Independent Methodist Conference and the Baptist Union of Scotland; the Moderators of the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches of England and the General Assembly of United Free Churches of Scotland; the Bishops of Brechlin and Edinburgh (i.e. not of the Established Church); the Chairmen of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Scotland; and the Chairmen of the London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends (Quakers). The Archbishop of Canterbury, who had made a protest in the House of Lords, did not sign. The text of the protest was as follows:

"In opening the latest discussion on the Irish situation in the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury took occasion once more to protest strongly against the deplorable practice of indiscriminate and unauthorised reprisals by the irregular forces of the Crown. He did so on the highest of all grounds—namely, the absolute unlawfulness of the attempt to overcome wrong, however flagrant and provocative, by means of further and equally indefensible wrong. With that protest we, the undersigned, desire earnestly to associate ourselves. And we go further. While not entitled to commit our respective Churches, we feel constrained to say that we cannot regard the cruel and detestable outrages which have given rise to the whole reprisals policy, authorized and unauthorized alike, as a mere outbreak of wanton criminality in the ordinary sense. Notoriously there lies behind them a long-cherished and deep-seated sense of political grievance which had been aggravated and inflamed by many untoward events and which the concessions of the new Irish Government Act have altogether failed to appease. Hence Dail Eireann' quarrel with Great Britain and the emergence of a situation fraught with intolerable distress and humiliation to every lover of his country.

In these circumstances we join our voices with those who are appealing from many sides for the adoption of a different line of policy. We plead with the Government to arrange, if possible, a genuine truce, with a view to a deliberate effort after an agreed solution of the Irish difficulty. It may be that the attempt will fail; but until it has been seriously and patiently tried we cannot acquiesce in any alternative course of action. The present policy is causing grave unrest throughout the Empire, and exposing us to misunderstanding and the hostile criticism even of the most friendly of the nations of the world. Admittedly it affords no prospect of the speedy restoration of law and order. Nor can we believe that it leads to the end all must desire—a peaceful and contented Ireland. On the contrary, its heaviest condemnation perhaps lies in the deepening alienation it is steadily effecting between this country and all classes of the Irish people. A method of government attended by such consequences cannot be politically or ethically right, and ought, we submit, to give place without delay to a policy of conciliation. What form this should take we do not presume to say. Various possibilities seem to be open. What the situation in our judgment requires is that the Government should take the initiative, and with resolute magnanimity pursue such a course, by the blessing of Heaven to the end.

The following are the signatories:

[Given above]

[*Times*, 6.4.1921]

More Protests

On the following day, April 7th, the *Times* carried a letter from Cardinal Bourne of Westminster to the Prime Minister saying that the English Catholic Bishops, who were holding their annual meeting, were gravely concerned about conditions in Ireland:

"We feel that the good name of England in other countries has been and still is being obscured by terrible happenings which it is impossible to explain or to justify. They desire me to impress upon you most earnestly that all ground should at once be removed for the definite charges which are so constantly being made of reprisals exercised by the forces of the Crown upon perfectly innocent persons.

In this connexion they are convinced that much good would be done towards promoting a good understanding and the restoration of law and order were the auxiliary troops withdrawn without delay from Ireland. Every week is adding to the difficulties of the situation. The Bishops trust that the Government will immediately take such measures as may promptly lead to the permanent reconciliation of all men, whatever their political opinions may be, so greatly desire."

The same issue of the *Times* also carried a report of *A Welsh Protest*, in the form of a letter sent by 27 Professors at the University of Wales to J. Herbert Lewis, MP for the University. And there was a report of what must have been the first Catholic Viceroy of Ireland since the Battle of the Boyne. Here is the Sinn Fein response to it:

"Lord Edmund Talbot is a Catholic. He has been appointed, not because he has any reputation as an able administrator—for he appears to have filled nothing but the most obscure and insignificant office—but because the Coalition Government hopes to turn his name and religion to successful propagandist use in foreign countries and also to create by his appointment division among Catholics in Ireland. Lord Edmund Talbot is to the Irish people what Lord French is—the chief representative of an usurping Government, to expel which the nation is prepared to sacrifice everything."

Lloyd George Replies

The Prime Minister's reply to the Bishop of Chelmsford and his associates was carried in the *Times* on 20th April 1921:

April 18.

My Lord Bishop—I have received the letter, dated April 3, signed by yourself and 19 other leaders of various Protestant religious denominations in Great Britain, and I have given it the serious and earnest attention to which it is rightly entitled, both on account of the responsibility and public influence of the signatories and the urgent importance of the subject with which it deals.

With the general motive of your resolution, that of helping to bring about peace with a contented Ireland, I am in heartiest sympathy. And it is because I feel that it is essential that there should be a full comprehension of the Government's view as to how this can alone be done that I propose to deal with your arguments in some detail.

1. Policy of Reprisals

[The Prime Minister denied that there were any "*irregular forces*" of the Crown in Ireland. The Auxiliaries had been formed and become operative only after 100 police had been murdered in cold blood:]

"For all these murders no murderer was executed, for no witnesses to enable conviction were forthcoming, largely because of intimidation, although many of these murders were committed in the open street in the presence of non-participating and unprotesting passers-

by. Can it be contended that a rebel organisation, which is based on repudiation of constitutional action in favour of violence, sets to work to achieve its ends by the deliberate and calculated murder of the members of a police force, 99 per cent of whom were Irish and 82 per cent of whom were Roman Catholic, which had always held an extraordinarily high reputation for tolerance and good will to the population it served... It seems to me that all liberal-minded and law respecting citizens must recognize that any and every Government must take prompt and decisive steps to protect the police, and to bring justice to those who invoke the weapon of assassination. Hence the creation of the Auxiliary Division.

Further, it would seem to be not less clear that where, owing to intimidation and murder, the ordinary judicial processes employed in a peaceful and civilized community have failed, the police, if they are to vindicate the law and bring murderers to justice, must be armed with exceptional powers akin to those entrusted to soldiers in the field. But that there has been any authorization or condonation of a policy of meeting murder by giving rein to unchecked violence on the other side is utterly untrue.

That there have been deplorable excesses I will not attempt to deny. Individuals working under conditions of extraordinary personal danger and strain, where they are in uniform and the adversaries mingle unrecognizable among the ordinary civilian population, have undoubtedly been guilty of unjustifiable acts. A certain number of undesirables have got into the corps...

With your plea for discipline, therefore, I am in the most complete sympathy...

2. The Condonation Of Crime

I do not wish to minimize in the least Great Britain's share of responsibility for the present state of the Irish question. But at long last all parties in Great Britain had united, in the General Election of 1918, in asking and securing from the electorate a mandate to give Ireland the Home Rule which had been pleaded for by Gladstone and asked for by all the leaders of Irish Nationalism since Isaac Butt, including Parnell, Dillon and Redmond. The only unsettled question was the treatment of Ulster, and as to that, both the Liberal Party had recognized in 1914, and the Irish Nationalists in 1916, that if there was to be a peaceful settlement Ulster must have separate treatment.

Sinn Fein rejected Home Rule and demanded in its place an Irish Republic for the whole of Ireland; Sinn Fein went further. It deliberately set to work to destroy conciliation and constitutional methods, because it recognized that violence was the only method by which it could realize a Republic. The rebellion of 1916 was the first blow to conciliation and reason. Its refusal to take part in the Convention was the second. Its proclamation of a Republic by Dail Eireann and abstention from Westminster was the third. Its inauguration of the policy of murder and assassination in order to defeat Home Rule rather than discuss the Home Rule Bill in Parliament or enter upon direct conference outside was the fourth.

I do not think that anybody can doubt that the principal reason why the war did not bring a peaceful settlement, and why Ireland is more deeply divided today than it has ever been has been the determination of Sinn Fein to prevent such a settlement and to fight for a Republic instead. I do not contest Sinn Fein's right to its opinions and aspirations... But what amazes me is that a body of responsible men, eminent leaders of the Church, should state publicly that Sinn Fein has some sort of justification for murdering innocent men in cold blood because its novel and extravagant political ideals have been denied.

Where does the doctrine end? There is a small but vigorous Communist party in these islands, which bitterly and with the most intense conviction believes that it ought to overthrow democratic institutions and seize power by force and violence, because of the

manner in which it considers the ruling classes of the past, the aristocracy and the owners of capital, oppressed and exploited the poor. Are the Communists, because of the sufferings and grievances of the working classes and the sincerity of their own industrial ideals, to be justified in employing murder and assassination to achieve their ends?...

But there is another aspect of the question to which I must allude. Sinn Fein does not confine its activities to attacks on servants of the Crown. It has inaugurated a reign of terror in Ireland which is certainly equal to anything on Irish history. Its hold on the country is due partly, no doubt, to the fanatical enthusiasm it invokes, but partly it is due to terrorism of the most extreme kind. Its opponents in Ireland are murdered ruthlessly, usually without the form of a trial, with no chance of pleading their case, simply because Sinn Fein leaders think them better out of the way.

The case of the murder of Sir Arthur Vicars is fresh in everybody's mind..."

[Lloyd George quotes from the *Manchester Guardian* of 16 April. He refers to William P. Kennedy, a Dillonite, who refused to close his premises at Boris, Co. Galway, on the occasion of the death of Terence Mac Swiney. He was boycotted and "took action for damages against a number of his enemies". He was shot, along with his solicitor, Michael O'Dempsey. Then there was William Goud, an ex-Army Captain, who returned to his studies in Trinity. He went home for the funeral of his father who was murdered at his own door a few days before, and was himself waylaid and killed with a notice pinned to him: "Tried, convicted, and executed; spies and informers beware". The newspapers of 8 April carried news of the murder of a war-crippled soldier in the presence of his mother and sister who were spattered with his blood. And Kitty Carroll, a poor woman who was the sole support of aged parents, was murdered as a spy.]

"Perhaps the most terrible aspect of the Irish situation today is the indifference which has grown up there to the crime of murder since Sinn Fein entered upon its campaign, though I cannot help feeling that in their hearts the Irish people are as shocked by it as we are..."

I would therefore most earnestly urge those who are responsible for the guidance of the Christian conscience not to obscure the moral issues involved...

3. The Policy Of The Government

I come now to the final point.

The resolution pleads for the adoption of a different line of policy, and especially for a truce with a view to a deliberate effort after an agreed solution. If I thought there was a different policy which would lead to the solution of our difficulties, I should not hesitate to adopt it, however different it were from that which the Government is now pursuing. The present state of affairs is due to one cause, and one cause only—that there is still an irreconcilable difference between the two sides. The one side—or, rather, the group which controls it—stands for an independent Irish Republic; the other stands for the maintenance in fundamentals of the Union, together with the completest self-government for Ireland within the Empire which is compatible with conceding to Ulster the same right of self-determination within Ireland as Nationalist Ireland has claimed within the Union.

Towards the solution of this problem—the real problem—the resolution makes no contribution, except the proposal for a truce. But a truce in itself will not bridge the gulf, though it might be useful if there were any doubt on either side as to where the other stands, or a basis for discussion were in sight. What really matters if we are to attain to peace is that a basis for a permanent settlement should be reached.

I fully admit, and I have always admitted, that the declared policy of Sinn Fein and the policy of his Majesty's Government are unreconcilable: I believe that the policy of establishing an Irish Republic is impossible for two reasons: first, because it is incompatible with the security of Great Britain and with the existence of the British commonwealth; and second, because if it were conceded it would mean civil war in Ireland—for Ulster would certainly resist incorporation in an Irish Republic by force—and in this war hundreds of thousands of people, not only from Great Britain but from all over the world, would hasten to take part.

On the other hand, I believe that the policy of the Government—the maintenance in fundamentals of the unity of the Kingdom, coupled with the immediate establishment of two Parliaments in Ireland with full powers to unite on any terms upon which they can agree upon themselves—is not only the sole practical solution, but one which is both just and wise in itself. I further believe that the present Home Rule Act is a sensible and workmanlike method of carrying this policy into effect. It confers on Ireland wider powers than either of Gladstone's Bills or the Act of 1914. It bases the financial relations of the two countries on relative taxable capacity, and leaves to Irishmen themselves the task of achieving unity with their own land.

Union or Secession

But the present struggle is not about the Home Rule Act at all. Fundamentally the issue is the same as that in the War of North and South in the United States—it is an issue between secession and union.

At the outbreak of the great American struggle nearly everybody in these islands sympathized with the South and was against the North. Even Gladstone took this view. Only John Bright never wavered in his adherence to Lincoln's cause. That war lasted four years. It cost a million lives and much devastation and ruin. There was more destruction of property in a single Confederate county than in all the so-called "reprisals" throughout the whole of Ireland.

Lincoln always rejected alike truce and compromise. As he often said, he was fighting for the Union and meant to save it even if he could only do so at the price of retaining slavery in the South. Is there a man or a woman today who does not admit that the North was right and does not see the calamitous results which would have followed the break-up of the American Union? I doubt if there is a responsible man in the Southern States today, however much he may admire the great figures, like Stonewall Jackson and Lee, who is not glad that the Union was preserved even at that terrible cost.

Is not our policy exactly the same? It is by reason of the contiguity of the two islands and their strategic and economic interdependence to fight secession and maintain the fundamental unity of our ancient kingdom of many nations from Flamborough Head to Cape Clear and from Cape Wrath to Land's End. I believe that our ideal of combining unity with Home Rule is a finer and nobler ideal than that excessive nationalism which will take nothing less than isolation, which is Sinn Fein's sacred creed today, and which if it had full play would Balkanize the world. I believe that once the struggle is over and its bitterness forgotten and unity has been preserved, all classes will agree, including a majority in Ireland itself, that in fundamentals the Government were right and Sinn Fein were wrong.

I do not see, therefore, how we can pursue a different line of policy. It has never been our policy to refuse compromise about anything but Union itself and the non-coercion of Ulster. Throughout the whole of last year when the Home Rule Bill was before Parliament, I invited negotiations with the elected representatives of Ireland, stating that the only points I could not discuss were the secession of Ireland and the forcing of Ulster into an Irish Parliament against its will. I also added that in my judgment, justice required that Ireland should carry

its share of the war debt, as Irishmen in all other parts of the world have to do, and not throw an increased burden on those who are already carrying the largest share of the loss and cost of the war.

To these overtures there was never a reply. And there has never been a reply, for the good reason that the real Sinn Fein organization is not yet ready to abandon its ideal of an independent Irish Republic, including Ulster. That there are many Sinn Feiners who recognize the folly and impossibility of this attitude is certain. But I regret that it is no less certain that up to the present the directing minds of the Sinn Fein movement, who control the Irish Republican Army—the real obstacle of peace—believe that they can ultimately win a Republic by continuing to fight as they fight today, and are resolutely opposed to compromise.

I wish it were otherwise, but I think that if the signatories of the resolution would approach, not moderate Irishmen, but those who control the Irish Republican Army, they would find that what I say is correct. Only a few days ago Mr. Michael Collins gave an interview to the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, and declared uncompromisingly for an independent Irish Republic, and added that, in his judgment, "the same effort which would get us Dominion Home Rule would get us a Republic".

The Condition Of Settlement

So long as the leaders of Sinn Fein stand in this position, and receive the support of their countrymen, settlement is, in my judgment, impossible. The Government of which I am the head will never give way upon the fundamental question of secession. Nor do I believe that any alternative Government could do so either. I need not now speak for Ulster, for its people will shortly have a Parliament through which they can express their views as to incorporation in a Dublin Parliament for themselves. I am willing, and, indeed, anxious, to discuss any and every road which promises to lead to a reconciliation of the parties to the present struggle. I recognize, as fully as any man, that force is itself no remedy, and that reason and good will alone can lead us to the final goal. But to abandon the use of force today would be to surrender alike to violence, crime, and separatism, and that I am not prepared to do.

So long, therefore, as Sinn Fein Ireland demands a Republic and refuses to accept loyal membership of the British Commonwealth, coupled with the fullest Home Rule which is compatible with conceding to Ulster the same rights as it claims for itself, the present evils will continue. I do not wish anybody to be under any misunderstanding on that point.

In conclusion, I should like respectfully to suggest that the signatories of the resolution should make their own position clear to the people of Ireland. I have replied to their address with complete frankness. I venture to believe that the majority of them are in agreement with the fundamental position set forth in this letter. If they desire to bring about peace, as they surely do, I believe that nothing would more rapidly promote it than that they and those who think like them, whatever they may think about some aspects of the policy of the present Government, should make it clear to Irish opinion that they can never attain their ends by resort to crime, that secession is impossible, and that, if they are to have peace, they must be willing to concede to Ulstermen the same rights as they claim for themselves. Those are the fundamental facts. To leave any doubt in the minds of Irishmen on these points is to prolong and not to shorten the present strife. Once they are grasped by Irishmen, I have faith that the end will be in sight, and I believe that nothing is more calculated to bring them home to Ireland than that those who are seeking to promote peace and concord with Ireland should make this clear.

Ever sincerely

D. Lloyd George

European Commission: Answer to the Globalist crisis is ... to accelerate and deepen globalization!

by Philip O'Connor

The European Commission recently pronounced on the international financial and economic crisis for the benefit of the Spring Council of Ministers and the G20 meeting scheduled for 2nd April (Communication for the European Council, *Driving European recovery*, 4th March 2009 - http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/press_20090304_en.pdf).

It called for increased agreed regulatory measures to restore the financial system and the strengthening by agreement of stimulus measures in Member States:

"national actions to boost demand will often have a positive cross border effect on goods and services in other Member States and thus feed through into a virtuous circle of recovery for Europe as a whole".

And it pronounced that as most EU trade was internal—between Member States—these measures should be coordinated so as to be mutually reinforcing. And thirdly it sought a focus on maintaining employment and boosting consumption in the Single Market zone: "Alleviating the human cost of the crisis."

Strengthening and consolidating the financial system is set out in a range of new rules to streamline the financial regulatory system across the Single Market zone (presumably in deference to the British, there is rarely any mention of the EuroZone). In a reference to the bank guarantee schemes introduced on foot of the Irish initiative (though it doesn't say that!), it claims that:

"last autumn, coordinated European action to recapitalise and guarantee banks across the EU prevented the meltdown of the European banking industry and helped restore some liquidity in interbank markets."

It places much faith on a system of jointly agreed regulations for the financial system across the Single Market zone in areas such as accountancy practices, management rules for hedge funds and derivatives etc. These are based on the recommendations of the Commission-mandated High Level Group chaired by Jacques de Larosière which reported on 25 February 2009 and which discovered that the financial collapse had been caused by a lack of an agreed regulatory framework.

Recognising that the "global economy is in the midst of the worst recession in decades" it calls for supports for the "real economy": since the start of the crisis the car industry alone had declined by over 33% and manufacturing and construction had lost over €150 billion in full-year terms. The response to this had been the "ambitious European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP)" agreed in December 2008:

"on the basis of proposals from the Commission... At its core was a combined effort to give Europe's economy an immediate fiscal boost, while targeting this investment at strengthening the European economy for the long-term challenges ahead. It recognised that the fall in private demand made the role of public expenditure even more important in the short term."

Early signs of the impact of the Plan, it claims,

"are positive, both in terms of volume of the stimulus and the direction of reforms. Most Member States have now adopted or announced fiscal stimulus measures. Over the period 2009 and 2010, fiscal policy is providing support to the economy in the region of 3.3% of GDP, equivalent to more than €400 billion, a potentially huge support to growth and jobs across the EU."

The Commission proposed a "targeted investment to the tune of €5 billion to address the challenge of energy security and to bring high-speed internet to rural communities, as well as through additional advance payments under cohesion policy amounting to €11 billion, of which €7 billion for new Member States. Moreover, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has boosted its SME lending possibilities by €15 billion."

The Commission also welcomed the targeting of resources to SMEs and R&D in most Member States.

But the core of its proposals centre on *"The Single Market as a lever for recovery"*:

"There is no doubt about the real pain that this twofold crisis—financial and economic—is causing to European households and businesses. The road to recovery will be gradual and will require a major mobilisation of efforts by all involved to accelerate implementation of structural reforms under the Lisbon Strategy. By pooling our efforts and by making the most of our competitive advantages, especially our Single Market, we can ensure that Europe comes out of this recession more quickly."

It declared that

"the measures we are taking to get through the present crisis will prepare the ground for a smooth transition to the European economy of the future."

This will involve, in particular, maintaining the pace of the shift to a low carbon economy:

"when the upturn starts green technologies and products should be the lead markets."

The recession is an opportunity for major restructuring and diversification of companies. Privatisation must proceed apace:

"The process of returning nationalised companies to private ownership and generally returning the level of state intervention in our economies to more normal levels will need careful management. Community competition policy can support this vital process, steering it towards open, efficient and innovative outcomes."

In other words, the current massive investment by States in economic activity will have to be reversed as soon as conditions allow.

Its key recommendations in relation to the "real economy" are summarised as: maintaining openness within the internal market, continuing to remove barriers and avoiding creating new ones, ensuring non-discrimination by treating goods and services from other Member States in accordance with EU rules and Treaty principles, targeting interventions towards our longer term policy goals such as facilitating structural change, enhancing competitiveness and addressing key challenges such as building a low carbon economy, taking full account of the crucial importance of SMEs by applying the "think small first" principle, and keeping the Single Market open to our trade partners and respecting international commitments, in particular those made in the WTO.

"In line with the EERP, Member States must now ensure that the fiscal stimulus packages are accompanied by an acceleration of structural reforms in the areas highlighted in the Lisbon strategy country-specific recommendations."

The employment measures call for retaining jobs through short-time working, subsidizing of jobs, investing in training, supporting unemployed through welfare-enhanced job placements, public employment schemes, maintaining minimum income levels, protecting pension schemes, subsidising individuals threatened with indebtedness, lowering non-wage costs (i.e. PRSI) on lower paid work, strengthening incentivised back-to-work measures etc. It also calls for ensuring free movement of workers throughout the Single Market:

"[This] can help address the persistence of mismatches between skills and labour market needs, even during the downturn. In this context, the Posted Workers Directive serves to facilitate free movement of workers in the context of crossborder provision of services, whilst effectively safeguarding against social dumping. The Commission will work with the Member States and Social Partners on a shared interpretation of the Directive to ensure that its practical application - in particular administrative cooperation between Member States - works as intended."

This seems highly idealistic given the realities set out in Feargus Ó Raghallaigh's article 'Cowed by EU Globalism' in this issue of IFA.

The Commission is adamant that the crisis is a global one and can only be answered by global remedies:

"This is a global crisis. The scale and speed at which a shock in one systemically important financial market [i.e. the US—PO'C] soon affected the financial system and spilled over to real economies worldwide have shown just how interdependent the world has become. The EU played a leading role in building recognition that global solutions are needed.

"Following the EU's initiative, the G-20 Washington Summit in November 2008 agreed an action plan to renew the international financial architecture to bring it up to date with the realities of globalisation.

"The EU must continue to speak with one voice at the G-20 London Summit of 2 April. We can be a strong and influential partner in this work, given our long-standing and successful experience of regional market integration and effective institution-building.

"As implementation of the European Economic Recovery Plan gains momentum, against the background of an ambitious reform of European financial markets, the European Union is particularly well-placed to take the lead in proposing concrete solutions that can deliver effective results at global level.

"These efforts should be consistent with the need for global solutions in the area of climate change. The transition to a low-carbon economy should create new opportunities for growth not only in Europe but worldwide. The London Summit should therefore reaffirm its commitment to an ambitious global outcome to the UN Climate Change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The core of the Commission message is that more globalism is the cure:

"We should also ensure that the London Summit projects clear messages about the need to keep global markets open. Whilst there is a global recognition that the historical experience of protectionism in a downturn is disastrous, domestic pressures to apply restrictive measures can be strong. An unequivocal message is essential to hold off these threats.

.....

"Upholding the benefits of the Single Market, and promoting the same values outside Europe [emphasis added—PO'C], will give the EU a unique launch pad for the return to growth. Protectionism and a retreat towards national markets can only lead to stagnation, a deeper and longer recession, and lost prosperity.

"Member States' action to address the crisis must take the Single Market dimension into account. Most, if not all, Member States will intervene to support economic activity on their territory during this crisis. The intelligent use of national levers in a European context is the best way to ensure that action will be effective.

"National measures can be most effective if Member States act in the knowledge that they are working with the grain of the single market. Working in partnership with Member States, the Commission stands ready to provide assistance with the design and implementation of concrete measures, promoting the exchange of good practices and sharing policy experience."

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Cowed By EU Globalism

by Feargus O Raghallaigh

Brian Cowen came back from Brussels on 12th December 2008 with a package of "legal guarantees" in response to *The Statement of Concerns of the Irish People on the Treaty of Lisbon* which he had brought with him. The deal with Sarkozy was set out in the EU "Presidency Conclusions" which committed the European Council to finding a legal means to enable it, while implementing the Lisbon Treaty, to retain a Commissioner for each member state and provide "protocols" in relation to Irish neutrality, national sovereignty in the area of taxation policy, the "right to life, education and the family" and workers' rights. All of this was on condition of the Irish Government "seeking ratification of the Treaty of the Lisbon by the end of the term of the current Commission". The mechanism offered to secure these "legal guarantees", according to Sarkozy, would be legislation attached to the next enlargement Treaty, presumed to be that for Croatia in 2010 or 2011 (See *Cowen/Sarkozy Lisbon Deal: The Primacy of Politics over Legalism, Irish Political Review*, February 2009)

Cowen blinded by EU Globalism

The halt brought to EU expansionism by the Russian stand over Georgia last August and the failure of Mandelson's radical globalism to secure an international deal at the World Trade Talks (followed by Mandelson's hasty exit from the Commission) all added to an illusion of a coming change of course in Brussels. But the adamant refusal of the Government to meet SIPTU demands during the last Lisbon Treaty to legislate for collective bargaining rights or to secure anything meaningful in this area under the tentative "legal guarantees" negotiated with Sarkozy point to the deeper flaw of the Irish Government's essential acceptance of the globalising agenda of Brussels and inability to see that recent events have already undermined that option.

In the coming months in the run-up to the elections to the European Parliament we might yet see the emergence in Europe of a countervailing political agenda. That agenda would be one that would seek to recover a space and project for Europe, that of a "moralised social order" as envisioned by Jacques Delors and those who worked with him on that project more than twenty years ago. That would be the only counter to the fanatical pursuit of globalisation of the Commission and the European Court of Justice.

European Employers' Offensive

It looks like the labour dispute in Britain at the Total refinery in Lindsey, near Grimsby, Lincolnshire is over—for the moment. The dispute, over the hiring policies of an on-site Italian (actually Sicilian) contractor IREM, is simply the latest evidence of what has been a decades-long project by European business, to undo the post-war Western European social settlement, the 'European social model' as it came to be known, particularly during the years of the Delors Presidency of the European Community.

The employers' project, a grand and visionary one—if from their point of view—was not particularly hidden although it was not too loudly trumpeted either. Its culmination in a sense was the European law, the *Posted Workers Directive*, in force since December 1996. At the outset the significance of the Directive was perhaps not fully appreciated among the general public and ordinary Trade Unionists. Indeed the professed and purported rationale for the law was to counter the possibility of 'social

dumping' in a single labour market. With the passage of time, however, its importance and the oppositeness of the alleged intended effect has come to be appreciated—particularly after the eastward expansion of the EU from the mid 'noughties' and the associated opening up of the entire EU labour market under the free movement rules of the single market. Perhaps the vocal supporters of the European social model did not appreciate what was afoot either. What was under way was nothing less than, in the Irish and British contexts, the restoration of the Taff Vale decision of 1900-01 and in the wider western European context, the undermining of the complex of institutional arrangements, understandings and laws underpinning the systems of social cohesion, Union recognition and collective bargaining.

Essence of Taff Vale

In Taff Vale a British court upheld the appeal of an employer (the Taff Vale Railway Company), a private rail operator, against the actions of a Union (the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, ASRS) in dispute, that the act of striking and picketing was a conspiracy and an act of combination. The issue was Union recognition. So, under the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875 it was held that a Union could be sued for damages caused by the actions of its officials in industrial disputes. The court's decision was upheld on appeal to the House of Lords. This decision put a coach and four through collective organisation and industrial action; significantly led to the growth of the British Labour Party; and to the action of a Liberal Government in overturning the effect of the decision through enacting the Trades Disputes Act, 1906, the basis for Trades Union action and collective bargaining for the rest of the century (although some aspects of the legislation were severely curtailed through the Thatcher years, especially as regards secondary action and picketing, balloting and so on).

The so-called 'voluntary' system, however, largely remained intact in both Britain and Ireland. What the 1906 Act did was to put Trade Union action beyond the law on combinations and conspiracy (as 'discovered' by the courts): 1906 was a pragmatic response by government from the societal point of view to the determination by the courts that collective worker behaviour was as much subject to the force of the law as any other act of combination or 'conspiracy'.

Thatcher's assault on the European Social Model

The idea that collective organisation and action by workers is—again from the societal point of view—different from other forms of combination became, particularly after WWII, a central plank in the organisation of both the economy and society throughout western Europe. In Britain it was one of the foundations of 'Butskellism' as it came to be called, in Germany a plank of the post-war social market model, and so on. It wasn't all plain sailing, not least in Britain where the Trade Unions contrasted 'voluntarism' and 'free collective bargaining' on the one hand with, on the other, what was implicit in the consensual system as it was evolving: the restrictions, as they argued, of a broad social model of collective functioning represented by 'social contracts', 'social compacts', 'prices and incomes policy', 'In Place of Strife', the Bullock proposals on industrial democracy and so on, on 'free' collective bargaining.

From the point of view of society in the round, Thatcher saw all of the ensuing chaos of Trade Union (and Labour Party) policy generated by such a perspective as destructive of stability and offering nothing useful in the alternative on offer. Imbued with the market ideology of the Institute of Economic Affairs, Sir Keith Joseph and ever more confident in her own instincts, she moved: the class stalemate inbuilt in the ideological stance of Unions and Labour simply had to be smashed and eggs broken.

There was no 'need' for what followed other than the necessity to deal with the refusal of the 'left' (whatever the term means and if you could call it that anyway) to deal with the reality of the exercise of power to which it had become party but refused to accept in its consequences: stability and progress, sense in place of unending and insoluble strife. None of this is to dispute or contest the rightness of many individual causes or disputes of the Thatcher and earlier years but in the round a game was thrown and lost.

Haughey's options

In Ireland things were moving in a different direction, if at times fitfully. From a much weaker position organised labour was moving towards a system of national collective bargaining with over time a widening of the scope, the agenda, of that bargaining: its culmination was in the shift towards Social Partnership that was proposed and secured by Haughey with the Congress in the midst of profound financial and economic crisis in the mid 1980s (yes, it's that long ago). Haughey talked with Helmut Schmidt to get at the bottom of the European "*social model*" as an alternative to the Thatcherite solution to the social and economic crisis of Britain. Congress took the offer and thus was born the system of Social Partnership.

Counter-Offensive: The European Round Table

In Europe, the continent, there was yet another story: the emergence in the 1980s of a new breed of business leader, who saw and decried 'euro-sclerosis'—slow if steady economic growth, improvement in general living standards, low unemployment, social advance, a stable rural society and economy (under the CAP) and periodic fiscal and currency crises (largely precipitated by US dollar crises, much to do with the consequences of the Vietnam War and its aftermath). They decried all of this, secretly in their quasi-masonic club, the European Round Table, and as they looked to Thatcher's Britain with its privatisations (BA, British Gas, BP, British Telecom and so on); to the likes of the Finnish head of Nokia Kari Kairamo as he led a lumber company into the telecommunications revolution and such as Carlo De Benedetti with his equally radical transformation of Olivetti.

These new gods of enterprise saw the holding back of the development of the Single Market (actually constitutionally enshrined in the Treaty of Rome) in favour of maintaining a socially cohesive, very much nationally-based system as 'sclerotic'—whether through the market's exclusion from vast National and Local government systems of public provision such as telecoms., utilities such as electricity, gas and water or in respect of wider public provision (such as health, transport and so on). They had their icons in the likes of De Benedetti and Kairamo—and others. And they had their inside supporters in the Commission—in the shape of Lord Cockfield, Leon Brittan and Peter Sutherland among others. They had, and continue to have, their agenda and mission:

"European industry cannot flourish unless it can compete in a global economy. This capacity to compete cannot be determined solely by the efforts of individual companies. The prevailing economic and social policy framework is crucially important and must be flexible enough to adapt swiftly to changes in global conditions" (taken from the Round Table website).

Many of these people had, in today's terms and language, a globalist agenda. They had the mantra of 'growth' which they opposed to 'sclerosis'—which was an internal project or agenda, dealing with Europe, to break the consensus model. But there was a wider agenda, including a strong Atlanticist streak, evident in involvement in bodies such as the secretive Bilderberg Group and Trilateral Commission. This was the genesis of 'globalisation'.

The "Single Market" Project

What has this to do with Lindsey Oil Refinery? This much: first the single marketers set about putting the constitutional aspiration on a firm statutory footing through the Single European Act and the Single Market programme. This pushed agendas such as open public procurement—the idea that public services are not providers of such services in their own right but rather the purchasers of various components of provision from the private markets, or if they are not then in law they should be. This agenda has underpinned the pursuit both of outright privatisations and also outsourcing and sub-contracting by public providers of services. The distinction between public and private services has largely been dismantled in law and in fact. Thus companies, such as Veolia of France, have taken over the job of public environmental services throughout much of Europe, as well as operating public transport systems (buses, trams and trains) and so on. Workforces disrupted by such tendering and contracting systems have been provided with the figment of 'transfer of engagement' rules—but these only cover the immediate transfer (from public to private employer). They do not secure Union recognition, collective bargaining rights or ongoing terms and conditions (beyond the immediate transfer period).

There is also the slowly-being-dismembered concept of 'services of general interest' (services covering such essential daily realities as energy, telecommunications, transport, radio and television, postal services, schools, health and social services, etc). On the one hand the concept of *service of general interest* was supposed to professedly give comfort to old-fashioned believers in public provision, whereas in fact the agenda is one of the attrition of public provision through further outsourcing and 'procurement' and ultimately in alliance with the US, the extension of this entire model to the rest of the world, through the Doha (Free Trade) Round.

How Christian Democrats Held the Ground

To an extent people like Delors, Mitterand and Kohl (and Haughey) went along with much of this over an extended period, but on strictly defined terms. The counter to liberalisation (within the EU) would be the strengthening of the 'European social model', cohesion, and none of them seem to have believed in the rampant market system. Even the Christian Democrats (or rather, particularly the Christian Democrats) of the old school had little time at all for such an agenda—as evidenced in Eduard Balladur's remark during the 1990s (as an RPR prime Minister in cohabitation with Socialist Mitterand as President), "*What is the market? It is the law of the jungle. And what is civilization? It is the struggle against nature*".

There is a summation of Delors' mode of thought, contained in *Jacques Delors And European Integration* (George Ross, Polity Press, 1995):

"The Delorist' vision saw the market as an indispensable allocator of resources... and source of economic dynamism. The market by itself, could not, however, guarantee equity, a moralised social order, or full economic success. These things depended on 'dialogue' among different groups—employers and labor in particular—to reach clearer understandings of mutual needs about what had to be done and what could be shared. Labor had a stake in economic success and thus good reasons to accept certain responsibilities. Employers had a stake in the predictability which labor's acceptance

of responsibilities would bring. 'Dynamic compromise' based on persistent discussion between different groups would be the secret of success. Finally, it was not the state's job to decide for others, but to facilitate negotiations among social partners."

All of this, however, is not what our other visionaries and harbingers of a future had in mind—not at all.

Trojan Horse: The European Court of Justice

And with the passing from power of Delors—and Mitterrand, and Kohl, and indeed Haughey, what came was the market whirlwind those other visionaries sought and with the eastward expansion and the opening up of the labour market came the final push. The object was to further erode, through the *Posted Workers Directive*, the capacity of western European workers to collectively protect their pay and conditions, their standards of living and a "moralised social order". In true Orwellian fashion the express purport of the Directive was the opposite of the outcome in fact. Instead of being a bulwark against social dumping it has become a propagator of the phenomenon, being instrumental in the phenomenon of the 'race to the bottom'.

In the new regime, companies from wherever in the expanded EU (or from outside) could propose to, and bid for, work or contracts anywhere in the Union (under the free movement of capital rules) but also to populate these undertakings with imported workforces (from wherever they might and can find them, including their own countries of origin) with, as it has been 'discovered' by the European Court of Justice, no need and every right to ignore collective agreements and to do no more than respect minimum wage legislation—wherever that exists and at whatever level of impoverishment.

There are restrictions, such as they are, for example, that the work is seen as essentially of a temporary nature (whatever that means and which is why so many examples of the problems created turn up in construction projects). It is all in the name of, horrible term, 'flexibilisation' of the 'European labour market'. That is what Swedish Trade Unionists found when they tried to put a stop to it in Sweden in a case involving a Latvian company, Laval. Like the Welsh railway workers of over a century ago they found that the courts (in this case the European Court of Justice or ECJ) ruled against the actions of the Swedish Trade Unionists and upheld the employer's right to ignore Swedish collective agreements, even if legally contracted (unlike Irish and British agreements, which are normally negotiated within the 'voluntarist' system).

Myths of Anti-Protectionism

With Delors *et al* safely out of the way, the Commission and the ECJ have pursued a muscular contest: who is to be seen as the stalwart of 'free' markets and their unfettered power? There is little to choose between the two of them and the Council of Ministers—which might have been expected to do otherwise—has simply become an extension of the contest, with the European Parliament having very limited power and the system overall, consumed by the Globalisation agenda.

We are bombarded by the media and politicians with 'arguments' in favour of this great agenda. A cloth-eared, one-eyed Broom [British Prime Minister Gordon Brown] preaches it from his political pulpit, talking rubbish about a world without borders, without countries. John Lennon may have caught the *Zeitgeist* with his world without religion but Broom is no Lennon—and this is, now, the world of the new Great Depression. And, as Larry Elliot, Economics Editor of *The Guardian*, has pointed out to deaf political ears, the 1930s was not triggered by a flight to Protectionism, rather the opposite in fact. In the 4th February edition of the paper he pointed to how the Crash was triggered by a contraction in bank credit and the money supply (much as is now happening) and "no country since the dawning of the modern

age has managed to industrialise successfully without protectionism". Britain, the US, the Asian Tigers all emerged through Protectionism, he points out. He might have added Germany—and indeed Ireland of the 1930s.

Guardian Raises Spectre of the "Mob"

And so, back to Grimsby: the media, not least *The Guardian*, have been full of photo coverage as well as the acres of newsprint. The photo journalism is interesting in its own right: pages of big pictures of 'rough looking', unshaven, uncouth-looking men in their hoodies, beanies and (on 4 February in *The Guardian*) a large photo of a man consumed by anger and wearing a Red Army winter hat. What is all this supposed to conjure up if not that great ruling- and middle-class dread, the mob?

The ECJ and EU institutions collectively have brought us to this. There might be an agenda that could find its place and space in the coming months in the run-up to the elections to the European Parliament. As stated at the outset, it is an agenda that could recover a space and project for Europe, that of a "moralised social order", as envisioned by Delors and those who worked with him on that project more than twenty years ago. That would certainly be a counter to the near-Tebbitite rants of Mandelson with his new version of 'get on yer bike', the pro-Lisbon mouthings of our political leaders and the phantasms of the worst anti-Lisbonites, including the 'free' market Libertas cleverly playing to the phantasmagorical, and the lunatics of the Commission and the Court of Justice with their failed globalisation agenda.

The Protectionist, social Europe project will probably re-emerge in the European Elections in some form. But of it there is little in the way of a spectre in Ireland—except those 120,000 who marched in Dublin on 21st February demanding a restoration of Social Partnership. Is it not blindingly obvious to Fianna Fáil, or even to Eamon Gilmore, that this is a nettle that must be grasped?

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The EU "forgets" about Georgia and makes up with Russia

by David Morrison

On 2 December 2008, the EU resumed negotiations with Russia about a new partnership agreement [1]. Negotiations had been postponed on 1 September 2008 in the wake of Russia's military action in Georgia in August.

The negotiations were resumed without a fanfare, in marked contrast to the hullabaloo that surrounded their postponement three months earlier. Vladimir Chizhov, the Russian Ambassador to the EU, met the European Commission's lead negotiator, Eneko Landaburu, for two hours in Brussels. There was no press conference afterwards.

British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, who in August was the leading advocate of the EU taking a hard line against Russia, and of the postponement of the negotiations, was absolutely silent about their resumption. Understandably so, since the EU has resumed negotiations, even though the condition laid down by the EU for their resumption – that Russia withdraw its troops to their positions prior to the outbreak of hostilities – hasn't been fulfilled.

EU foreign ministers made the decision to resume negotiations on 10 November 2008 [2]. Prior to the meeting, Miliband issued a joint statement with Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt, saying:

"... we are deeply concerned that Russia has not yet withdrawn to its pre 7 August positions as the EU has made clear that it must. We therefore urge Russia to fully implement both the 12 August and 8 September EU brokered peace agreements. We are also concerned that OSCE as well as EU monitors have still been prevented from entering South Ossetia." [3]

Despite all this, Miliband didn't oppose resumption on behalf of Britain. Miliband the mouse has become Miliband the mouse.

The only state that held out against resumption was Lithuania, but the resumption didn't require unanimity amongst member states (apparently because the negotiations were not suspended last September, merely postponed).

EU External Relations Commissioner, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, made a lame attempt to counter the assumption that the EU had climbed down:

"This does not mean that we are giving a gift to Russia and this does not mean that we are changing our very firm position on the events of the summer. Russia's action over Georgia remains unacceptable." [2]

In reality, the EU has now terminated its very mild sanction against Russia for this action.

Much more important, the EU has accepted the result of that action, which is that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are no longer part of Georgia in any meaningful sense, and won't be for the foreseeable future. The EU may not have recognized them as independent states, as Russia has done, but it has abandoned any challenge to Russia's insistence, backed up with Russian military force, that they are not going to be governed from Tbilisi.

Negotiations postponed

An extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 1 September 2008, called to consider events in Georgia, took the decision to postpone the scheduled negotiations on a partnership agreement with Russia. The Council conclusions stated:

"Until [Russian] troops have withdrawn to the positions held prior to 7 August, meetings on the negotiation of the Partnership Agreement will be postponed." [4]

Russia withdrew its troops from Georgia outside South Ossetia and Abkhazia. However, Russia stated plainly from the outset that it intended to keep thousands of troops in South Ossetia and Abkhazia for the foreseeable future. On 8 September 2008, the Russian Defence Minister, Anatoly Serdyukov, said that 3,800 troops would be stationed in each area [5]. That is a great deal more than the number deployed prior to 7 August 2008, when it is generally believed there were about 1,000 troops under Russian command in South Ossetia and 2,500 in Abkhazia.

So, there isn't the slightest doubt that Russian troops haven't been withdrawn to their positions prior to 7 August 2008. Nevertheless, the EU has resumed negotiations with Russia.

EU Monitoring Mission

As president of the EU, President Sarkozy brokered a ceasefire between Russia and Georgia on 12 August 2008.

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The text of the ceasefire agreement (given in a press release from an EU foreign ministers meeting the next day [6] (p 6-7)) consists of a set of principles and is very imprecise. On the withdrawal of Russian troops, the agreement says:

"Russian military forces will have to withdraw to the lines held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Pending an international mechanism, Russian peace-keeping forces will implement additional security measures;" (point 5)

In the first sentence, Russia signed up to withdrawing its forces to the positions held prior to 7 August – eventually. The second sentence allowed Russia to keep troops inside Georgia proper on the borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia until an international monitoring mechanism was in place.

On 8 September 2008, President Sarkozy went back to Moscow, and then to Tbilisi, to make arrangements for the implementation of the agreement of 12 August (see [7] for the text of what was agreed). Part of these arrangements was:

"the deployment of additional observers in the areas adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia in sufficient numbers to replace the Russian peacekeeping [sic] forces by 1 October 2008, including at least 200 European Union observers."

The EU observers, aka the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia), were deployed as arranged by 1 October 2008 and Russian troops withdrew into South Ossetia and Abkhazia, more or less.

It was also agreed that UN and OSCE international monitors would continue to be deployed within Abkhazia and South Ossetia respectively, as they were prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Russia insisted on monitors in Georgia proper, and insisted that they came from the EU, because, since Georgia is keen to join the EU, the presence of EU monitors is likely to restrain it from repeating its aggression of 7 August.

The agreement with Russia provided for the deployment of EU observers "in the areas adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia", but not within these areas – which implied that the EU accepted that these areas were no longer really part of Georgia. However, in order to sell the agreement in Tbilisi, Sarkozy gave the false impression that Russia had agreed to their deployment inside South Ossetia and Abkhazia, saying as he stood alongside Georgian President Saakashvili:

"The spirit of the text is that they (the EU observers) will have a mandate to enter (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), to observe, to report." [8]

This produced a fierce response from Moscow, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov saying:

"This is an absolutely immoral attempt to explain dishonestly to Mr Saakashvili what obligations were taken on by the European Union and what obligations by Russia. Additional international observers will be deployed precisely around South Ossetia and Abkhazia and not inside these republics." [8]

Nevertheless, the EU legislation specifying the mandate for EUMM Georgia (Council Joint Action 2008/736/CFSP of 15 September 2008 [9]) describes its area of operation as Georgia without mentioning South Ossetia and Abkhazia, so it meant to include them. A statement from the head of the mission, Hansjörg Haber, on 4 November 2008 underlined this, saying:

"EUMM has a Georgia-wide mandate, thus including Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We are here to observe compliance with the peace agreements of 12 August and 8 September by all sides, contribute to stabilisation and normalisation of the situation on the ground and help confidence-building.

"However, EUMM is a civilian and unarmed mission. We cannot and we do not want to force our way. We can only go where there is cooperation. It is the task of our monitors to knock on the doors and request access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Therefore, our patrols approach the Russian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian checkpoints along the administrative boundary line. We approach the staff of the checkpoints in a friendly manner, try to establish contacts and explain our mandate. We will continue this confidence-building work." [10]

Up to now, in line with the arrangements made with Sarkozy in Moscow on 12 September 2008, Russia has refused to allow EU observers into South Ossetia and Abkhazia (see interview with Hansjörg Haber on 27 March 2009 [11])

By having EU monitors seek access to South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the EU is expressing its formal position that Georgia includes South Ossetia and Abkhazia. By refusing to make an issue of Russia's refusal to grant them access, the EU is accepting the reality that they are now separate entities under Russian protection.

NATO

2 December 2008 was a very good day for Russia. Not only did the EU resume negotiations with it on a partnership agreement, but, a few hours later in another part of Brussels, NATO foreign ministers decided to resume contact with Russia within the NATO-Russia Council. Miliband the mouth was party to this decision as well, as was US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

Contact with Russia within the NATO-Russia Council had been broken off in August. A special NATO foreign ministers meeting on 19 August 2008 concluded:

"In 2002, we established the NATO-Russia Council, a framework for discussions with Russia, including on issues that divide the Alliance and Russia. We have determined that we cannot continue with business as usual." [12]

But on 2 December 2008, NATO reversed gear. True, in the communiqué at the end of the meeting [13], NATO condemned Russia for its "disproportionate military actions during the conflict with Georgia in August" and for its "subsequent recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia, which we condemn and call upon Russia to reverse". In addition, NATO demanded that Russia "implement fully the commitments agreed with

Georgia, as mediated by the EU on 12 August and 8 September 2008" and allow "full access by international monitors". Nevertheless, the foreign ministers

"mandated the Secretary General [of NATO] to re-engage with Russia at the political level; agreed to informal discussions in the NRC [NATO-Russia Council]; and requested the Secretary General to report back to us prior to any decision to engage Russia formally in the NRC."

Neither Rice nor Miliband opposed this resumption of relations with Russia.

Neither Rice nor Miliband pressed for Membership Action Plans (MAPs) for Georgia and the Ukraine either.

On 3 April 2008, at a heads of state meeting in Bucharest, NATO had decided in principle to allow Ukraine and Georgia to become full members. But, Germany, France and other states successfully resisted intense pressure from the US (with the support of the UK) to draw up MAPs for Ukraine and Georgia right away.

The foreign ministers' communiqué on 2 December 2008 reaffirmed "all elements of the decisions regarding Ukraine and Georgia taken by our Heads of State and Government in Bucharest". But the US and the UK didn't press for MAPs this time, presumably because they knew that they weren't going to succeed. It looks as if NATO's eastward march is at an end.

President Sarkozy's role

When President Sarkozy came to power, he sounded as if he was going to be much more pro-American than his predecessors. But, in his dealings with Russia in the aftermath of the hostilities in Georgia, he sidelined the US and placed the EU centre stage. It is impossible to believe that this would have happened had any state other than France happened to hold the EU presidency at the time. It is also impossible to believe that all other EU states were happy with Sarkozy's sidelining of the US – for example, Britain and the former Soviet bloc states, which have welcomed the exercise of US power in eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War.

What is the evidence for this? First, Sarkozy's first trip to Moscow on 12 August 2008 to broker a ceasefire was opposed by the US. Sarkozy said so, when he addressed the European Parliament as President of the European Council on 21 October 2008 [14]. Without directly naming the US (or the UK), he also said that "some were saying" that dialogue was useless and there had to be a military response (which he described as "madness").

Here's the passage on Georgia from his speech:

"We [the French presidency] wanted this Europe first of all to be united – which wasn't that simple –, to think independently – because the world needs Europe to think independently – and be proactive. If Europe has things to say, it must not just say them, it must do them. First of all we had the war, with the Russians' wholly disproportionate reaction in the Georgian conflict. I use the words advisedly. I say 'disproportionate' because it is disproportionate to intervene as the

Russians intervened in Georgia. But I use the word 'reaction' because while the reaction was disproportionate, there had been a wholly inappropriate action before. Europe must be fair and not hesitate to break out of ideological mindsets to promote a message of peace.

On 8 August, the crisis erupted. On 12 August Bernard Kouchner and I were in Moscow to obtain the ceasefire. I'm not saying what was done was perfect, I'm simply saying that in four days Europe got a ceasefire. And at the beginning of September, Europe got the commitment to a withdrawal to the pre-8 August positions. In two months, Europe obtained the end of a war and withdrawal of the occupation troops. There were several possibilities. Some were saying – and they had reasons for doing so – that dialogue was useless and that the response to the military action had to be military: madness! Europe has seen the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. Europe must not be an accessory to a new cold war, entered solely because people lost their cool.

"This was a problem we overcame with our American allies, who thought that the visit to Moscow wasn't timely. Despite everything, we acted hand in hand with our American allies. They had a position which wasn't the same as ours. We tried to build collaboration rather than opposition. And frankly, given the state of the world today, I don't think it needs a crisis between Europe and Russia. That would be irresponsible. We can therefore defend our ideas on respect for sovereignty, on respect for Georgia's integrity, on human rights and on our differences with those who govern Russia. But it would have been irresponsible to create the conditions for a clash we absolutely didn't need. The discussions have begun in Geneva on the future status of the Georgian territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. I'm told they've got off to a difficult start. Who could imagine it being any other way? But what's important is that they are starting. I have to say, moreover, that President Medvedev has honoured the commitments he made before the Commission and European Council presidencies when we went to Moscow at the beginning of September.

"Europe has brought peace. Europe obtained the withdrawal of an occupation army and Europe wanted the international discussions. It seems to me that it's been a long time since Europe has played such a role in a conflict of this kind. I can of course see all the ambiguities, all the inadequacies, all the compromises it's been necessary to make, but in all conscience I think we have obtained the maximum of what was possible, and, above all, President [of the Parliament] Pötering, if Europe hadn't made the voice of dialogue and reason heard, who would have made it heard? When Bernard Kouchner and I left on 12 August for Moscow and Tbilisi, all the world media were well aware that the Russians were 40 km from Tbilisi and the goal was to topple Mr Saakashvili's regime. That was the reality. We were very close to disaster but thanks to Europe, a determined Europe, there was no disaster, even though, President Pötering, there will, of course, be a long way to go before tensions calm down in that part of the world."

Needless to say, Sarkozy was not in the business of minimising his achievements as the holder of the EU presidency, nor of the degree to which Russia shifted ground due to his intervention on behalf of the EU. In reality, Russia got what it wanted – South Ossetia and Abkhazia as separate entities under Russian military protection and unlikely to be ruled from Tbilisi ever again.

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The US "forgets" about Georgia and makes up with Russia

by David Morrison

Presidents Obama and Medvedev put their names to a joint statement on US-Russia relations [1], when they met in London on 31 March 2009, prior to the G-20 summit. This, we are led to believe, is a concrete manifestation of the "reset" in US relations with Russia, promised by Obama.

The aspect of the statement which made headlines was their commitment to negotiate a new nuclear arms reduction treaty to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), which expires in December 2009. The aspect of the statement that should have made headlines was the complete absence from it of the word "Georgia".

It is true that the statement does contain a coy reference to "the military actions of last August". But the "reset" is not made conditional on Russia withdrawing its forces to the positions they occupied prior to "the military actions of last August" or on Russia reversing its subsequent recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, separate from Georgia.

Clearly, the US has followed the EU in accepting the fait accompli established by Russia in Georgia last August (see my article *The EU "forgets" about Georgia and makes up with Russia* [2]).

This isn't a major departure from the stance of the Bush administration, which went a long way down this road last December, when it didn't block NATO's resumption of meetings with Russia within the NATO-Russia Council. But, on that occasion, NATO condemned Russia for its "disproportionate military actions during the conflict with Georgia in August" and for its "subsequent recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia, which we condemn and call upon Russia to reverse" [3].

By contrast, the Obama-Medvedev statement doesn't contain a word of US disapproval of Russia's actions, nor any demand that Russia reverse what it has done. All it says is:

"Although we disagree about the causes and sequence of the military actions of last August, we agreed that we must continue efforts toward a peaceful and lasting solution to the unstable situation today. Bearing in mind that significant differences remain between us, we nonetheless stress the importance of last year's six-point accord of August 12, the September 8 agreement, and other relevant agreements, and pursuing effective cooperation in the Geneva discussions to bring stability to the region."

The August 12 accord is the ceasefire agreement negotiated by Sarkozy, which was supposed to be implemented in accordance with the September 8 agreement. It hasn't been implemented apart from the Russian withdrawal from Georgia outside South Ossetia or Abkhazia. The September 8 agreement included the provision of EU monitors, which Russia hasn't allowed into either South Ossetia or Abkhazia. The "Geneva discussions" on a political settlement have, as yet, made no progress even on humanitarian issues.

Russian help

Why has Obama "reset" US policy with Russia at this time? The fundamental reason is that he needs Russian help with supplying US troops in Afghanistan. In addition, he hopes to persuade Russia to be more vigorous in pressuring Iran about its nuclear activities.

An alternative means of supplying troops in Afghanistan has become a priority in recent months because NATO supply lines overland through Pakistan and the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan have been increasingly subject to armed attack and confiscation. And this supply problem will grow as the extra 20,000+ US troops promised by Obama arrive in Afghanistan in the coming months. Until recently, the overland route through Pakistan carried 85-90% of all supplies to NATO forces in Afghanistan.

As long ago as April 2008, prior to the events in Georgia, Russia agreed in principle to allow supplies to be transported overland through Russia. But it wasn't until 19

February 2009 that the first US shipment of non-military supplies left the Latvian port of Riga by train en route to Afghanistan via Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan [4]. It is expected that there will be 20 to 30 US shipments a week. Other NATO countries are using this route as well. On 2 April 2009, just after Obama and Medvedev met in London, the BBC reported that Russia had agreed to discuss the transit of US military supplies to Afghanistan across its territory [5].

The US is also seeking out a route further south, avoiding Russia, through Georgia and Azerbaijan to the Caspian Sea at Baku, across the Caspian Sea and then through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, but this is a much less convenient, and slower, route. According to the New York Times [6], in addition Pentagon and NATO planners, "have studied Iranian routes from the port of Chabahar, on the Arabian Sea, that link with a new road recently completed by India in western Afghanistan", a route that is "considered shorter and safer than going through Pakistan".

Manas airbase

Another operational problem facing NATO in Afghanistan is the possible loss of the use of the Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan. This base, which is leased by the US, is vital to NATO operations in Afghanistan, functioning both as a gateway for NATO troops (including British troops) moving in and out of Afghanistan and as the base for the air tankers that perform in-flight re-fuelling on aircraft operating over Afghanistan.

Manas is the only airbase available to NATO in Central Asia. NATO use of the Karshi-Khanabad airbase in Uzbekistan was terminated in 2005. On 20 February 2009, the Kyrgyz Government gave the US six months notice to quit Manas.

The Kyrgyz Government's decision to evict the US seems to have been prompted by Russia, presumably with the objective of increasing its bargaining power over the US. A few days earlier, President Bakiyev of Kyrgyzstan travelled to Moscow and returned with the promise of a \$2bn loan and a non-refundable credit worth \$150m [7]. He immediately proposed to Kyrgyzstan's parliament that the US lease on Manas be terminated. On 19 February 2009, the parliament voted overwhelmingly to do so and the next day the US was given notice to quit the base.

This is probably not the end of the matter and the US may well continue to have use of Manas after the notice expires in August 2009. But, most likely, Russia is in a position to demand a price of one sort or another for fixing it.

It would be an exaggeration to say that Russia has a stranglehold over US operations in Afghanistan, but the US must be very uncomfortable about how much leverage Russia is currently in a position to exert.

Afghanistan

Needless to say, there is nothing about this crucial issue in the Obama-Medvedev statement. The short paragraph on Afghanistan begins:

"We agreed that al-Qaida and other terrorist and insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan pose a common threat to many nations, including the United States and Russia."

and ends:

"Both sides agreed to work out new ways of cooperation to facilitate international efforts of stabilization, reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, including in the regional context."

Curiously, this seems to reflect the earlier US "strategy" of building a state in Afghanistan rather than the new, more limited, "strategy" announced by Obama on 27 March 2009, which purports to have "a clear and focused goal ... to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan" [8].

Iran

On Iran, the statement is rather mild, but with the usual contradiction. It begins by recognising that "under the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty] Iran has the right to a civilian nuclear program", which is true – Article IV(1) of the NPT says:

"Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes ..." [9]

The statement continues by saying that "Iran needs to restore confidence in its exclusively peaceful nature". A reasonable implication from this is that Iran can continue its current nuclear activities, including uranium enrichment, providing it manages to convince the US and Russia that these activities are not for military purposes.

However, the statement goes on to "call on Iran to fully implement the relevant UN Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors resolutions, including provision of required cooperation with the IAEA". These resolutions require, inter alia, that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment, which is Iran's "inalienable right" under the NPT, providing it is for "peaceful purposes". And, of course, despite many years of inspecting Iran's nuclear facilities, the IAEA has found no evidence that its nuclear activities are for other than "peaceful purposes".

This is the contradiction at the heart of the demands made on Iran: why should Iran be required to halt nuclear activities which are its "inalienable right" under the NPT, when there is no evidence that they are for other than "peaceful purposes"?

Russia and China have supported these Security Council resolutions against Iran, but have used their influence to restrict the severity of the economic sanctions applied by them. It remains to be seen if Russia is now prepared to see Iran sanctioned more severely, if the US demands it.

The Iran section of the statement ends:

"We reiterated our commitment to pursue a comprehensive diplomatic solution, including direct diplomacy and through P5+1 negotiations, and urged Iran to seize this opportunity to address the international community's concerns."

(The P5+1 are the five permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, Russia, the UK and the US – plus Germany).

On 8 April 2009, the US State Department announced that the P5+1 has asked Iran for a meeting and that "the US will join P5+1 discussions with Iran from now on" [10]. This decision to negotiate face to face with Iran is a break with the practice of the Bush administration. However, there has been no discernible change in US policy towards Iran.

Obama has been widely praised for rhetorical gestures towards Iran, but they contained some extraordinarily arrogant remarks. For example, in his Nowruz (New Year) message to Iran on 20 March 2009, he said:

"The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations. You have that right – but it comes with real responsibilities, and that place cannot be reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization. And the measure of that greatness is not the capacity to destroy, it is your demonstrated ability to build and create." [11]

In the opinion of the US President, it is apparently in his gift to decide if and when Iran (and other states in this world?) is fit to take "its rightful place in the community of nations" (whatever that means). And this "place" cannot be reached through "terror or arms".

This from the president of the only state in this world that has used nuclear arms, a state that supported Iraq's aggression against Iran in the 1980s that caused upwards of a million Iranian casualties, from a state that in the last decade has come half way round the world to invade and occupy states that border Iran to the east and west and is responsible for death and destruction on an industrial scale in those states. This is from the president of the state whose predecessor declared Iran to be a member of the "axis of evil" and continually threatened military action against it, as did (and does) US ally Israel.

Missile defence

The US proposal to deploy a missile defence system in Eastern Europe, ostensibly to counter Iranian nuclear missiles, has been a bone of contention between the US and Russia for the last few years. The Czech Republic has agreed to host the radars for this system (despite overwhelming popular opposition) and Poland has agreed to host the (as yet undeveloped) interceptor missiles.

There are grave doubts about whether this system will be effective (as there is about the system already deployed on the West coast of the US, ostensibly to counter threats from North Korea).

The deployment of these missile defence systems would have been in breach of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty the US signed with the Soviet Union in 1972. So, in preparation, the US unilaterally withdrew from the Treaty in June 2002. The Treaty barred the US and the Soviet Union from deploying nationwide defences against strategic ballistic missiles. The reasoning behind this, as stated in the

preamble to the Treaty, was the belief on both sides that "effective measures to limit anti-ballistic missile systems would be a substantial factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms and would lead to a decrease in the risk of outbreak of war involving nuclear weapons" [12].

During his election campaign, Obama expressed doubts about whether these systems would be effective and value for money. In a speech in Prague on 5 April 2009, he said:

"As long as the threat from Iran persists, we intend to go forward with a missile defense system that is cost-effective and proven. If the Iranian threat is eliminated, we will have a stronger basis for security, and the driving force for missile defense construction in Europe at this time will be removed." [13]

The message here to Russia is clear: help us deal with Iran's (alleged) ambition to have a nuclear weapons system and then there will be no need of a missile defence system in Eastern Europe.

On the question of missile defence, the Obama-Medvedev statement is opaque. It says:

"While acknowledging that differences remain over the purposes of deployment of missile defense assets in Europe, we discussed new possibilities for mutual international cooperation in the field of missile defense, taking into account joint assessments of missile challenges and threats, aimed at enhancing the security of our countries, and that of our allies and partners. The relationship between offensive and defensive arms will be discussed by the two governments."

In that, the US seems to concede that missile defence in Eastern Europe is a matter for discussion with Russia, at the very least. If the US is still dependent on Russia for supplying its troops in Afghanistan, when the time comes for the decision to be made, then Russia may well have a veto. On the other hand, to avoid Russia having such leverage, the US could withdraw from Afghanistan.

Euro-Atlantic security treaty

On 6 June 2008, in a wide ranging speech in Berlin, President Medvedev floated the idea of "drafting and signing a legally binding treaty on European security in which the organisations currently working in the Euro-Atlantic area could become parties" [14]. He expanded upon the idea in a speech at a conference in Evian on 8 October 2008 [15], in the presence of President Sarkozy, who voiced approval for holding an OSCE conference about the proposal this year.

NATO likes to think of what it calls the "Euro-Atlantic area" as its bailiwick. By this, it means not just North America and Europe, but also the territory in Asia that was formerly part of the Soviet Union. 50 states in this area are associated with NATO in what it calls the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, including states such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, which are a long way from Europe and the Atlantic.

As NATO has expanded eastwards its full name – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – has become

increasingly inappropriate and, as far as possible, "Euro-Atlantic" has replaced "North Atlantic" in the language it uses. Euro-Atlantic may not be an ideal description but at least it is better than North Atlantic. So, these days, NATO communiqués are peppered with references to "Euro-Atlantic security" and the aspirations of states to "Euro-Atlantic integration", that is, NATO membership.

Clearly, Medvedev's floating of this idea is an assertion by Russia that the Euro-Atlantic area isn't the sole preserve of NATO. Other security organisations do exist in this area, for example, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which includes Russia and 6 former Soviet states (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), and the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), of which Russia and China, plus Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, are members.

It wasn't surprising that the US and the UK were less than happy when Sarkozy expressed approval for Medvedev's proposal, because putting it on the table concedes the point that NATO hasn't got exclusive rights in the Euro-Atlantic area. And, if the proposal was ever realised in practice, it would restrict NATO, including US, freedom of action in the area, for example, in deploying a missile defence system in Eastern Europe.

It was therefore surprising to read the following in the Obama-Medvedev statement:

"We discussed our interest in exploring a comprehensive dialogue on strengthening Euro-Atlantic and European security, including existing commitments and President Medvedev's June 2008 proposals on these issues. The OSCE is one of the key multilateral venues for this dialogue, as is the NATO-Russia Council."

In this, the US seems to have conceded that Medvedev's idea should be open for discussion.

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Gaza and the road to a Unitary State

By Feargus Ó Raghallaigh

Like so many people around the world the Jewish, classical musician Daniel Barenboim is anguished in the extreme—his soul tortured and clearly, he feels, his moral sensibilities trampled underfoot by Gaza.

For Barenboim it is personal in a deep sense. In 1999 he established the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, based in Seville, Spain. It is a remarkable institution, uniting young Palestinian and Jewish musicians. In this orchestra-setting they live and work together, are trained and perform under Barenboim, and tour the world. In a real way Barenboim and his young musicians live out a dream, very much his own dream (as well as theirs) of mutual respect, sharing a space and place, and peaceful coexistence.

On 1 January last in the *Guardian*, Barenboim wrote:

"The developments of the last few days [the Israeli attack on Gaza] are extremely worrisome to me for reasons of humane and political natures. While it is self-evident that Israel has the right to defend itself, that it cannot and should not tolerate missile attacks on its citizens, its army's relentless and brutal bombardment of Gaza has raised a few important questions in my mind."

He went on:

"... if civilian deaths are unavoidable, what is the purpose of the bombardment? What, if any, is the logic behind the violence, and what does Israel hope to achieve through it? If the aim is to destroy Hamas then the most important question to ask is whether this is attainable. If not, then the whole attack is not only cruel, barbaric and reprehensible, it is senseless." And: "One and a half million Gaza residents will not suddenly go down on their knees in reverence for the power of the Israeli army. We must not forget that before Hamas was elected by the Palestinians, it was encouraged by Israel as a tactic to weaken Yasser Arafat. Israel's recent history leads me to believe that if Hamas is bombed out of existence, another group will most certainly take its place, a group that would be more radical, more violent, and more full of hatred towards Israel."

Whether Barenboim was ever a real Zionist, and one doubts it, he most certainly is not a Zionist today. Born in Buenos Aires in the 1940s—he still holds Argentinian citizenship while also holding Israeli citizenship (the family emigrated to Israel in the 1950s). He also holds Spanish and Palestinian Authority citizenship.

Barenboim was a long-time friend of Edward Said with whom he co-founded the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. He sees Israel today as an "Occupation", lives in Berlin and there has had a long relationship with the (former East German) Berlin State Opera.

Barenboim's utterances on the conflict in Palestine—his use of the term 'Occupation' to describe the State of Israel, his observations that Israel's approach is both "morally abhorrent and strategically wrong", and further, "putting in danger the very existence of the state of Israel" – have generated predictable responses within Israel: descriptions of him as "a real Jew hater" and "a real anti-semite".

In the 26 February edition of the *New York Review of Books* there is a statement published over Barenboim's name and a long list of other prominent signatories. It is not at all unusual in its content—except that it is yet another indicator of the extent to which Israel has lost the moral battle, if not the military campaign (though that also is questionable in a very real sense).

The statement reads:

"For the last forty years, history has proven that the Israeli–Palestinian conflict cannot be settled by force. Every effort, every possible means and resource of imagination and reflection should now be brought into play to find a new way forward. A new initiative which allays fear and suffering, acknowledges the injustice done, and leads to the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike. An initiative which demands of all sides a common responsibility: to ensure equal rights and dignity to both peoples, and to ensure the right of each person to transcend the past and aspire to a future."

The statement is even-handed, balanced, idealistic and implicitly 'two-states'. Its first co-signatory is 'Adonis'; Adonis is Blair's deep friend, Andrew Adonis, one-time LSE academic and Liberal, and now Broom's 'buddy'.

The point though is, Israel has lost the Battle for Gaza, and is in the eyes of many throughout the world significantly shorn of the kind of legitimacy in which it wrapped itself, and could clothe itself, so effectively since 1948. The White House is, if not lost, then for the moment silent. The UN, including the Security Council, is no longer a push-over for a stridently pro-Israeli resolution and the Secretary General is visibly appalled at what he sees in Gaza. The EU also is shuffling from foot to foot in at least embarrassment. The development of EU-Israeli relations is stalled.

Of course Israel continues to have friends—even, indeed particularly, among many of those who have pretty well unreservedly supported Israel's cause in the past and are now uncomfortable, to put it mildly, with current policy. Many are aghast, though hopeful. As Antony Lerman wrote in the *Guardian* (6th January):

"Israel is heavily dependent on what Jews think. Its leaders turn to their support whenever they face an internal crisis or need cover for some new military adventure. But it's now not too far-fetched to think Jewish opinion could turn decisively against Israel's current path. This would shake the government and help change Middle East realities. So, out of the rubble of Gaza and the political failure it represents, Jewish dissent may emerge a more potent force."

Lerman, commenting on German reaction to Gaza, specifically a letter from a group of Jewish pro-peace lobbyists, published in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, remarked on its significance:

"... a major newspaper in a country where expressing public criticism of Israel is difficult for anyone, let alone a group of Jews."

Public criticism of Israel in Ireland has also had a difficult history because of a cultivated sense of guilt over Ireland and WWII but including also the 'Limerick Pogrom' and outbreaks of anti-Jewish (and anti-German) sentiment during WWI as well as Jews' involvement in our own independence struggle. But in Ireland also the deep revulsion felt at the Battle for Gaza and its massive, indiscriminate character, its unrelenting nature, and the growing realisation that the attack was premeditated, calculated and in breach of the established truce-in-place did prompt a significant re-think. This has to be the conclusion one takes from the letter pages of the Irish newspapers. One typical letter seeking a change in the Irish position on Israel (*The Irish Times*, 28th January 2008) was signed by 148 academics, including several Jewish academics, and stated:

There has been widespread international condemnation of Israel's bombardment and subsequent invasion of Gaza, which has been defined by international lawyers as a violation of the 4th Geneva Convention. No civilians, Israelis or Palestinian should be subjected to attack whether from rockets from Gaza or bombs and bullets from Israel. However, while every government has both the right and responsibility to defend its civilian population, we believe that Israel's violent actions are disproportionate and constitute collective punishment of a civilian population.

We also note that Israeli spokespersons themselves have admitted that prior to Israel's killing of 6 Hamas members in the Nov 4 attack on Gaza, Hamas appears to have abided by its ceasefire agreement with Israel, firing no rockets and trying to prevent other groups from doing so. This begs the question: what is the real reason behind the onslaught?

In addition, we note that during its recent offensive Israel expressly targeted educational institutions including the Islamic University, the Ministry of Education, the American International School, and 3 UN schools which were destroyed with massive loss of civilian life. During the illegal sealing off of the Gaza Strip that preceded the current aggression, Israel had prevented numerous Palestinian students from leaving Gaza to avail of Fulbright scholarships to the USA.

We believe that it is time to renew the call made by Irish-based academics in September 2006 for a moratorium on the funding of Israeli academic institutions by national and European cultural and research institutions, and an end to the EU's practice of treating Israel as a European state for the purposes of awarding grants and contracts. Such a moratorium should continue until Israel ends its repressive policies against Gaza, and abides by UN resolutions (which include the ending of the occupation of all Palestinian territories).

We believe that opposition to such a move based on the principle of academic freedom has lost the last semblance of validity in view of the above-mentioned violations of the right to education enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 14).

Beyond that popular change in outlook there is also a clear measure of disquiet in the political sphere. Long before the recent events in Gaza, Irish political opinion had been departing from the "balanced" view being taken by the EU in particular. Speaking in the Dáil on 11th March last, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahearn, stated that he regarded the Israeli blockade of Gaza as "collective punishment ... illegal under International Humanitarian Law."

The Gaza "offensive" however, was the last straw for many politicians. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Eu-

ropean Affairs adopted a motion from Fianna Fáil's Michael Mulcahy seeking an examination of whether Israeli actions in Gaza amounted to a breach of Clause 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement (which makes the agreement dependent on Israeli compliance with international humanitarian law).

The Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) for the first time came to be regarded as a "reasonable" voice on the question of Israel and Palestine. It made itself central to the debate, with letters to the press, Dáil questions, meetings with politicians that included a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and a meeting with Foreign Minister Micheál Martin, constantly pressing the facts of the Hamas-Israel ceasefire and Israel's premeditated breach of it, as well as focusing on the hypocrisies of the EU relationship with Israel and hitting on historical memory with allusions to the Irish "Peace Process" (thus in a letter to the *The Irish Times*, 14th January 2009).

Answering questions in the Dáil (12th February 2009), Minister of Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin stated that the Irish Government position in relation to any upgrade of the EU-Israel Association Agreement would depend on "overall developments in the peace process":

"Such developments should in my view include Israeli Government policy on settlement activity and expansion. ... An upgrade in relations must be linked with the issues raised by Deputy Ó Snodaigh and settlements in particular."

He also clearly indicated that the Irish Government favoured an engagement with Hamas:

"I have detected a shift in European thinking in the aftermath of Gaza, although certain countries clearly have different perspectives from ours. ... Flexibility is needed in facilitating the emergence of a proper peace process. We have some experience in that regard in that events were sequenced or choreographed and people were not put in impossible positions. In other words, we were more interested in outcomes than initial inputs. I sense an awakening to that among some EU Foreign Ministers. The President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, and others have pointed out to us that whatever emerges in the context of Palestinian unity, we should not close the door in a knee-jerk manner. That is something for which I am pushing strongly."

He also defended the right of Fianna Fáil TDs to support the position of the IPSC on matters like the boycott of Israel and even stated with regard to the Hamas-Israel ceasefire preceding the Israeli onslaught:

"It is a matter of record that during the period from 18 June up until 4 November 2008, when the Israeli army killed six Hamas militants just inside Gaza, there was a dramatic reduction in rockets and mortars being fired by Palestinian militants from Gaza into Israel."

Despite being on the back foot with European circles over the Lisbon Referendum matter, the Irish Government followed through on these positions at European Council meetings in January and February, though they are unlikely to break with "European solidarity" on the issue.

The Israelis have not been insensitive to the way sentiment in Ireland has shown itself—as evidenced by the public stance of their country's Ambassador to Ireland,

who, in countless letters and opinion pieces in the media, has repeatedly complained of Irish public opinion on Israel. *The Irish Times* of 12th January 2009 reported on Israeli disquiet at the "extreme" position of Irish public and political opinion, quoting an article by Herb Keinon in *The Jerusalem Post* the previous week which had prominently singled out Ireland, as among the most hostile to Israel's claims regarding the Gaza war.

Keinon wrote:

"Ireland, according to foreign ministry officials, is currently one of the European countries most antagonistic to Israel, and a country where the hostility of the press is matched by the tone of the government."

He also referred to a letter from Fianna Fáil TD Chris Andrews, published in *The Irish Times*, which called for the expulsion of Israeli ambassador to Ireland Zion Evrony and described Israel's actions in Gaza as "state terrorism". The letter, Keinon wrote, was an example of the "toxic environment" in Ireland. According to *The Irish Times*:

"It's not the first time Ireland's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whether expressed in Government policy or public opinion, has come in for scathing commentary in the Israeli media or indeed within Israeli government circles... The [*Jerusalem Post*] added that "Israel's relations with Ireland are widely considered in Jerusalem as among the worst Israel has with any European country, and Ireland is roughly clumped together in Jerusalem with the Scandinavian countries in the EU as being among the most critical of Israel".

Israel also had—and continues to have—the encouragement of vociferous Irish supporters or 'friends', who have engaged in letter pages and opinion pieces and columns in the newspapers, including in Israeli papers.

A good example of the latter phenomenon is the article by a Sean Gannon in the [edition] of the *Jerusalem Post*. There Gannon represents the deeply "ambivalent at best" attitudes of Irish people to the Israeli state, Irish society's 'anti-Zionism', and anti-Semitism' with all three concepts conflated and interchangeable with each other: "... Irish attitudes to Israel have always been ambivalent at best.

"Early Irish anti-Zionism sprang fully formed from the head of a Catholic anti-Semitism which presented Jewish sovereignty over the cradle of Christianity as not only improper in the theological abstract but (drawing on contemporary ideas about Judaeo-communist anti-Christian plots) as constituting a very real threat to Catholic interests."

This is rubbish that, without specific reference, alludes to the 'Limerick pogrom' organised in 1904, if one could honour the event with such title, by a Limerick Redemptorist, Fr. Creagh. For his sins Fr. Creagh was banished, first to Belfast and then to the middle of the Pacific Ocean and the events were deplored and attacked by many leading Irish Nationalists, including famously Michael Davitt.

Davitt is interesting in all of this in that in 1903 he was commissioned as a noted international foreign correspondent, by William Randolph Hearst to visit and report upon pogroms in the Russian city of Kishinev (now Chisinau, Moldova). His reports were published in both *The Times* (London) and in two leading New York Hearst papers (the *Journal* and the *American*) and subsequently widely syndi-

cated throughout the US. What he saw in Kishinev and conversations he had with senior Tsarist officials, led him to the view that the only hope for the Jews in the Pale was migration to Palestine there to establish their own homeland. The articles were subsequently extended and published in book form by American Zionists as *Within the Pale: The True Story of Anti-Semitic Persecutions in Russia* (1903). Davitt toured America to speak on Kishinev and his work has never since been out of print. Davitt was, by the way, pro-Boer for much the same reason as he was pro-Zionist: he was anti-Imperialist in the broad, generalised sense.

Anyone with a semblance of knowledge of modern Irish history (including its anti-Semitic bits), but incorporating the history of the Left in Ireland, will know that there has been a serious long-term affair between Zionism and various strands of Irish national life, including the language revival movement (in admiration of the Israeli revival of Hebrew as a national language for the Israeli state), other strands in nationalism (accepting the Zionist armed struggle against the British as, instinctively, to be supported) and also within the Left (in being an extension of a kind of the English Left and Labour movement with its Puritan-based millennialism, the dream of the 'New Jerusalem').

Gannon also has a go at Irish involvement with the UN, including the Army's Blue Beret and Blue Helmet engagements in the Lebanon:

"Ireland's furious reaction to the war was informed by its own UNIFIL experience, which greatly colored Irish attitudes toward Israel. Deployed in 1978, the Irish battalion constantly clashed with Saad Haddad's Israeli-sponsored militias, culminating in April 1980 in the abduction and murder of two Irish soldiers. Despite Jerusalem's vehement denials, this was linked by Dublin to its own pro-PLO positions. The suspicion that Irish soldiers were being deliberately targeted soured bilateral relations for 21 years and, in fact, has never been fully dispelled."

No, it has not – any more than anyone anywhere has shaken off Sabra and Shatila (Beirut, 1982). Have a look at Ari Folman's film *Waltz with Bashir* (it's only up for an Oscar and Folman by the way served with the IDF in Lebanon in 1982). It is, in Roger Ebert's review,

"a devastating animated film that tries to reconstruct how and why thousands of innocent civilians were massacred [in Sabra and Shatila camps, Beirut] because those with the power to stop them took no action. Why they did not act is hard to say. Did they not see? Not realize? Not draw fateful conclusions? In any event, at the film's end, the animation gives way to newsreel footage of the dead, whose death is inescapable."

Clearly the Irish are (like Ari Folman) 'softies', not up to the muscular brutality, coarseness and even nihilism of the IDF and the leading echelons of modern Israeli society: not for them the mincing minuets of Mozart, the grace of the gavotte or the serenity of the symphony. Instead, the boom of war and the numbing nihilism of victory-at-all-costs.

And, in the true sense of any nutter, Gannon has a deep sense of victimhood and oppression, ironic in the stance he has adopted on his chosen issue to make a cheap name for himself. He is one of a small band:

"Apart from perhaps one Sunday broadsheet, reporting is starkly

unsympathetic to Israel and the op-ed and letters pages are also overwhelmingly hostile ... Those few commentators [like himself?] who do take pro-Israel positions are generally noninfluential, viewed almost without exception as controversialists who take the opposing view on every issue commanding a broad national consensus."

I see the muscular hand of Eoghan Harris.

A regular theme in the many attempted defences of the IDF assault on Gaza is the asserted right of Israel to defend itself from Hamas rocket attacks. The reality of the brutal if brief war of December last is that it was not defensive: it was a truce-breaking (on the eve of a might-have-been-renewed truce) attack intended to engender a military (Hamas) response, so as to invoke a 'defence'. The response to this will be – and has been – to reference the long-term rocket attacks from Gaza into southern Israel. But who started it all, cultivated the settlements (in Gaza) and as Barenboim points out, not so long ago cultivated Hamas in opposition to the then *bête noire*, Arafat (and Fatah and the PA)?

Daniel Barenboim is a cultivated, civilised individual, a deeply cultured man of the world and a doyen of classical music. In this he may be a romantic, touring the Middle East with his young musicians, playing to Arab, Palestinian and Jewish audiences as well as letting the rest of the world in on what he and Said dreamed up. His outlook and life are in total contrast to the coarseness that has come to characterise the life of the Israeli, even at the highest level. Contrast Barenboim with General Moshe Ayalon, then chief of staff in 2002:

"The Palestinians must be made to understand in the deepest recesses of their consciousness that they are a defeated people ..."

and the manner in which the charge of "disproportionate response" has simply been absorbed by the Israeli leadership as in the circumstance, appropriate and justifiable. "A defeated people"? This coming from Israelis, the children and descendants of those rescued from the Camps?

Modern Israelis in their coarseness and insensitivity, their brutality and lack of moral sensibility are in their own minds the Children of Israel chosen as set out in *Deuteronomy*, to live in the Promised Land. Racial superiority is a myth, and a foolish fantasy, a political formulism of relatively recent conceit—even if Deuteronomy is an ancient text, like any national fable. From the wings it is fuelled by the millennialist miasma of the Christian fundamentalist idea of the Second Coming. The 'national home' is an outgrowth and product of both Emancipation (by Napoleon) and the disruption of 19th Century European nationalisms, again the work of Napoleon and, as usual in the history of modern Europe and the world, British machination. It has no place in the thinking of Barenboim—nor would one expect such.

The outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is a man in need of some Freudian analysis. On the one hand he has poured scorn on Israel's military and security-seeking pursuits:

"They're still living in the War of Independence (1948) and the Sinai campaign (1956). With them, it's all about tanks, about controlling territories or controlled territories, holding this or that hill. But these things are worthless ... The Lebanon war (2006) will

go down in history as the first war in which the military leadership understood that classical warfare has become obsolete" (Alain Gresh, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, February 2009).

So, Greish remarks that the Israeli government are in favour of peace in the same way that the US government in the 19th century was in favour of the peace they decided to impose on the Native American tribes.

Well, here is the *New York Times* of 15 September 1865 on the Indian Wars:

"Many of the Western settlers are very anxious for a war of extermination against the Indians, and assert that outrages and atrocities will never cease until this is adopted and ended. But this in itself would be an atrocity of the most gigantic and inexcusable character. Moreover, it would not be near as simple or easy a matter as the exterminators suppose. We believe it would be a war thrice the length of that recently waged against the Southern Confederacy, and would entail great bloodshed on our side as well as the other, and also enormous expense."

And that is precisely where Olmert—and the rest of the Israeli establishment including the IDF command—have brought their people, into the nightmare *Waltz with Bashir*: it will prove an existential crisis for all—for both forces (Israeli and Palestinian), but that might be the best result, for the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra and believers in Barenboim's and Said's joint vision of a future for the unholy 'Holy Land'.

For Ireland there is the obvious opportunity to take a lead at European level on an issue of importance. No doubt it will fail to do this. But if one group of European powers have formed themselves into the uncritical supporters of the Zionist state regardless of "European solidarity," then what is there to prevent another grouping to emerge championing an alternative course?

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Another Public Stoning

by Raymond Deane

[After the January attack on Gaza, Israel is facing its worst diplomatic crisis in two decades. Its sports teams have met hostility and violent protests in Sweden, Spain and Turkey. A group of top international judges and human rights investigators recently called for an inquiry into Israel's actions in Gaza. 'Israel Apartheid Week' drew participants in 54 cities around the world in March 2009, twice the number of 2008, according to its organizers. And even in the American Jewish community, albeit in its liberal wing, there is a chill.

In Britain the *Independent* newspaper published dramatic photos of injured and dead children on its front page throughout the Gaza attack; the *Guardian* is continuing its exposure of Israeli war crimes; the front page headline of Tuesday 24th March was 'New evidence of Israel's Gaza war crimes revealed'.

The Gaza attack inspired widespread horror and marked a turning point in public opinion away from support from Israel except in one powerful European country, which is still supporting ethnic cleansing and disproportionate violence against a defenceless people. This is the story of what happened to one man who tried to speak like a liberal European in Germany.]

Hermann Dierkes is a respected politician with an honourable record of campaigning for social and political justice in the German Rhineland city of Duisburg. He represented his party Die Linke (The Left Party) on Duisburg City Council, campaigning tirelessly on anti-racist and anti-fascist issues. Most recently, he was his party's candidate for the post of Lord Mayor.

On 18th February 2009 Dierkes addressed a public meeting on the question of Palestine. To the question of how to take action against the injustice being suffered by Palestinians, he responded that the recent World Social Forum in Belem (Brazil) had proposed an arms embargo, sanctions, and the boycott of Israeli exports. He added:

"We should no longer accept that in the name of the Holocaust and with the support of the government of the Federal Republic such grave violations of human rights can be perpetrated and tolerated... Everyone can help strengthen pressure for a different politics, for example by boycotting Israeli products."

A few days later, Dierkes gave an interview to the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (WAZ), a conservative paper based in the nearby city of Essen. He explained the demands of the World Social Forum, and requested that the published interview should stress that this had nothing to do with antisemitism—a qualification that invariably needs to be made in Germany, except when there is suspicion of Islamophobia. Predictably, his precautions were in vain; scenting a political coup, the reporter published his article without including the qualification.

All hell broke loose. In the 25th February edition of *Bild*—Germany's best-selling and most obnoxious daily paper—Dieter Graumann, Vice-President of the Central Jewish Council, accused him of "pure antisemitism". WAZ editorialist Achim Beer decried Dierke's "careless Nazi utterances", comparing his words to "a mass execution at the edge of a Ukrainian forest". Hendrik Wüst, General Secretary of the CDU (the Christian Democratic Party), warned that "the Nazi propaganda" emanating from Die Linke is "intolerable". Michael Groschek, General Secretary of the local branch of the Social Democratic Party (SPD, which shares power nationally with the CDU) played electoral politics with the claim that "[a]nyone playing

electoral politics with such anti-Israeli utterances sets himself outside the rules of the democratic game."

Worse still, Dierke's own party failed to stand by him unambiguously. Press Spokesperson Alrun Nüsslein opined that if Israel is criticized because "the population in the Gaza Strip is collectively punished by the... closure of border crossings, it is equally impossible for us to punish the Israeli population" by means of a boycott of Israeli goods, particularly "in the context of German history", a mantra with which Germans routinely absolve themselves of their historic responsibility towards the Palestinians. Other voices within the party took a more strident tone. Petra Pau, Vice President of the Bundestag (German Parliament), said Dierke's words "awake unspeakable associations and employ dubious clichés". Left Party politicians in Dierke's own area condemned his "anti-Jewish endeavours" (Günter Will) and "antisemitic utterances" (Anna Lena Orłowski).

Events took their predestined course, and on 26th February Dierkes resigned his position within Die Linke and withdrew his mayoral candidacy. In an open letter to his party colleagues, pointing out that he had been the victim of "a public stoning" and of a campaign that was

"a terrible mixture of the gravest insults and defamation, Islamophobic hatred, hatred of immigrants, and murder threats",

he maintained that

"[t]he victims of the Shoa and the heroes of the Warsaw Jewish rising would turn away with horror [could they see] with what malice and toward what ends they are being instrumentalised in order to justify... the undemocratic and murderous politics of the Israeli government..."

A quick perusal of the German blogosphere throws up countless repetitions of the phrase "*kauft nicht beim Juden!*"—"don't buy from the Jew!"—a slogan from the Nazi era that no longer serves to defame Jews but rather those who seek justice for the Palestinians. However, Jews aren't entirely immune from this weapon: in the respected weekly *Die Zeit* (15th January, 2009) a certain Thomas

Assheuer turned it against the Canadian Jewish author Naomi Klein after the British *Guardian* published her call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. Given that Klein had carefully specified that BDS should be aimed at Israeli institutions and not individuals, this piece of defamation was particularly crass.

It appears that freedom of speech, supposedly one of the proudest acquisitions of post-Fascist Germany, is readily suppressed when exercised to advocate positive action against the racist, political institutions and actions of the Zionist state. Indeed so brutal and venomous was the response to Hermann Dierke's remarks, and so instantaneous and unanimous the recourse, however ironic, to Nazi sloganeering, that it is difficult not to be reminded of the rhetoric promulgated by Julius Streicher's vile paper *Der Stürmer* between 1923 and 1945 and not to feel that the same atavistic sources that once disgorged Jew-hatred are now being tapped in this virulent and unceasing campaign against the advocacy of Palestinian rights. The Palestin-

ians, after all, stand in the way of the establishment of a racial Jewish state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan river, an eventuality that the German establishment deludedly sees as somehow shriving its own past crimes.

It has to be said that ordinary German people are, by and large, as unimpressed by philosemitic hysteria as they are by antisemitism. It remains to be seen how those people who have repeatedly voted for Hermann Dierke because they see him as an honest and reliable politician—something as rare in Germany as elsewhere—will react to being robbed of their representative by such a campaign of hatred and defamation on behalf of a quasi-fascist state.

Finally, it will be interesting to see if this *débâcle* induces Die Linke to reconsider whether it is more appropriate to adopt a principled position on Israel than to continue playing to the gallery of rightist pressure-groups that have taken upon themselves the task of perpetuating unconditional German support for Israel. It is hard to feel optimistic about this.

Review of a review “*Berlin Hanover Express*”

By Jack Lane

The “*Berlin Hanover Express*” was reviewed in the London *Times* on 12 March 2009 by one of its acclaimed reviewers, Benedict Nightingale. It provided a great opportunity to discredit Irish neutrality in WWII and give vent to any other anti-Irish prejudice that came to the reviewer's mind. It was headed “Chillecho of Ireland's love affair with Hitler” and began:

“As recent events have tragically confirmed, there are Irishmen so implacably hostile to Britain and British rule in Ulster that they will countenance anything that hurts the ancestral foe. After all, didn't even de Valera offer his friend, the German ambassador, his condolences on the death of Hitler? So we can't be surprised to learn that there were deluded Irish souls in the Berlin legation of 1942 who were looking forward to *apax Germanica* that would punish England and favour their nation. That's the place, time and focus of this new play by the Irish writer Ian Kennedy Martin. Just two diplomats remain in the legation....”

The two characters are then painted in the most grotesque fashion:

“O'Kane's growing realisation that the Holocaust is under way also makes it clear that Ireland's neutrality was becoming indefensible. That's certainly the author's view and the reason he ends up suggesting that Mallin is even more of a moral horror than the lecherous, gluttonous, sadistic true believer, Kollvitz. Mallin still expects a German victory. Despite knowing the truth about Belsen, while describing it as leftist propaganda, he welcomes the prospect. In his fervent chauvinism, fanatic discipline and obliviousness to murder he's at one with the Nazis and an example of Irish fascism that isn't dead yet.”

Other reviews followed a similar pattern. Now these two moral reprobates must have been remarkably well informed diplomats in 1942. By an interesting coincidence

there was another story in the *Times* that same day that show how perceptive these Irish guys were. This story was headed “Double life of Auschwitz volunteer who uncovered Holocaust secrets” by Kamil Tchorek and is worth quoting in full:

“It was perhaps the bravest act of espionage of the Second World War. After voluntarily being imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp for 22 years, and smuggling out its darkest secrets to the Allies, Witold Pilecki overcame a guard and, with two comrades, escaped almost certain death.

Now new details have emerged of the extraordinary tale of the Polish officer who hatched a plot with the country's resistance to be rounded up by the occupying Germans in September 1940 and sent to the most notorious Nazi extermination centre.

At the time Auschwitz was predominantly a camp for captured resistance fighters, although Jews, and anyone considered a threat to the Nazi regime, were also being sent there.

Newly released documents from the Polish archives reveal how Mr Pilecki, going under the false name Tomasz Serafinski, went about setting up an underground resistance group in the camp, recruiting its members and organising it into a coherent movement.

“In order to assure greater security I have taken the view that each cell of five will not be aware of another cell,” he wrote in one of his reports smuggled out to the Resistance and which has now come to light.

“This is also why I have avoided people who are registered here under their real names. Some are involved in the most incompetent conspiracies and have their own plans for rebellion in the camp.”

Later he wrote: “The gigantic machinery of the camp spewing out dead bodies has claimed many of my friends ... We have sent messages to the outside world which were then transmitted back by foreign radio stations. Consequently the camp guards are very angry right now.”

Mr Pilecki's reports from the camp were channelled to the Allies via a courier system that the Polish Resistance operated throughout

occupied Europe. By 1942 Mr Pilecki's organisation realised the existence of the gas chambers and he worked on several plans to liberate Auschwitz, including one in which the RAF would bomb the walls, or Free Polish paratroopers would fly in from Britain.

However, in 1943, realising that the Allies had no plans to liberate the camp, he and two others escaped. The new documents include a Gestapo manhunt alert after his escape.

Mr Pilecki ensured that a full report on the camp reached London, and the resistance group he started in Auschwitz continued to feed information to Britain and the United States, confirming that the Nazis were bent on the extermination of the Jews.

The archive material will again raise questions as to why the Allies, and in particular Winston Churchill, never did anything to stop the atrocities there. "We can only assume the British thought we were exaggerating," said the Polish historian Jacek Pawlowicz. "I'm certain Poles shared their intelligence with MI6 and the highest levels of British Government, which, for some reason, remained silent."

After his escape Mr Pilecki was captured fighting in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 and spent the rest of the conflict in a prisoner-of-war camp. In July 1945 he joined Free Polish troops in Italy, from where he agreed to return to Poland and gather intelligence on the Soviet takeover of the country.

He was, however, caught by the Polish Communist regime. In a twist of fate, a Polish Jew administered the torture during his interrogation. Mr Pilecki's wife was invited to visit and he told her that his time in Auschwitz was child's play by comparison. After a show trial he was given three death sentences and shot.

The new material includes his charge sheet, which has 132 subsections, each listing a separate alleged crime. "From July 1945 to May 1947 the accused worked against the Polish state as a paid resident of an overseas intelligence agency," one accusation reads. "The worst crime committed against the state was that he was acting in the interests of foreign imperialism, to which he has completely sold out through a prolonged period of work as a spy." The implication is clear: Mr Pilecki was providing information on the Soviet-backed regime that was finding its way to MI6.

After his death Mr Pilecki was demonised by the Communists and his heroics re-emerged only after 1989.

His son, Andrzej Pilecki, who was 16 when he learnt that his father had been executed, said: "There'd be no better memorial to my father than for the young to learn of his example. I was at school at the time, it was a terrible shock, but now after 60 years of waiting I am thrilled to see justice."

The new archive releases also reveal touching details. In a smuggled letter dated October 18, 1943, to his ten-year-old daughter he wrote: "I am very happy to hear you are such a devoted housemaid and that you like to take care of the animals and our plants in the garden. I, too, like every kind of bug and beetle as well as the beans and the peas. I like everything that lives. I'm very glad to hear that inside my children there are the same thoughts that I have."

The Chief Rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, said that Mr Pilecki was "an example of inexplicable goodness at a time of inexplicable evil. There is ever-growing awareness of Poles helping Jews in the Holocaust, and how they paid with their lives, like Pilecki. We must honour these examples and follow them today in the parts of the world where there are horrors again."

The historian Michael R.D. Foot said that the life and death of Mr Pilecki brought shame on the British and the Allies, who turned a blind eye to Stalin's European ambitions as well as to the Holocaust. "The Foreign Office's betrayal of Poland is the darkest chapter in its history, even if that betrayal was a strategic necessity," he said.

The *Times* then supplied a sort of supplement by Ben Macintyre to explain the Allies attitude to this knowledge of the Holocaust:

"The new evidence suggesting that Britain was aware of Witold Pilecki's plans to liberate Auschwitz will reignite the long-running debate over how much Winston Churchill knew about the death camp and whether he did enough to prevent the genocide taking place there.

There is little doubt that Churchill, in contrast to many of his contemporaries, was a staunch defender of the Jews and one of the few statesmen to grasp the enormity of the Holocaust.

As early as 1941 the code-breakers at Bletchley Park had furnished Churchill with ample evidence of the systematic mass murder of Jews. By 1942 he was condemning what he called "a bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination". More specifically, he knew that a train containing 4,000 Jewish children had left Lyon for "somewhere in Poland".

"There is no doubt," he wrote to Anthony Eden, "that this is probably the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the whole history of the world, and has been done by scientific machinery by nominally civilised men in the name of a great State and one of the leading races in Europe."

Sir Martin Gilbert, Churchill's official biographer, argues that it was not until July 1944 that Churchill learnt of Auschwitz, when he was also informed that Hungarian Jews were being transported there at the rate of 12,000 a day.

Responding to a plan to bomb Auschwitz from the air, he told Eden: "Get anything out of the Air Force you can, and invoke me if necessary." The camp was within range of US bombers and several nearby military targets were destroyed from the air. Yet the rail lines to Auschwitz were never bombed. Churchill's defenders insist that his orders became bogged down in the Whitehall machinery, which was desperately focused on winning the war by military means. The decision not to bomb was apparently taken for "operational reasons" that have never been fully explained.

Churchill would claim that the full extent of the horror was not appreciated until much later: "I had no idea, when the war came to an end, of the horrible massacres which had occurred; the millions and millions that have been slaughtered. That dawned on us gradually after the struggle was over."

Churchill's detractors insist that, for all his vocal support of the Jews, his practical assistance was strictly limited. Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader, claimed that Churchill and other Allied leaders had ignored his pleas for intervention to stop the killing.

"Nobody cared what happened to the Jews," he said. "Nobody had raised a finger to stop them being slaughtered."

At the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem last year, the former US President George Bush was blunt about the Allies' failure to destroy, or even interrupt, the Auschwitz death machine: "We should have bombed it."

Churchill was also in no doubt as to what should happen to the operators of the death camps when the war was over. On July 11, 1944, he wrote: "All concerned in this crime who may fall into our hands, including the people who only obeyed orders by carrying out these butcheries, should be put to death."

Of course this is not really news. Two emissaries from Warsaw, who both witnessed the slaughter, came to London and told their story: Jan Karski, in November 1942, and Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, in December 1943. Karski, a liaison officer of the Polish underground, later published his story.

What would be news today would be a credible explanation of why none of these people were listened to. Why did nobody want to know about the Nazis and the Jews? All sort of propaganda real and imagined was spread about the Nazis. Psychologists and pornography experts were called in to add as much lurid colour as possible. But clear evidence about mass killing of the Jews was left totally unexploited. This should have been a godsend to the anti-Nazi propaganda. But it was not even acknowledged. Why? These are the questions Mr Nightingale and Ian Kennedy

Martin, the author of the play, might address.

Can I suggest a topic for Mr Martin's next play – the Evian Conference of 1938. This is a much underwritten episode, and a true account of that would be news, and good theatre, and give a good insight into the reasons for the Holocaust. There would be 'chill echoes' aplenty for Mr Nightingale to write about. I think it would be much more useful than the highly imaginary rantings of two junior Irish diplomats some years later.

The 35 hour week in France: a success after all

by Cathy Winch

With the present crisis, firms in Europe are reducing working hours (and corresponding wages) to reduce production and avoid redundancies. The few French firms who had gone back to the 39-hour week are now reverting to the 35-hour week.

The move to a 35-hour week can be seen as a hardship or a success, depending on how it is done. In France it is seen as a victory of the labour movement. It was in Mitterrand's 1981 election manifesto although never implemented; Martine Aubry finally started implementing it under the Prime Ministership of Lionel Jospin in 1998, after Dominique Strauss-Kahn reworked the law. France is not unique in Europe: five important sectors of the economy in Germany, including steel, have had the 35 hour week for some time.

The law in France came with a slogan: *Travailler moins pour travailler tous* ('Work less so there is work for all' or 'work less so we all work'), an inspiring inclusive sentiment to which people responded positively; the French aspire to inclusivity, and governments pay at least lip service to this; for example the social services minister is the minister for 'solidarity', income support benefit is 'solidarity benefit'. (But the French were also sensitive to Sarkozy's counter slogan: *Travailler plus pour gagner plus* [work more to earn more], since they went as far as to elect him.)

The aim of the law was to share work and combat unemployment (12% in 1997); improve industrial relations by making negotiations necessary between employers and employees; improve health of work force; improve family and community life.

The State provided the legal framework and the finance: people worked 35 hours but were paid for 39 hours. The difference was made up by the State collecting less tax from employers so that employers were not out of pocket. The actual organisation of working time was left to negotiation at local level; hence wide differences in implementation, depending on the nature of the work, size of firm, presence

or absence of unions etc. The law was actually called the law of "negotiated reduction of working time".

The week need not be strictly 35 hours: the time worked can be averaged through the year; but overtime is limited to 180 hours a year (raised since December 2004 to 220); here are possible examples of working weeks:

1. 35 hours
2. 39 hours + 25 days off (over and above holidays) a year
3. 39 hours + 0.5 day off a week
4. 39 hours + 2 days off every 4 weeks
5. 37.30 hours + 15 days off a year

Overtime was to be paid 25% extra (after 35 hours up to 43 hours), but only 10% extra for firms employing fewer than 20 people, going up to 25% after 40 hours; time off in lieu was available (a quarter of an hour per hour being the equivalent of 25% more pay). It is cheaper to pay overtime than to take on new staff, which is why the number of overtime hours was strictly limited.

The French immediately adopted a new acronym: RTT (*Reduction du Temps de Travail*, reduction of time worked) and now they talk about taking an RTT day (a day off, taken from their 35 hour week entitlement). On the national day of action, 29th January last, some people took an 'RTT day' in order not to work during the day of action, without losing pay or getting into possible trouble. In other words, the 35 hour week is now part of daily life.

The situation is by definition not uniform, since work time is negotiated case by case. There are conflicts and disagreements; for example laboratory employees must by law have regular breaks; one particular private laboratory near Paris stopped paying the time spent on morning and afternoons breaks to make up time. A poultry processing factory, Doux, is being taken to court (March 2009) for refusing to pay for the half hour daily break which had been

negotiated as part of the new work time. Negotiations are on going, for example in 2004 Bosch employees accepted 35 hour pay for a 36 hour week, others, e.g. Hewlett-Packard, followed suit.

The situation was different in the public and private sector, in big and small firms, working full or part-time. Managers and executives were exempted from the 35 hour law; their hours were calculated in days instead of hours to reflect the more autonomous nature of their occupation.

The effects on unemployment were hotly discussed in the early years of the measure.

Results depend on many factors and some, such as family and community life, are hard to quantify. Generally the Left view the effects positively and the right negatively. For economic liberals, the law was an archaic throw back to State control of the economy, and economically inefficient.

The first figures to be analysed were the employment figures: had working less meant more people worked? The answers varied.

A union sponsored study group found in 2002 that 500 000 jobs had been created;

Martine Aubry put the figure at 400 000 in February 2004;

D. Strauss-Kahn found up to 250 000.

The MEDEF (Employers federation, equivalent of CBI) commissioned no study but supported figures that showed no improvement.

OECD found uncertain results, perhaps a moderate contribution to lowering unemployment.

INSEE (Statistics Office) (2006) found the new law had a negative impact on jobs.

It seems in fact that the same work was done in less time; INSEE found a drop of only 3.7% in production in the year after the introduction of the 35 hour week. Nevertheless the government has been trying to go back on the legislation, but is unable to do so directly: it would be as unacceptable as removing paid holidays. The answer for the government is to bribe employees by encouraging overtime, the most recent measure being exempting overtime from income tax. This is called by the social partners and the state 'unravelling the 35 hours'.

The situation is such today that the Communist newspaper *l'Humanité* asked if the locally negotiated contract was the norm and the law the exception. Now RTT days can be 'bought back', i.e. converted into paid working days. More workers are treated as 'executives', with correspondingly weaker protection on length of time worked. The original law depended on a strict limit on overtime: 180 hours a year, with well defined rules for pay and time off in lieu. This limit was extended to 220 hours in 2004. If employers wanted to increase that time, they had to apply to the Labour Inspector. A new law debated in summer 2008 removed this clause: now employers are free to negotiate contracts and employees are no longer protected by law. The situation is almost that of the UK, where employers can 'opt out' of employment law regarding time worked. 'Contract takes precedence over law' is the situation now. Some contracts are good for employees and respect the law, others do not.

In June 2008 'opt out' was made general in Europe, thanks to the insistence of the UK and Ireland, supported by Poland; only five countries abstained in the vote: Spain,

Belgium, Greece, Hungary and Cyprus. Now time worked can go up to 60 hours, or 65 if time 'on call' is included.

However, the present crisis could mark a return to regulated working hours, since less work is available. On the other hand, people can become so desperate for employment that they will accept any conditions.

During a parliamentary debate on working time in October 2003 a Communist MP reminded his audience that in 1940 the Right blamed the French military defeat on the week's paid holiday a year which the 1936 Popular Front had instituted. Now the French have 4 four weeks a year paid holiday, plus public holidays, and few people are saying that the economy is suffering because of that. In fact the time worked per household has vastly increased since 1936, since now all adults are expected to work, which means a doubling of time worked per family.

It is to be hoped that the current crisis will strengthen the shorter week, and strengthen by the same token the arguments of those fighting Sunday work, for family, social and cultural reasons. Sunday work is still illegal in France (with clearly defined exceptions). The government backed down on proposed changes on Sunday work in December 2008.

Generally the 35 hour week is appreciated by employees; even if the low paid sometimes feel that availing themselves of the 35 hours is a luxury they can't afford, all surveys show a majority in favour of reduced time. This is despite the wage freeze that often accompanied it (together with increased productivity and flexibility) and despite ferocious attacks on it from the media and government ministers. Among the arguments employed were: no other developed nation has such a law, so it must be wrong; it's economic nonsense, the French have been out of pocket as a result, and it's outdated State intervention. Well state intervention is back on the agenda in Europe.

The French have asked the crucial economic question: do we want more work and more goods being produced which will be bought on credit, or more time to live. Working a 35 hour week is an advantage and not a hardship if everyone else does it. It means that society values what you can do with your time more than what you can do with your money.

Programme for the national days of action

The French unions called two successful national days of action, consisting of strikes and marches, on 29 January and 19 March this year. The 35-hour week was prominent in the demands put forward by unions for the national days of action: unions demanded the *return* of tax and National Insurance contributions to be paid on overtime. (The Government had exonerated overtime from tax etc in order to undermine the 35 hour week and encourage the use of overtime by firms as opposed to taking on more staff.)

Union membership is low in France, but the importance of unions is high. In the words of Martin Schain, author of

a 1998 book on the French trade union movement (*A Century of Organised Labour in France: a Union Movement for the Twentieth Century*):

'Union presence (though not membership) is encouraged, and even subsidised, by the network of social representatives elected by workers by law. Shop stewards and plant committees are mandated by legislation and 'representative' unions put up candidates for these posts.'

As a result, 70% of workers in the public sector have union representation (15% are actually members of a union). In the private sector the figures are 31% and 5%.

The Sarkozy Government actually strengthened the position of unions in 2007: now unions must have at least 10% of workers' votes to be deemed 'representative'.

The eight main unions put forward a programme of demands for the national days of action.

Employment is the priority. Works committees should have right of veto on job cuts. Firms that make a profit are not be allowed to make redundancies; public money given to firms to be given on condition that firms take on new employees. The Government to withdraw its proposed 30 000 job cuts in the public sector, as well as the proposed law to allow Sunday working.

Regarding unemployment, shareholders dividends should be diverted to increase the pay of employees on short time working.

Regarding 'purchasing power' (Sarkozy was elected on his promise of defending this): plant negotiations must be conducted on the basis that purchasing power must not decrease. Firms that have not signed wage agreements before 1st June should lose some tax benefits. Increase of the minimum wage. No pension to be below the minimum wage. Increased benefits.

Education: withdraw proposed law on Higher Education, that would lead to a two-speed system. (Universities have had weeks of strike action on this). Stop job cuts in secondary schools. Withdraw proposed law on primary schools.

Health: withdraw the Minister for Health's plan. Suspend closures of local hospitals; take on more staff.

Social justice: withdraw the 2007/08 law giving refunds to taxpayers who paid more than 50% tax in one year (the so-called fiscal shield).

At the moment Sarkozy is standing firm against all demands, unlike less hard line members of his party. Left parties, among which we can include on this the Socialist Party, support the demands. Union demands are not usually ignored wholesale, so we will have to see what happens.

Sarkozy is siding with the unpopular main employers' association, the MEDEF (Mouvement des Entreprises de France), which castigated the unions for calling another day of action. Their leader, Laurence Parisot, is a particular hate figure; the radio station France Inter detailed on 20th March the odious work practices in the Parisot clothing factory, with interviews featuring unhappy employees.

Politicians on the other hand, queued up to offer their support. On the Right, Bayrou ('the movement reflects deep anger at the injustice of protecting the rich at a time of crisis'), Alain Juppé (Gaullist member of Sarkozy's party the UMP), and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan (DLR, *Debout La République*), and on the 'Left' Segolene Royal ('the day was legitimate and useful') and Martine Aubry ('there were hundreds of us socialists among the marchers').

The day was deemed more of a success than the 29th January, with more demonstrators out.

Sarkozy declared that all possible measures had already been taken; the unions are meeting to decide on the next step. At the moment the 1st May seems to be the next possible date for a day of marches, one practical reason being that the Spring holidays (Easter to the British) are coming and they are taken at different times in different parts of France, extending over several weeks.

Japan and WW2— Part 1: Has The General A Point?

by Philip O'Connor

On 6th December 1941 the Japanese Navy attacked the US Pacific Fleet docked in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The attack has gone down in World War Two mythology under Roosevelt's term, the "Day of Infamy", comparing only to the Al-Qaida assault on the New York Financial Services Centre in 2001.

The General's essay

Recently the Chief of Staff of the Japanese Air Force wrote an essay. Amongst other things he stated that America had been covertly at war with Japan throughout the 1930s, supplying the Chinese Kuomintang and urging it on to ever more aggressive assaults on the Japanese presence in northern China. These assaults ultimately led to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1936. Most unforgivably, he also stated that America instigated the battle that ignited the Second World War in East Asia:

"Roosevelt had become president on his public pledge not to go to war, so in order to start a war between the United States and Japan it had to appear that Japan took the first shot. Japan was caught in Roosevelt's trap and carried out the attack on Pearl Harbor." (Tamogami Toshio, *Was Japan An Aggressor Nation?*).

A few weeks ago, General Toshio was sacked.

In Britain the history of the Second World War in Asia is little known about. What is written or—more often—portrayed on film about it centres mostly on the plight of British prisoners of the Japanese, and involves a generalised view of the Japanese war as a continuum with the Nazi war in Europe. Mindless portrayal of 'camps' is used to imply an identity of conditions and purpose between Auschwitz and Japanese detention camps in Asia. The War throughout the globe by the gallant 'Allies' is presented as a fight for democracy and freedom against the unspeakable barbarism and pure evil of an 'Axis' alliance bent on "world domination".

World domination

But no evidence exists for the view of a common Axis war effort for world domination. Germany, Japan and Italy had agreed a so-called "Anti-Comintern Pact" in 1936, but this declaratory anti-Communist stance was a propaganda event with little practical meaning, organised in response to the Popular Front campaign of the Comintern. At that time Britain and America were also arrayed against the "communist threat" of Soviet Russia. Following the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935, Britain in fact was the effective military ally of Nazi Germany. The War in Europe got under way in 1939 as a conflict launched by Britain and France against Germany and Russia. Germany sought to keep Italy neutral so as to prevent an escalation of the war in the West, while France and Britain, instead of attacking Germany on the basis of their paper "*guarantee*" to Poland, set about military operations against Russia through Finland.

By 1941, the only side which developed ambitions to a global war and a global victory were the Allied Powers, and especially the British-US alliance created in early 1941, when the US was

technically still as neutral as Ireland, Sweden or Switzerland. After Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in June of that year, Stalin went along with the common cause declared by the Atlantic Allies for the sake of a common front in Europe. As has been demonstrated by Brendan Clifford in his "Afterword" to the 2nd edition of Elizabeth Bowen: *Notes On Eire: Espionage Reports To Winston Churchill 1940-2* (Aubane Historical Society, 2008), the Japanese and Germans undertook no joint planning and Hitler himself was hopeful for a restoration of the British Empire in Asia with which he could do business.

The Japanese concluded a Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union in April 1941, thus allowing the Soviets to concentrate forces against the coming German attack in the West and allowing Japan to concentrate its forces in southern Asia where it saw itself being forced into a showdown with the US. Critical Intelligence confirming the absence of a common German-Japanese design came from the communist spy in the German Embassy in Tokyo—Richard Sorge—and this enabled the Soviet Union to move its Siberian Army west and mount the credible resistance which brought Hitler's invasion to a standstill at the gates of Moscow. The Soviet-Japanese Agreement came just two months before the German attack on Russia. It dispels any notion of a Berlin-Tokyo "Axis" let alone a joint plan for "world domination".

US expansion in Asia

US eastern expansion in the hundred years prior to Pearl Harbor needs some explanation. Driven by Protestant zeal ("*Manifest Destiny*") and Free Trade doctrine (the "*Open Door*"), the US had been storming across the Pacific, 'penetrating' China in an openly imperial venture, and arranging naval stand-offs with their rival Japan. The methods of American expansionism differed in no way from those of other Western empire builders.

Hawaii—the later site of the US Pacific Fleet—had been a timeless Pacific Island Kingdom until 1893, when a group of American businessmen operating there organised as a "Committee of Safety" and proceeded to overthrow Queen Liliuokalani. In 1894 the US Congress formally annexed Hawaii to the US. (The Clinton Presidency "apologised" for this coup a century later.) Other island kingdoms with no quarrel with the US were overthrown in a similar manner and their territory and resources seized.

The Philippines proved a lot trickier. America's war against Spain—aimed at seizing Spain's remaining colonial possessions anywhere within a few thousand miles of the US—ended in 1898 with a Treaty "ceding" Cuba, Guam, the Philippines and Puerto Rico to the USA. But national resistance movements in all of these were to delay American efforts at securing their new 'possessions'. In the case of the Philippines, a peasant-based resistance, which had developed there against the Spanish in the 1850s, led to the establishment of an Independent Republic in 1898 on the defeat of the Spanish. But the US was having none of it and invaded. A bitter war was fought and although this formally ended in 1901 with the overthrow of the national

government, resistance to American domination continued until 1913. Suppression of the resistance cost over a million Philipinos their lives in a genocidal campaign waged by the US Army:

"The Americans... exceeded even the cruellest Spanish precedents in manipulating disease and hunger as weapons against an insurgent but weakened population. Beginning with the outbreak of war in February 1899, military authorities closed all the ports, disrupting the vital inter-island trade in foodstuffs and preventing the migration of hungry laborers to food-surplus areas. Then, as drought began to turn into famine in 1900, they authorized the systematic destruction of rice stores and livestock in areas that continued to support the guerrilla resistance... An ensuing campaign of terror against the rural population, backed up by a pass system and population "reconcentration", prefigured US strategy in Vietnam during the 1960s. "All palay, rice, and storehouses clearly for use by enemy soldiers", writes [the historian] De Bevoise, "were to be destroyed... The food denial programme got out of hand. Increasingly unsure who was enemy and who was friend, American soldiers on patrol did not agonize over such distinctions. They shot and burned indiscriminately, engaging in an orgy of destruction throughout the Philippines." As one soldier wrote back home to Michigan: "We burned every house, destroyed every carabao and other animals, all rice and other foods." ...

"As peasants began to die of hunger in the fall of 1900, American officers openly acknowledged in correspondence that starvation had become official military strategy. "The result is inevitable", wrote Colonel Dickman from Panay, "many people will starve to death before the end of six months". On Samar, Brigadier General Jacob Smith ordered his men to turn the interior into a "howling wilderness". ... De Bevoise concludes: "The American war contributed directly and indirectly to the loss of more than a million persons from a base population of about seven million". In comparative terms, this was comparable to mortality during the Irish famine of the 1840s." (Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, London, 2002, p198-9.)

China—Even before its brutal colonisation of the Philippines the US had been pushing its "Open Door" policy in China. Following Britain's "Opium Wars" of the 1840s, much of China became occupied as Western states seized territory and resources. In 1901 following the defeat of the Chinese nationalist uprising—known in the West as the "Boxer Rebellion"—this occupation was formalised and "legitimised" by a Treaty with the Qing Dynasty which the latter had little choice but to accept. The eleven Western powers thus legitimised in their Imperial occupation of China included the US, Britain and Britain's ally at the time, Japan.

JAPANESE GENERAL'S RESPONSE

The now ex-General Toshio writes of these events from a Japanese perspective:

"If you say that Japan was the aggressor nation [in relation to China—POC], then I would like to ask what country among the great powers of that time was not an aggressor. That is not to say that because other countries were doing so it was all right for Japan to do so as well, but rather that there is no reason to single out Japan as an aggressor nation..."

"Going back ... to 1901, in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, the Qing Empire signed the Boxer Protocol in 1901 with eleven countries including Japan. As a result, our country gained a right to station troops in Qing China. Also, in 1915, following four months of negotiations with the government of Yuan Shikai, and incorporating China's points as well, agreement was reached on Japan's so-called 21 Demands towards China. Some people say that this was the start of Japan's invasion of China, but if you compare these demands to the general international norms of colonial administration by the great powers at the time, there

was nothing terribly unusual about it. China too accepted the demands at one point and ratified them" (*Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?*).

But there was a problem. Japan was the sole remaining sovereign Asian state and—more particularly—a coming industrial power. Even prior to the First World War it was widely written about in the US as a serious challenge to American ambitions in China and the Pacific that would have to be dealt with. During the 'Great War' Japan was a British ally and used its forces to protect the British Empire in Asia. At the end of that War, the US moved to begin isolating Japan. As Toshio writes:

"However, four years later, in 1919, when China was allowed to attend the Paris Peace Conference, it began complaining about the 21 Demands with America's backing. Even then, England and France supported Japan's position. Moreover, Japan never advanced its Army without the agreement of Chiang Kai-shek's KMT. "

By the 1920s, most of East Asia was securely in Western hands. India, Burma, Singapore, Malaya, Hong Kong and numerous Pacific Islands were 'British', the French 'owned' most of Indo-China, China itself was in the hands of various Western powers and its weak central government was increasingly a creature of the United States. Holland controlled the East Indies (later Indonesia) and was merrily pumping oil, rubber and numerous other minerals out of it, and the United States controlled the Philippines and had effective hegemony over much of the Pacific. Pacific islands which were not outright Western colonies were held as League of Nations 'mandate territories' by Western powers, Australia or New Zealand. But Britain's freedom of action in the world had been ended by the war bankrupting it, and—after briefly contemplating and rejecting with a shudder the prospect of war with the US—Britain recognised that its future imperial role would best be served as a junior partner in an Anglo-US Alliance. The British reluctantly abandoned their Japanese ally in 1921 on US insistence and joined in the American strategy of isolation and economic strangulation of Japan.

Japan had gained control of Korea and Manchuria in the joint imperial carve up of China after 1901, and had done so as an ally of Britain. Toshio argues that Japanese occupation of these territories was both of a type with, but also more benign than, Western imperialist norms:

"By contrast [with Western empires—POC], ... Japan had been calling for harmony between the five tribes, laying out a vision for the tribes—the Yamato (Japanese), Koreans, Chinese, Manchurians and Mongols—to intermix and live peacefully together. At a time when racial discrimination was considered natural, this was a groundbreaking proposal. At the Paris Peace Conference at the end of World War I, when Japan urged that the abolition of racial discrimination be included in the Treaty, England and America laughed it off. But if you look at the world today, it has become the kind of world that Japan was urging at the time."

On the annexation of Korea that followed the Sino-Japanese War in which Britain backed Japan, Toshio says:

"Japan tried to develop Manchuria, the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan in the same way it was developing the Japanese mainland."

In contrast to Western empires, it sought to incorporate its colonies "within the nation itself". Under a "very moderate" colonial regime, the plains of Manchuria were transformed from an agricultural economy to an industrial one, and in all three territories mass education was introduced for the "native peo-

ples", modern road, power and water infrastructures were installed and universities established. The Army was opened up to these populations and men of Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean background were to achieve the highest ranks in the Imperial Japanese Army of the Second World War. (Chiang Kai-shek and several of his Generals were themselves also graduates of Japanese military academies.) The imperial households of China and Japan inter-married. Most of all, while populations were falling elsewhere, in the Japanese-occupied regions it doubled between 1920 and 1940.

Toshio claims that the Sino-Japanese War of 1936 was started by a large scale offensive by Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) against the Japanese presence (military and civilian), and that this offensive was instigated by the US. KMT forces were massively supported by the US, and Chinese strategy was also being manipulated from Moscow following the creation of the Popular Front with Mao's Communists. He provides convincing evidence from recently available US and Soviet sources that this was in fact so. The war thus cooked up went badly for the disunited Chinese forces, however, and led to partial Japanese victories and the extension of Japanese power in China in the late 1930s. Toshio admits that Japanese atrocities occurred, but dismisses these as individual acts of delinquency not unusual in the context of colonial wars of the time and also refers to Chinese atrocities against Japanese military and civilians.

ROOSEVELT'S TRAP

Japanese actions between 1920 and 1944 were determined by what the West was doing in Asia. The 'Allied' economic isolation of Japan led to the Japanese responding with a desperate strategy. If it did nothing, its industrial base would collapse, as Japan itself had no resources of oil, rubber or copper. It had adopted a Western practice—secure itself as an industrialised military power by controlling the sources of raw materials it needed. These resources were located in the Western colonies of Indochina, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. It sought repeatedly to negotiate with the US for peaceful access to these areas through trade, but the US blockade, supported by the European colonial powers, ruled this out. Japan extended its slice of China in the 1930s and, following the German defeat of France and Holland in 1940, it advanced on their now adrift colonies in Indo-China in 1941. Its aims were limited—establish a Japanese sphere in the Western sense as a secure basis for its own industrial development. Brendan Clifford describes it as follows:

"[Japan] became an imperialist predator when the alternative was to become the prey of capitalist imperialism, as China was. The Japanese islands lacked the material resources necessary for capitalist industrialisation. Japan was not self-sufficient in these things as America was, and as England had been until it chose to become a world Imperialist power for other reasons.... In 1939 America revoked its commercial agreement with Japan and in 1940-41 it stopped the export of oil, rubber and other commodities, and froze Japanese assets in America and demanded that Japan withdraw from its empire. This was while the two countries were at peace... American policy towards Japan was such that there were only two possible outcomes: war, or Japanese surrender without war. The current edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* puts it this way: The Japanese "faced the alternative of either withdrawing from Indochina and possibly China or seizing the sources of oil production in the Netherlands East Indies"... The Japanese Government spent the Summer and Fall of 1941 trying to negotiate a compromise with the USA which would remove the stark choice between economic collapse and war. In July 1941 it established a joint Protectorate with Vichy France over

Indochina... and it made preparations to move into the Dutch East Indies to gain oil supplies... At the same time it sought to make an agreement with the USA for gaining a supply of raw materials by trade if it dismantled its Empire. But the US insisted that its ultimatum be complied with unconditionally before any other agreement could be made. ..." ('Afterword' to *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 187)

The American ultimatum took the form of the "*Hull Note*". Cordell Hull was US Secretary of State and a leading advocate—along with Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury—of expansion in Asia and war with Japan. War was unpopular with the American public but, though he had been elected on a programme of keeping America out of war, Roosevelt and his inner circle were intent on joining the War in Europe and provoking one in Asia. America was both overtly and covertly subsidising the war efforts of both China and Britain. In October 1941, the US 'Flying Tigers' based with the KMT began direct covert air attacks on Japanese positions in China. The Notes to Japan were meant to instigate hostilities and on 25th November 1941 the US Cabinet decided to act. As Secretary of State Stimson noted in his diary:

"The question was how we should manoeuvre them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves. It was a difficult proposition. Hull laid out his general broad propositions on which the thing should be rested—the freedom of the seas and the fact that Japan was in alliance with Hitler and was carrying out his policy of world aggression. The others brought out the fact that that any such expedition to the south as the Japanese were likely to take would be an encirclement of our interests in the Philippines and cutting into our vital supply of rubber from Malaya. I pointed out to the President that he had already taken the first steps towards an ultimatum in notifying Japan way back last summer that if she crossed the border into Thailand she was violating our safety and that therefore he had only to point out that to follow any such expedition was a violation of a warning we had already given" (quoted in *ibid.*, p188).

The US issued its ultimatum and the Japanese found themselves in a "trap". As Toshio writes:

"Roosevelt had become president on his public pledge not to go to war, so in order to start a war between the United States and Japan it had to appear that Japan took the first shot. Japan was caught in Roosevelt's trap and carried out the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"Could the war have been avoided? If Japan had accepted the conditions laid out in the Hull note, perhaps the war could have been temporarily avoided. But even if the war had been avoided temporarily, when you consider the survival of the fittest mentality that dominated international relations at the time, you can easily imagine that the United States would have issued a second and a third set of demands. As a result, those of us living today could very well have been living in a Japan that was a white man's colony" (*Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?*).

In that dog-eat-dog world, the Japanese leadership regarded their war with the US as a desperate gamble which it had only an odds-on chance of carrying off. As Toshio points out, the Japanese leadership was "not stupid". It was a conflict it believed it had no option of avoiding.

From other sources it emerges that in September 1940, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Navy, told Prince Konoye his view of the prospects of a war with the United States. He believed they had six months to achieve their objectives, or at most a year, "*but I have absolutely no confidence for the second and third years*".

In July 1941, as American pressure grew, the Japanese Naval Chief of Staff, Admiral Osami Nagano, told the Cabinet:

"As for war with the United States, although there is now a chance of achieving victory, the chances will diminish as time goes on. By the latter half of next year it will already be difficult for us to cope with the United States; after that the situation will become increasingly worse... If we conclude that conflict cannot ultimately be avoided, then I would like you to understand that as time goes by we will be in a disadvantageous position."

In September 1941 Nagano told the Government that a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor gave Japan "a chance to win the war", by temporarily disabling the US Pacific Fleet, but otherwise he believed Japan was getting weaker while the US grew stronger. (John Ellis *Brute Force: Allied Strategy and Tactics in the Second World War*, London, 1990, p443-4.)

So what did the Japanese mean by "achieving victory" and "a chance to win the war" following the impossible ultimatum of the Hull Note? They believed a short war launched by a surprise attack could bring about the temporary breaking of American naval power in the Pacific, which would open an opportunity for a new agreement with the United States providing for Japan's right to control 'its' sphere in Asia. As Ellis writes, their bid was to try to assert "a Japanese equivalent of the Monroe Doctrine" in the Pacific, though even this is probably overstating it: In 1946

the United States Strategic Bombing Survey concluded:

"There is no evidence in the Japanese plans of an intention to defeat the United States. Japan planned to fight a war of limited objectives and, having gained what it wanted, expected to negotiate for a favourable peace" (quoted in Ellis, *Brute Force*, p445).

Japanese expansion through south-east Asia during 1941 was based on what Ellis describes as a "strategic concept" that was "essentially defensive". The East Indies were the prime source of oil and the other raw materials it sought, and peaceful access to which it had been denied by the US and British Blockade supported by the other Western colonial powers in the region. Seizing these and temporarily disabling the US Pacific Fleet, according to Ellis, were—

"not seen as part of a remorseless advance towards mainland America, but as the establishment of a *ne plus ultra* line that would deny potential air and naval bases to the enemy. When the Japanese commanders sanctioned their amphibious blitzkrieg it was on the clear understanding that the initial conquests were to be the only conquests, and that there was to be no thought of fighting a protracted war to the death with the Western powers in the Pacific" (p446).

Wars do not follow pre-ordained patterns, and once the conflict began, so the Greater East Asian War—as Toshio calls it—took its course. When Japan did attack Pearl Harbor, they sunk a range of aging battleships—the modern aircraft carriers were conveniently absent. Roosevelt had his War.

Japan and WW2— Part 2: "Asia for the Asians!"

Japan advanced through South East Asia expounding a programme as they went of "Asia for the Asians," which, as Brendan Clifford writes, "was very different from the message carried to Eastern Europe and Russia by Nazi Germany" (*Afterword*, p. 192). As ex-General Toshio writes:

"If you leave people alone, someday someone will create the conveniences of civilisation, such as cars, washing machines, and computers. But in the history of mankind, the relationship between the rulers and the ruled is only determined by war..."

After the Greater East Asian War [known in the West as *World War Two—POC*], many countries in Asia and Africa were released from the control of white nations. A world of racial equality arrived and problems between nations were to be resolved through discussion. That was a result of Japan's strength in fighting the Russo-Japanese War and the Greater East Asian War. If Japan had not fought the Greater East Asian War at that time, it may have taken another one hundred or two hundred years before we could have experienced the world of racial equality that we have today." (*Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?*)

Has Toshio a point here? Japan's "Co-Prosperity Zone" in Asia was originally not unpopular, though its rough occupation policies made it so after a time. Resistance movements seldom existed, apart from exceptional cases (the Philippines again!) By contrast, a sizeable Indian National Army (INA) of about 40,000 volunteers was organised by Subhas Chandra Bose. It proclaimed a "Provisional Government of Free India" and fought with the Japanese against the British in Burma. After the war, attempts to place INA men on trial in India became a galvanising point of the Indian Independence movement and today Bose is revered in independent India (including through the naming of the airport in Calcutta in his honour).

Similarly, in Burma, the leader of the independence movement, Aung San—father of the current "pro-democracy" figure of western media acclaim, Aung San Suu Kyi—graduated from a Japanese military academy and in the war organised a military force to fight with the Japanese. He negotiated with them the establishment of an Independent Burmese state in 1943.

As the fortunes of war changed, so the Burmese independence movement, under the influence of a United Front with communist forces, switched sides in 1945 with a promise from the Allies of an independent state after the war. In the event, after negotiating a transition regime with the Attlee Government in 1946, Aung and most of his Cabinet were assassinated by British agents.

There were similar arrangements under the Japanese elsewhere, also based on an anti-colonial rationale. In Thailand the Phibun government negotiated a Pact with the Japanese in 1941, though it stopped short of declaring war on the United States. Japan's arrangements with Thailand were popular and were based on the dismantling of western colonial (especially French) structures. The Phibun government remained in power until June 1944. As elsewhere, the extreme pressure on Japan—particularly shortages of food and raw materials—led to unpopular requisitioning, and the turning of the tide in favour of the U.S. from 1943 led to a change of mood in these countries in favour of accommodation with the new strong boys on the block, the Americans.

Japan's "Co-Prosperity Zone" never developed further, and its position in Asia rapidly became untenable as the Allied blockade and military effort started to strangle it. The Japanese-American war changed the character of Japa-

nese expansion in Asia and the conflict with the U.S. became the main (unequal) conflict.

Was the Asian War "Anti-Fascist"?

Japan was not a "democracy" in World War Two in the now accepted American sense, but then neither were China, the Soviet Union, France, Portugal or some of the other protagonists in the Asian conflict. Britain—and indeed the Netherlands—existed in Asia on a different basis to that on which they existed at home: as an unreconstructed colonial stratum wielding absolute power over native subjects. The economic and political squeeze on Japan in the 1920s had rendered Japan's political system—a type of democratising imperial one—dysfunctional, and had led to widespread social unrest and political paralysis. The ruling elites—particularly the army—took power with the partial collusion of the imperial monarchy. But, apart from the Communists—a fairly substantial force in Japan at that time, pursuing the politics of class-based civil war—this was not an issue for the circles that mattered in world politics. Japan, like any country aping the western path of development, also produced a fascist type movement, but that had a marginal existence. Japan retained an imperial dynasty and was ruled during the years of its existential crisis by an "emergency government" of civil administrators and the army.

America fought the war against Japan on the clear basis of *Manifest Destiny* and without any pretence of fighting an "anti-fascist war". U.S. soldiers who fought in the Pacific never heard the term "anti-fascist" as a description of what they were doing. They heard a lot about the "yellow races", and a book appeared 20 years ago which produced a lot of evidence which showed that the U.S. waged a fundamentally racial war against what it regarded as its racial inferiors, involving much slaughter of prisoners etc. Grenades and flame-throwers proved a favourite method (see John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, New York, 1986). These revelations struck me at the time as very similar to new histories appearing in Germany about the nature of the German Army's campaign in Russia as a war of racial destruction ("*Vernichtungskrieg*"). From late 1944, when the unequal war was nearly over, America launched an unmerciful onslaught of fire bombing against Tokyo and other cities (which were largely constructed of timber), culminating in the nuclear incineration of the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This genocidal onslaught killed well over half a million people.

What of Britain throughout all of this? In Asia, Britain also never pretended to be fighting an "anti-fascist" war, but rather a war on the basis of old fashioned colonial and imperial interest and survival against an imperial competitor. In India it attempted a re-run of the Home Rule propaganda it had employed in Ireland in the 'Great War'. The Indian Congress movement split three ways, but its substantial leadership, including Gandhi, didn't fall for it and was interned. The predominantly Muslim wing responded more positively to British promises and a further substantial section sided with Japan. The doctrine of *divide et impera* employed since the days of the "Indian Mutiny" (India's "First War of Independence") came home to roost.

The British colonial armies in South East Asia were roundly thrashed by the technically much more modestly equipped armies of Japan in 1941. The ignominious capitulation of the massive British garrison in Hong Kong—which on the insistence of Churchill included large numbers of Australians and Canadians—was followed by the last stand at Singapore, where General Percival, a man who had achieved some notoriety as the principal practitioner of a terrorist counter insurgency with the Essex Regiment in Co. Cork during the Irish War of Independence, surrendered to the under-equipped Japanese forces. After these ignominious defeats, Britain's war in Asia was a minor sideshow compared to the U.S. war effort. It involved trying to prevent a Japanese advance on India through Burma, and some gallant commando style activity in Burma and elsewhere, led by men such as Colonel Wingate who had long histories fighting "natives" in India, Afghanistan, Africa and elsewhere. It doesn't bear too much scrutiny.

The effect of the Second World War in Asia was to smash Europe's Asian empires, which had formed the most parasitic and exploitative elements of those empires. As the Japanese retreated in 1944-5, imperial control was re-established by military means against national liberation movements by the British, French, Dutch, Portuguese and others. Japanese PoWs were re-armed as a militia for use against the Vietnamese and we all know what happened there subsequently. In an exotic twist of history, former Waffen-SS troops led by former resistance officers formed the backbone of the forces sent by France and the Netherlands in trying to re-secure their former "possessions" (the French Foreign Legion in Indo-China employed many French and German SS, often as an alternative to facing a firing squad, while the Dutch had enough SS of their own—50,000 Dutchmen had fought in the Waffen-SS). Horrendous wars ensued against national movements in the Dutch East Indies, French Indochina, British Malaya, etc., some lasting into the 1960s and beyond, and at the cost of millions of Asian lives. But the Japanese had broken the spell and these protracted western imperial rearguard actions failed to restore imperial control in the long run.

Starving the prisoners?

The Japanese gamble of a limited war against the U.S. Pacific garrison did not pay off, and the U.S., as planned, used the war scenario to establish total control across the Pacific once Japan was locked into a long conflict. The Japanese economy did not have the resources or industrial base for this and it was very soon stretched to breaking point. The Americans had the Japanese codes and were able pretty well to follow every movement of troops and supplies from the end of 1942. Food supplies dwindled. After the war Japanese generals testified that as early as 1942, at the Battle of Guadalcanal, only 20% of supplies dispatched from Japan ever got through:

"As a result the troops ... lacked heavy equipment, adequate ammunition and even food ... Approximately ... 10,000 men starved to death." (quoted in Ellis, *Brute Force*, p. 465).

So what of Britain's last Asian war myth—the couple of thousand British prisoners who died in Japanese detention camps? With Japanese troops actually starving to death

in large numbers, and Japan's armies deprived by the blockade of food and modern medicines, there was not much of these commodities left to spare for enemy prisoners.

A recent memoir by John Lanchester is one of a spate of books appearing lately in Britain in which people are "coming to terms" with their families' implication in imperialism and imperialist crimes (an embarrassed Graham Norton was recently confronted on British television with the murderous exploits of his own ancestors in the suppression by the Yeomanry of the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland). Lanchester's is one of the better of these memoirs to have appeared to date. He had a part-Irish, part-English colonial background. I presume his sense of guilt derives from the former, which included some hard-headed women sceptical of the civilisation in whose service they found themselves (his grandmother was an ex-nun from Mayo). His grand-parents, colonials in China, were "caught up" in the Japanese advance through the British colonies and ended up in an internment camp in Hong Kong. Lanchester makes the following revelation:

"So the days passed. When the Canadians were released for repatriation, on 23 September 1943, there were rumours that the same might happen to the British: that they would be exchanged for Japanese citizens held in Australia. These rumours gave rise to the most dangerous varieties of hope. But they didn't come true, for a reason that camp inmates sometimes darkly speculated about: because the British government wanted a British POW presence in Hong Kong at the end of the war, to facilitate reclaiming the colony for the British Empire. This was something my grandmother [the Irish ex-nun—PO'C] spoke about as a black rumour, and, like not a few black rumours, it is now a matter of historical record, thanks in part to Philip Snow's book *The Fall of Hong Kong*. The Japanese would have been willing to negotiate a deal over repatriating the internees, who after all were of no use to them. It was the British who wanted them there. The suffering of the prisoners and internees was all so that the flag would be promptly raised once more over the colony at the end of the war.... When the end of the war came, the British reclaimed the colony with a brisk lack of fuss..." (*Family Romance—Every family has secrets. Some families have lies* (2008) Penguin edition, pp. 195-6.)

No war for democracy

Britain fought its war in Asia unequivocally as a war to re-establish its colonial empire. The *Atlantic Charter* was signed by the U.S. and Britain in August 1941 (months before the U.S. officially entered the wars in Europe and Asia) as a means of bringing the U.S. into the war and creating the basis of a world wide coalition. It declared U.S.-U.K. solidarity with democracy and the freedom of nations and is often presented as the statement of (western) Allied war aims in WW2. These included "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live", and "a permanent system of general security". It was immediately welcomed by resistance movements and exile governments across the world, including by Ho Chi Minh in Indo-China. No signed copies of it are known to exist, however, and H. V. Morton, who was with Churchill's party, states that no signed version ever existed. As has recently come to light, the very evening of the announcement of the *Charter*, Churchill secured the agreement of Roosevelt that its provisions would not apply to the British

Empire, and that the Empire was to be restored intact after hostilities ended. (See Jonathan Fenby, *Alliance: The Inside Story of How Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill Won One War and Began Another*, London, 2008.)

Not surprisingly, the new found British "liberation" effort in Asia found little support locally. The Japanese "Co-Prosperity Zone" and claim to lead the smashing of western imperialism in Asia had been widely supported by independence movements across Asia. The successful blockading of Japan and the strangling of its raw materials and food and medical supplies turned Japanese occupation policy to one of desperate requisitioning of material and food supplies. The unequal war with America meant the outcome could not be long in doubt, and in this context Asian independence movements began to change sides towards the Americans. In Vietnam, the communist resistance leader, Ho Chi Minh, who cooperated closely with U.S. intelligence forces (the O.S.S.) modelled his planned Vietnamese *Declaration of Independence* on the original American document.

At the end of the war, as British and other European Allied powers sought to re-impose their colonial rule over Asia, the independence movements resisted fiercely, with the explicit support of the Communists and the sometimes tacit support of the Americans. The Cold War drew the Americans back in behind the colonials. But the sentimental colonial world portrayed in J.G. Ballard's well written propaganda novel—*Empire of the Sun*—was no more. Nowhere the British returned were they welcomed, and long and vicious counter-insurgency wars were to follow. In British Malaya alone over a million people were to die. The arrival of the Cold War was the saving of Japan from the fate of a "white man's colony" but a sentence of death for millions of independence activists throughout Asia. The exception of course was China. There the Communist forces defeated the Kuomintang, driving them back to Taiwan by 1949, and re-established a sovereign China for the first time in 150 years, at enormous cost. The Japanese were gone, and the remnants of the American and other western imperial colonies rapidly followed.

As regards interpretations of what the Second World War in Asia was all about, it seems surely that General Toshio has grounds for a case of Unfair Dismissal!

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Charles W Freeman: an interesting appointment

On 26 February 2009, President Obama appointed Charles W. Freeman as the Chairman of the US National Intelligence Council. This body oversees the production of US National Intelligence Estimates, which are the consensus judgments of the 16 US intelligence agencies.

Less than a fortnight later, Freeman withdrew. In a blistering statement explaining his withdrawal, he said he had been "under constant attack by unscrupulous people with a passionate attachment to the views of a political faction in a foreign country" [1] and he didn't believe that the National Intelligence Council could function effectively while he was its chairman and under attack in this manner. The foreign country in question was Israel.

The speech [2] reproduced below made in May 2007 shows why the Israeli lobby in the US was less than happy with his appointment. In it, Freeman makes a number of outrageous remarks, for instance:

"Israel no longer even pretends to seek peace with the Palestinians; it strives instead to pacify them" and

"it is past time for an active and honest discussion with both Israel and the government Palestinians have elected, which – in an irony that escapes few abroad – is the only democratically elected government in the Arab world".

Freeman has a long record in government service, beginning in 1965 when he entered the US foreign service. He acted as President Nixon's interpreter on his visit to China in 1972. He was US ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1989-92 and served in both the Reagan and Clinton administrations. Since 1997, he has been president of a Washington based think tank, called the Middle East Policy Council.

Freeman's speeches on foreign policy over the past decade make interesting reading (see [3]). He has been a fierce critic of US foreign policy since 9/11, which, like Obama's pastor, he regards as the chickens coming home to roost for the US – he told a forum in October 2005 "what 9/11 showed is that if we bomb people, they bomb back" [4]. He says (in the speech below) that US unquestioning support for Israel "makes the long-term escalation of terrorism against the United States a certainty, not a matter of conjecture".

Freeman is an admirer of China and served on the advisory board of the Chinese national oil company from 2004 to 2008, for which he was remunerated. (He recently referred to the last year's violence in Tibet as "a race riot by Tibetans" [5]). He is also an admirer of Saudi Arabia, which supported his think tank financially. Critics of his appointment seized on his past receipt of money from both China and Saudi Arabia, saying that it made it impossible

for him to fulfil his duties as Chairman of the National Intelligence Council impartially.

Freeman is not in favour of America retreating from the world, in the manner advocated by Pat Buchanan. He is in favour of US foreign policy being driven by a realistic assessment of American interests in the world, rather than by ideology. Spreading freedom and democracy is not high on his agenda. As such, he is in the mould of people like Brent Scowcroft, who worked for the first President Bush.

To date, the Obama administration has not made any dramatic shifts in US foreign policy, and certainly not on Palestine. However, that Obama appointed somebody of such unorthodox views to a senior position (albeit not a policy making position) is an indication that he hasn't got a closed mind on foreign affairs.

The Israeli lobby's victory in unseating Freeman may turn out to be hollow. Had he taken up his post, he would have had to shut up about foreign affairs. Now that he has been unseated he will certainly not shut up, as his withdrawal statement demonstrates, and his words will have a much wider audience, and much greater impact, than before his appointment – to the detriment of Israeli interests.

David Morrison

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Can American Leadership Be Restored?

Remarks by Charles Freeman
Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs
24 May 2007

When our descendants look back on the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of this one, they will be puzzled. The end of the Cold War relieved Americans of almost all international anxieties. It left us free to use our unparalleled economic power, military might, and cultural appeal to craft a world to our liking. We did not rise to the occasion. Still, almost the whole world stood with us after 9/11.

There is still no rival to our power, but almost no one abroad now wants to follow our lead and our ability to shape events has

been greatly – perhaps irreparably – enfeebled. In less than a decade, we have managed to discredit our capacity to enlist others in defending our interests and to forfeit our moral authority as the natural leader of the global community. There is no need for me to outline to this expert audience the many respects in which our prestige and influence are now diminished. Historians will surely wonder: how did this happen?

How our global leadership collapsed is, of course, a question our politicians now evade as politically incorrect. It's also a very good question and really deserves an answer. I don't plan to try to give you one. Why deprive our posterity of all the fun of puzzling one out?

We are engaged in a war, a global war on terror; a long war, we are told. It is somehow more dangerous than the Cold War was, we are warned. So, to preserve our democracy, we must now refrain from exercising it. And, to keep our ancient liberties, we must now curtail them. These propositions may strike some here as slightly illogical, but I beg you not to say so – especially if you have a security clearance and want to keep it or are interested in a job in this or a future administration. To many now in power in Washington and in much of the country, it remains perilously unpatriotic to ask why we were struck on 9/11 or who we're fighting or whether attempting forcibly to pacify various parts of the realm of Islam will reduce the number of our enemies or increase them.

So, we're in a war whose origins it is taboo to examine, as the only presidential candidate of either party to attempt to do so was reminded in a debate with his fellow Republicans just last week. And this is a war whose proponents assert that it must – and will – continue without end. If we accept their premises, they are right. How can a war with no defined ends beyond the avoidance of retreat ever reach a convenient stopping point? How can we win a war with an enemy so ill-understood that we must invent a nonexistent ideology of "Islamofascism" for it? How can we mobilize our people to conduct a long-term struggle with a violent movement once they realize that its objective is not to conquer us but to persuade us to stay home, leaving its part of the world to decide on its own what religious doctrine should govern its societies? And how can a war with no clear objectives ever accomplish its mission and end?

The answer is that no matter how many Afghans and Arabs we kill or lock up in Guantánamo it can't and it won't. The sooner we admit this and get on with the task of reducing the war to manageable proportions, the less we will compound the damage to ourselves, our allies, our friends, and the prospects for our peaceful coexistence with the fifth of the human race that practices Islam. The sooner we decide and explain what this war is about, the fewer our enemies and the more numerous our allies will be. The sooner we define achievable objectives, the greater our hope of achieving them. The sooner we stop rummaging blindly in the hornets' nests of the Middle East, the less likely we'll be stung worse than we have been.

The pain of admitting failure will be all the greater because this disaster was completely bipartisan. Both parties colluded in catastrophically misguided policies of militarism and jingoistic xenophobia. We succumbed to panic and unreasoning dread. We got carried away with our military prowess. Our press embedded itself with the troops and jumped into bed with our government. We invaded countries that existed only in our imaginations and then were shocked by their failure to conform to our preconcep-

tions. We asked our military to do things soldiers can do only poorly, if at all. Our representatives pawned our essential freedoms to our Commander-in-Chief in exchange for implied promises that he would reduce the risks to our security by means that he later declined to disclose or explain.

Not many among us voiced public objections. Those who did found the press too busy demonstrating its patriotism to publicize dissenting views. The issues were, as always, too complex for television. As a wise commentator recently pointed out, television has the same relationship to news that bumper stickers do to philosophy.

Perhaps that's why we decided to try out a made-for-TV approach to international negotiation in which our leaders demonstrate their resolve by refusing to allow our diplomats to talk to bad guys until they come out with their hands up. When that approach produces the predictable impasse, we fall back on the "shoot first, let God worry about what happens next" neocon school of war planning. In the mess that ensues, our primary concern is rightly to support our troops. But supporting the troops is a domestic political imperative, not a strategy, and it doesn't tell our military what it is being asked to achieve. As force protection becomes our major preoccupation, we find we must pacify the countries we occupy so that we can continue to station troops in them to fight the terrorists our occupation is creating.

Rather than consider the possibility that the witless application to foreign societies of military pressure, no matter how immense and irresistible it may be, is more likely to generate resistance than to make states of them, we prefer to blame the inhabitants of these societies for their ingratitude and internal divisions. So we threaten to withdraw our political and economic support from them, while piling on more American troops. Asked when our soldiers may be able to declare their mission accomplished and to leave Iraq and Afghanistan, our Commander-in-Chief replies that this is a policy question that the generals in the field should decide, and that he's not going to decide for them. Think about that for a minute. Since when are generals responsible for making policy decisions? They are conditioned to focus on implementing policy and to avoid making it. Whatever happened to civilian control of the military or "the buck stops here?" Why should our military be left to hold the bag in this way?

How we got into this mess is, however, far less important than figuring out how we can get out of it. Much more has been destroyed than just the social and political orders in Iraq and Afghanistan. The term "collateral damage" was invented to denote the undesirable side-effects of actions on the battlefield. But it certainly applies to the consequences of our confused and counterproductive conduct and the misdirection of our armed forces since 9/11. We have greatly devalued our political and moral standing with our allies and friends and foolishly degraded the deterrent value of our military power. The world now fears our savagery but has lost confidence in our fair-mindedness, judgment, and competence. What are the consequences of this and how can we overcome them?

A common concern about the belligerent unilateralism of the world's greatest military power is driving lesser powers to look for political and economic support from countries who are distant, unthreatening, or unlikely to back American agendas. So, for example, Venezuela, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and key Africans are courting China; Europe is flirting with Asia; and all are seeking the affections of the oil and gas producers of the Middle

East as well as of Russia and India. In most countries, politicians now see public spats with the United States as the easiest way to rally their people and enhance their prestige. The result is the progressive displacement of our previously indispensable influence and leadership in more and more areas of the world.

Sagging demand for our leadership may be a good thing to the extent it relieves us of the burdens of our much-proclaimed status as the sole remaining superpower. But we're clearly bothered by being seen as less relevant. Our answer to this seems to be to build an even more powerful military. Some of you will recall newspaper reports that our defense spending is only about 3.6 percent of GDP, reflecting a defense budget of only – I emphasize – only \$499.4 billion. But a lot of defense-related spending is outside the Defense Department's budget. This fiscal year we will actually spend at least \$934.9 billion (or about 6.8 percent of our GDP) on our military. Outside DoD, the Department of Energy will spend \$16.6 billion on nuclear weapons. The State Department will disburse \$25.3 billion in foreign military assistance. We will spend \$69.1 billion on defense-related homeland security programs and \$69.8 billion for treatment of wounded veterans. The Treasury will spend \$38.5 billion on unfunded military retirements. We will pay \$206.7 billion in interest on war debt. Other bits and pieces, including satellite launches, will add another \$8.5 billion. Altogether, I repeat, that's about \$935 billion. But there's no sign that all this military spending – though it is vastly more than the rest of the world combined – and the power projection capabilities it buys are regaining international leadership for us.

In Latin America, Brazil is assuming the mantle of regional leader, even as Hugo Chávez Frías and other defiant nationalists seek to build influence at our expense.

In Europe, transcontinental integration is proceeding without reference to us or our views about the roles of strategically important countries like Turkey and Ukraine in the EU. New relationships are being forged with Russia. European policies toward such problem states as Iran, Iraq, and Israel increasingly diverge from our own.

Asia is returning to its pre-modern status as the center of gravity of the world economy. Events there are being driven not by us, but by the restored wealth and power of China and India, a once again assertive Japan, strategic repositioning by both parts of Korea, growing partnerships between Muslim nations in Southeast Asia and the Arabs and Persians, the de facto reintegration of Taiwan with the rest of China, and a bloom of pan-Asian political and economic arrangements from which we are absent.

In the Middle East, Iran has been empowered by our blunders in Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon. Saudi Arabia has awakened from its traditional risk-averse passivity to fill the diplomatic vacuums we have created. Israel is even more despised and isolated than we are, and together with the Israelis we are rapidly multiplying the ranks of terrorists with regional and global reach. And so it goes.

The world before us is both unfamiliar and unanticipated. Our military-industrial complex, securocrats, and pundits keep arguing for more carriers, submarines, and fighter bombers. This is good for the defense industrial base but, in terms of stopping terrorists, it is, I am afraid, an American equivalent of the Maginot Line: the building of an impregnable deterrent to the threat of the past, not the future. Like the French generals, our

defense planners are preparing for the return of a familiar enemy – some new version of our sadly vanished Soviet adversary that will rise to compete with us for global hegemony and that we can hold to account for failing to constrain attacks on us by lesser enemies. But it is not what is happening and it must now be doubted that it ever will.

In the world of the early 21st Century, the major ideological contest is between those who share our past faith in the rule of law and the new American contempt for the notion that we should, like others, respect the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions, and other elements of international law. In some senses, we have met the enemy and he is who we used to be. We can count on no common threat to rally the world behind us. In the new era, there are no blocs and no clear battle lines. Those who are our allies for some purposes may be our adversaries in respect to others, and vice versa. For all of our military strength, the demands on our diplomatic skills will be the greatest in our history. The stakes are high and the margins for error of our foreign policies are steadily narrowing. We are, however, training our diplomats for the transformative tasks of imperial administration. Like our military planners, our diplomatic leadership has it wrong. Our empire was stillborn. We just didn't notice.

Our post Cold War global hegemony is being undermined not by a peer competitor but by a combination of our own neocon-induced ineptitude and the emergence of countries with substantial power and influence in their own regions. These regional powers distrust our purposes, fear our militarism, and reject our leadership. Distrust drives them to reaffirm the principles of international law we have now abandoned. Fear drives them to pursue the development or acquisition of weapons with which to deter the policies of preemptive attack and forcible regime change we now espouse. (If the weak think the powerful consider themselves above the law, the only protection for the vulnerable is to arm themselves. So scofflaw behavior in the name of halting or reversing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction actually promotes it.

All this is creating a world of regional balances in which we play a lessened role, some of these regional balances – as in South Asia today and the Middle East of the future – involving dangerous nuclear standoffs between two or more middle-ranking powers.

As new centers of economic and political power emerge around the world, global institutions designed to include countries whose participation is essential to problem solving are no longer in alignment with the actual distribution of either the world's power or its problems. They reflect past rather than present international pecking orders. Since they exclude key players, they can't contrive workable solutions or buy-in to them by those who must support them or refrain from wrecking them if they are to succeed. The problem is most obvious in organizations devoted to economic matters.

Take the G-7, a self-constituted Euro-American-Japanese club of democracies plus Russia. The G-7 once played a central role in managing the global economy. It still discusses global trade and investment imbalances. But, without Chinese participation, this amounts to little more than ineffectual whining.

Or consider energy and the environment, other issues of broad concern. With the fastest growing new energy consumers like

China, India, and Brazil outside the OECD and its affiliated International Energy Agency, there is no way to coordinate an effective international response to energy shortages or crises. And when the United States absents ourselves, as we have from the Kyoto regime and from some parts of the UN system, even less can be accomplished.

The same pattern of growing misalignment between power and institutions exists throughout the international system. The membership and voting arrangements of the UN Security Council, for example, reflect both the colonial era and the outcome of World War II far better than they mirror current realities. A body charged with the management of global security and other vitally important issues is obviously handicapped in its ability to make, legitimize, and enforce its decisions if it overweights Europe, inflexibly slights India and Japan, and includes no Muslim nation or group of nations among its permanent members. The UN's difficulties are compounded by the contemptuous treatment it now receives from Washington, and by the effects on its image here and abroad of our using it primarily to fend off international condemnation of outrageous behavior by Israel. We can and must do better than this.

To regain both credibility and international respect, we Americans must, of course, restore the vigor of our constitutional democracy and its respect for civil liberties. But that in itself will be far from enough. The willingness of others to follow us in the past did not derive from our ability to intimidate or coerce them. Instead, we inspired the world with our vision and our example. Now, we know what we're against. But what are we for? Whatever happened to American optimism and idealism? To be able to lead the world again we must once again exemplify aspirations for a higher standard of freedom and justice at home and abroad. We cannot compel – but must persuade – others to work with us. And to lead a team, we must rediscover how to be a team player.

When President Roosevelt first proposed what became the United Nations, he envisaged a concert of powers that could foster a harmonious and largely peaceful world order, increasingly free of both want and fear, and respectful of individual and collective rights as well as of the cultural diversity of humankind. That vision remains both relevant and compelling. The bipolar struggles of the Cold War strangled it at birth. But the Cold War is over and the world that is emerging, though it contains multiple strategic geometries, needs a common architecture that can flexibly address its problems and sustain its peace and development. As currently constituted, the UN does not serve these fundamental purposes well. It is time to admit that it has lost the confidence of many of its members. We need to update it, as we must reform other institutions – like the G-7, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund – to be able to manage the challenges before us. And if we cannot bring these organizations into alignment with emerging realities, we should not shrink from starting over by creating alternatives to them.

Like our own country, the UN was founded on the belief that liberty, tranquility, and the general welfare are best secured by the rule of law – universal adherence to rules that provide predictable order and protect the weak against the

strong. That concept, like parliamentary democracy, is a unique contribution of Western culture to global civilization. It has been embraced, though not yet implemented, almost everywhere. Achieving its implementation and embedding it firmly in the structure of the emerging world order should be at the very top of our foreign policy agenda. It must be at the center of any reaffirmation of the UN's purposes through its reform or replacement.

But, if America and Europe, which originated and sponsored the idea of a tolerant, rule-bound international order as an alternative to the law of the jungle, are no longer united in support of the rule of law, it is unlikely to survive, still less to prevail as the international system evolves. And as European arrest warrants for American agents engaged in officially sanctioned kidnappings and torture attest, the Atlantic community is now seriously divided. If we Americans renew our adherence to the rule of law at home, as I believe we must, we would find the European Union ready to work closely with us in promoting it abroad. Nowhere has the utility of consultative processes been more convincingly demonstrated than in Europe, where a democratic common political culture respectful of human rights has spread across a continent. A club of democracies like the G-7 may now be unable to manage the world's economy, but regular meetings at the summit of such a grouping could have a major impact on the world's political evolution if they focused on harmonizing and promoting global standards for the rule of law and parliamentary democracy. The groundwork for such an effort is already in place.

Finding common ground with Europe and Japan will also be key to curing our default on leadership with respect to the climate. China is about to overtake the United States as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. The prerequisite for persuading China to behave responsibly is to join the other industrial democracies in behaving responsibly ourselves. Only then can we insist that China and other newly industrializing nations do likewise.

Let me conclude. I have been talking about how to reassert our leadership on the global level. But, in the end, we face the paradox that the world, though globalized to an unprecedented degree, is made up of a series of regions in which regional powers increasingly call the shots. And all diplomacy, like all politics, is local. We face perplexing choices in every region of the world. But the policies that have brought discredit upon us center on one region – the Middle East. To restore our reputation we must correct these policies. And the problem of terrorism that now bedevils us has its origins in one region – the Middle East. To end this terrorism we must address the issues in the region that give rise to it.

Principal among these is the brutal oppression of the Palestinians by an Israeli occupation that is about to mark its fortieth anniversary and shows no sign of ending. Arab identification with Palestinian suffering, once variable in its intensity, is now total. American identification with Israeli policy has also become total. Those in the region and beyond it who detest Israeli behavior, which is to say almost everyone, now naturally extend their loathing to Americans. This has had the effect of universalizing anti-Americanism, legitimizing radical Islamism, and gaining Iran a

foothold among Sunni as well as Shiite Arabs. For its part, Israel no longer even pretends to seek peace with the Palestinians; it strives instead to pacify them. Palestinian retaliation against this policy is as likely to be directed against Israel's American backers as against Israel itself. Under the circumstances, such retaliation – whatever form it takes – will have the support or at least the sympathy of most people in the region and many outside it. This makes the long-term escalation of terrorism against the United States a certainty, not a matter of conjecture.

The Palestine problem cannot be solved by the use of force; it requires much more than the diplomacy-free foreign policy we have practiced since 9/11. Israel is not only not managing this problem; it is severely aggravating it. Denial born of political correctness will not cure this fact. Israel has shown – not surprisingly – that, if we offer nothing but unquestioning support and political protection for whatever it does, it will feel no incentive to pay attention to either our interests or our advice. Hamas is showing that if we offer it nothing but unreasoning hostility and condemnation, it will only stiffen its position and seek allies among our enemies. In both cases, we forfeit our influence for no gain.

There will be no negotiation between Israelis and Palestinians, no peace, and no reconciliation between them – and there will be no reduction in anti-American terrorism – until we have the courage to act on our interests. These are not the same as those of any party in the region, including Israel,

and we must talk with all parties, whatever we think of them or their means of struggle. Refusal to reason with those whose actions threaten injury to oneself, one's friends, and one's interests is foolish, feckless, and self-defeating. That is why it is past time for an active and honest discussion with both Israel and the government Palestinians have elected, which – in an irony that escapes few abroad – is the only democratically elected government in the Arab world.

But to restore our reputation in the region and the world, given all that has happened, and to eliminate terrorism against Americans, it is no longer enough just to go through the motions of trying to make peace between Israelis and Arabs. We must succeed in actually doing so. Nothing should be a more urgent task for American diplomacy.

Thank you.

[Scofflaw: One who habitually violates the law or fails to answer court summonses; a contemptuous law violator; a person who flouts the law, esp. one who fails to pay fines owed; a person who flouts rules, conventions, or accepted practices.]

John Maynard Keynes, "National Self-Sufficiency" First Finlay Lecture, University College Dublin, April 19, 1933

I

I was brought up, like most Englishmen, to respect free trade not only as an economic doctrine which a rational and instructed person could not doubt, but almost as a part of the moral law. I regarded ordinary departures from it as being at the same time an imbecility and an outrage. I thought England's unshakable free trade convictions, maintained for nearly a hundred years, to be both the explanation before man and the justification before Heaven of her economic supremacy. As lately as 1923 I was writing that free trade was based on fundamental "truths" which, stated with their due qualifications, no one can dispute who is capable of understanding the meaning of the words.

Looking again to-day at the statements of these fundamental truths which I then gave, I do not find myself disputing them. Yet the orientation of my mind is changed; and I share this change of mind with many others. Partly, indeed my background of economic theory is modified; I should not charge Mr. Baldwin, as I did then, with being "a victim of the Protectionist fallacy in its crudest form" because he believed that, in the existing conditions, a tariff might do something to diminish British unemployment. But mainly I attribute my change of outlook to something else – to my hopes and fears and preoccupations, along with those of many or most, I believe, of this generation throughout the world, being different from what they were. It is a long business to shuffle out of the mental habits of the pre-war nineteenth-century

world. It is astonishing what a bundle of obsolete habiliments one's mind drags round even after the centre of consciousness has been shifted. But to-day at last, one-third of the way through the twentieth century, we are most of us escaping from the nineteenth; and by the time we reach its mid point, it may be that our habits of mind and what we care about will be as different from nineteenth-century methods and values as each other century's has been from its predecessor's.

So here to-day, delivering the first of a series of lectures, which will have many successors but no predecessor, delivering it in Ireland, which has lifted a lively foot out of its bogs to become a centre of economic experiment and stands almost as remote from English nineteenth century Liberalism as Communist Russia or Fascist Italy or the blond beasts in Germany, — I feel it appropriate to attempt some sort of a stocktaking, of an analysis, of a diagnosis to discover in what this change of mind essentially consists, and finally to inquire whether, in the confusion of mind which still envelops this new-found enthusiasm of change, we may not be running an unnecessary risk of pouring out with the slops and the swill some pearls of characteristic nineteenth century wisdom.

What did the nineteenth-century free traders, who were among the most idealistic and disinterested of men, believe that they were accomplishing?

They believed – and perhaps it is fair to put this first – that they were being perfectly sensible, that they alone of men were

clear-sighted, and that the policies which sought to interfere with the ideal international division of labour were always the offspring of ignorance out of self-interest.

In the second place, they believed that they were solving the problem of poverty, and solving it for the world as a whole, by putting to their best uses, like a good housekeeper, the world's resources and abilities.

They believed, further, that they were serving, not merely the survival of the economically fittest, but the great cause of liberty, of freedom for personal initiative and individual gift, the cause of inventive art and the glorious fertility of the untrammelled mind against the forces of privilege and monopoly and obsolescence.

They believed, finally, that they were the friends and assurers of peace and international concord and economic justice between nations and the diffusers of the benefits of progress.

And if to the poet of that age there sometimes came strange desires to wander far away where never comes the trader and catch the wild goat by the hair, there came also with full assurance the comfortable reaction—

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,

Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

II

What fault have we to find with this? Taking it at its surface value—none. Yet we are not, many of us, content with it as a working political theory. What is wrong? We shall discover the source of our doubts, I think, not through a frontal attack, but by perambulation—by wandering round a different way to find the place of our political heart's desire.

To begin with the question of peace. We are pacifist today with so much strength of conviction that, if the economic internationalist could win this point, he would soon recapture our support. But it does not now seem obvious that a great concentration of national effort on the capture of foreign trade, that the penetration of a country's economic structure by the resources and the influence of foreign capitalists, and that a close dependence of our own economic life on the fluctuating economic policies of foreign countries are safeguards and assurances of international peace. It is easier, in the light of experience and foresight, to argue quite the contrary. The protection of a country's existing foreign interests, the capture of new markets, the progress of economic imperialism—these are a scarcely avoidable part of a scheme of things which aims at the maximum of international specialization and at the maximum geographical diffusion of capital wherever its seat of ownership. Advisable domestic policies might often be easier to compass, if the phenomenon known as "the flight of capital" could be ruled out. The divorce between ownership and the real responsibility of management is serious within a country, when, as a result of joint stock enterprise, ownership is broken up among innumerable individuals who buy their interest to-day and sell it to-morrow and lack altogether both knowledge and responsibility towards what they momentarily own. But when the same principle is applied internationally, it is, in times of stress, intolerable—I am irresponsible towards what I own and those who operate what I own are irresponsible towards me. There may be some financial calculation which shows it to be advantageous that my savings should be invested in whatever quarter of the habitable globe shows the greatest marginal efficiency of capital or the highest rate of interest. But experience is accumulating that remoteness between ownership and operation—what is historically symbolised for you in Ireland by absentee landlordism—is an evil in the

relations among men, likely or certain in the long run to set up strains and enmities which will bring to nought the financial calculation.

Take as an example the relations between England and Ireland. The fact that the economic interests of the two countries have been for generations closely intertwined has been no occasion or guarantee of peace. It may be true, I believe it is, that a large part of these economic relations are of such great economic advantage to both countries that it would be most foolish recklessly to disrupt them. But if you owed us no money, if we had never owned your land, if the exchange of goods were on a scale which made the question one of minor importance to the producers of both countries, it would be much easier to be friends. I sympathize, therefore, with those who would minimize, rather than with those who would maximize, economic entanglement among nations. Ideas, knowledge, science, hospitality, travel—these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be homespun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible, and, above all, let finance be primarily national. Yet, at the same time, those who seek to disembarass a country of its entanglements should be very slow and wary. It should not be a matter of tearing up roots but of slowly training a plant to grow in a different direction.

For these strong reasons, therefore, I am inclined to the belief that, after the transition is accomplished, a greater measure of national self-sufficiency and economic isolation among countries than existed in 1914 may tend to serve the cause of peace, rather than otherwise. At any rate, the age of economic internationalism was not particularly successful in avoiding war; and if its friends retort, that the imperfection of its success never gave it a fair chance, it is reasonable to point out that a greater success is scarcely probable in the coming years.

Let us turn from these questions of doubtful judgment, where each of us will remain entitled to his own opinion, to a matter more purely economic. In the nineteenth century the economic internationalist could probably claim with justice that his policy was tending to the world's great enrichment, that it was promoting economic progress, and that its reversal would have seriously impoverished both ourselves and our neighbours. This raises a question of balance between economic and non-economic advantage which is never easily decided. Poverty is a great evil; and economic advantage is a real good, not to be sacrificed to alternative real goods unless it is clearly of an inferior weight. I am ready to believe that in the nineteenth century two sets of conditions existed which caused the advantages of economic internationalism to outweigh disadvantages of a different kind. At a time when wholesale migrations were populating new continents, it was natural that the men should carry with them into the New Worlds the material fruits of the technique of the Old, embodying the savings of those who were sending them. The investment of British savings in rails and rolling stock to be installed by British engineers to carry British emigrants to new fields and pastures, the fruits of which they would return in due proportion to those whose frugality had made these things possible, was not economic internationalism remotely resembling in its essence the part ownership of the A.E.G. of Germany by a speculator in Chicago, or of the municipal improvements of Rio de Janeiro by an English spinster. Yet it was the type of organization necessary to facilitate the former which has eventually ended up in the latter. In the second place, at a time when there were enormous differences in degree in the industrialization and opportunities for technical training in different countries, the advantages of a high degree of national specialization were very considerable.

But I am not persuaded that the economic advantages of the international division of labour to-day are at all comparable with what they were. I must not be understood to carry my argument beyond a certain point. A considerable degree of international specialization is necessary in a rational world in all cases where it is dictated by wide differences of climate, natural resources, native aptitudes, level of culture and density of population. But over an increasingly wide range of industrial products, and perhaps of agricultural products also, I have become doubtful whether the economic loss of national self-sufficiency is great enough to outweigh the other advantages of gradually bringing the product and the consumer within the ambit of the same national, economic, and financial organization. Experience accumulates to prove that most modern processes of mass production can be performed in most countries and climates with almost equal efficiency. Moreover, with greater wealth, both primary and manufactured products play a smaller relative part in the national economy compared with houses, personal services, and local amenities, which are not equally available for international exchange; with the result that a moderate increase in the real cost of primary and manufactured products consequent on greater national self-sufficiency may cease to be of serious consequence when weighed in the balance against advantages of a different kind. National self-sufficiency, in short, though it costs something, may be becoming a luxury which we can afford, if we happen to want it.

III

Are there sufficient good reasons why we may happen to want it? There are many friends of mine, nurtured in the old school and reasonably offended by the waste and economic loss attendant on contemporary economic nationalism in being, to whom the tendency of these remarks will be pain and grief. Yet let me try to indicate to them in terms with which they may sympathize the reasons which I think I see.

The decadent international but individualistic capitalism, in the hands of which we found ourselves after the war, is not a success. It is not intelligent, it is not beautiful, it is not just, it is not virtuous—and it doesn't deliver the goods. In short, we dislike it, and we are beginning to despise it. But when we wonder what to put in its place, we are extremely perplexed.

Each year it becomes more obvious that the world is embarking on a variety of politico-economic experiments, and that different types of experiment appeal to different national temperaments and historical environments. The nineteenth-century free trader's economic internationalism assumed that the whole world was, or would be, organized on a basis of private competitive capitalism and of the freedom of private contract inviolably protected by the sanctions of law—in various phases, of course, of complexity and development, but conforming to a uniform type which it would be the general object to perfect and certainly not to destroy. Nineteenth-century protectionism was a blot upon the efficiency and good sense of this scheme of things, but it did not modify the general presumption as to the fundamental characteristics of economic society.

But to-day one country after another abandons these presumptions. Russia is still alone in her particular experiment, but no longer alone in her abandonment of the old presumptions. Italy, Ireland, Germany have cast their eyes, or are casting them, towards new modes of political economy. Many more countries after them, I predict, will seek, one by one, after new economic goods. Even countries such as Great Britain and the United States, which still conform par excellence to the old model, are striving,

under the surface, after a new economic plan. We do not know what will be the outcome. We are—all of us, I expect—about to make many mistakes. No one can tell which of the new systems will prove itself best.

But the point for my present discussion is this. We each have our own fancy. Not believing that we are saved already, we each should like to have a try at working out our own salvation. We do not wish, therefore, to be at the mercy of world forces working out, or trying to work out, some uniform equilibrium according to the ideal principles, if they can be called such, of *laissez-faire* capitalism. There are still those who cling to the old ideas, but in no country of the world to-day can they be reckoned as a serious force. We wish—for the time at least and so long as the present transitional, experimental phase endures—to be our own masters, and to be as free as we can make ourselves from the interferences of the outside world.

Thus, regarded from this point of view, the policy of an increased national self-sufficiency is to be considered, not as an ideal in itself, but as directed to the creation of an environment in which other ideals can be safely and conveniently pursued.

Let me give as dry an illustration of this as I can devise, chosen because it is connected with ideas with which recently my own mind has been largely preoccupied. In matters of economic detail, as distinct from the central controls, I am in favour of retaining as much private judgment and initiative and enterprise as possible. But I have become convinced that the retention of the structure of private enterprise is incompatible with that degree of material well-being to which our technical advancement entitles us, unless the rate of interest falls to a much lower figure than is likely to come about by natural forces operating on the old lines. Indeed, the transformation of society, which I preferably envisage, may require a reduction in the rate of interest towards vanishing point within the next thirty years. But under a system by which the rate of interest finds a uniform level, after allowing for risk and the like, throughout the world under the operation of normal financial forces, this is most unlikely to occur. Thus for a complexity of reasons, which I cannot elaborate in this place, economic internationalism embracing the free movement of capital and of loanable funds as well as of traded goods may condemn my own country for a generation to come to a much lower degree of material prosperity than could be attained under a different system.

But this is merely an illustration. It is my central contention that there is no prospect for the next generation of a uniformity of economic system throughout the world, such as existed, broadly speaking, during the nineteenth century; that we all need to be as free as possible of interference from economic changes elsewhere, in order to make our own favourite experiments towards the ideal social republic of the future; and that a deliberate movement towards greater national self-sufficiency and economic isolation will make our task easier, in so far as it can be accomplished without excessive economic cost.

IV

There is one more explanation, I think, of the re-orientation of our minds. The nineteenth century carried to extravagant lengths the criterion of what one can call for short "the financial results," as a test of the advisability of any course of action sponsored by private or by collective action. The whole conduct of life was made into a sort of parody of an accountant's nightmare. Instead of using their vastly increased material and technical resources to build a wonder city, the men of the nineteenth century built slums; and they thought it right and advisable to build slums because

slums, on the test of private enterprise, "paid," whereas the wonder city would, they thought, have been an act of foolish extravagance, which would, in the imbecile idiom of the financial fashion, have "mortgaged the future"—though how the construction to-day of great and glorious works can impoverish the future, no man can see until his mind is beset by false analogies from an irrelevant accountancy. Even to-day I spend my time—half vainly, but also, I must admit, half successfully—in trying to persuade my countrymen that the nation as a whole will assuredly be richer if unemployed men and machines are used to build much needed houses than if they are supported in idleness. For the minds of this generation are still so beclouded by bogus calculations that they distrust conclusions which should be obvious, out of a reliance on a system of financial accounting which casts doubt on whether such an operation will "pay." We have to remain poor because it does not "pay" to be rich. We have to live in hovels, not because we cannot build palaces but because we cannot "afford" them.

The same rule of self-destructive financial calculation governs every walk of life. We destroy the beauty of the countryside because the unappropriated splendours of nature have no economic value. We are capable of shutting off the sun and the stars because they do not pay a dividend. London is one of the richest cities in the history of civilization, but it cannot "afford" the highest standards of achievement of which its own living citizens are capable, because they do not "pay."

If I had responsibility for the Government of Ireland to-day, I should most deliberately set out to make Dublin, within its appropriate limits of scale, a splendid city fully endowed with all the appurtenances of art and civilization on the highest standards of which its citizens were individually capable, convinced that what I could create, I could afford—and believing that money thus spent not only would be better than any dole but would make unnecessary any dole. For with what we have spent on the dole in England since the war we could have made our cities the greatest works of man in the world.

Or again, we have until recently conceived it a moral duty to ruin the tillers of the soil and destroy the age-long human traditions attendant on husbandry, if we could get a loaf of bread thereby a tenth of a penny cheaper. There was nothing which it was not our duty to sacrifice to this Moloch and Mammon in one; for we faithfully believed that the worship of these monsters would overcome the evil of poverty and lead the next generation safely and comfortably, on the back of compound interest, into economic peace.

To-day we suffer disillusion, not because we are poorer than we were—on the contrary, even to-day we enjoy, in Great Britain at least, a higher standard of life than at any previous period—but because other values seem to have been sacrificed and because they seem to have been sacrificed unnecessarily, inasmuch as our economic system is not, in fact, enabling us to exploit to the utmost the possibilities for economic wealth afforded by the progress of our technique, but falls far short of this, leading us to feel that we might as well have used up the margin in more satisfying ways.

But once we allow ourselves to be disobedient to the test of an accountant's profit, we have begun to change our civilization. And we need to do so very warily, cautiously, and self-consciously. For there is a wide field of human activity where we shall be wise to retain the usual pecuniary tests. It is the state, rather than the individual, which needs to change its criterion. It is the conception of the Secretary of the Treasury as the chairman of a sort of joint stock company which has to be discarded. Now, if the functions and purposes of the state are to be thus enlarged,

the decision as to what, broadly speaking, shall be produced within the nation and what shall be exchanged with abroad, must stand high among the objects of policy.

V

From these reflections on the proper purposes of the state, I return to the world of contemporary politics. Having sought to understand and to do full justice to the ideas which underlie the urge felt by so many countries to-day towards greater national self-sufficiency, we have to consider with care whether in practice we are not too easily discarding much of value which the nineteenth century achieved. In those countries where the advocates of national self-sufficiency have attained power, it appears to my judgment that, without exception, many foolish things are being done. Mussolini, perhaps, is acquiring wisdom teeth. But Russia to-day exhibits the worst example which the world, perhaps, has ever seen, of administrative incompetence and of the sacrifice of almost everything that makes life worth living to wooden heads. Germany is at the mercy of unchained irresponsibles—though it is too soon to judge her.

Ireland?—well I know so little about Ireland that it ought to be no effort for me to be discreet! Let me, nevertheless, risk a few rash sentences, asking beforehand the pardon of my readers for an incursion for which I have but too little warrant.

I feel myself greatly divided in my sympathies. It will be obvious from what I have just said that, if I were an Irishman, I should find much to attract me in the economic outlook of your present government towards greater self-sufficiency. But as a practical man and as one who considers poverty and insecurity to be great evils, I should wish to be first satisfied on two matters.

My first question is fundamental. I should ask if Ireland—above all if the Free State—is a large enough unit geographically, with sufficiently diversified natural resources, for more than a very modest measure of national self-sufficiency to be feasible without a disastrous reduction in a standard of life which is already none too high. I believe, I should answer that it would be an act of high wisdom on the part of the Irish to enter into an economic arrangement with England which would, within appropriate limits, retain for Ireland her traditional British markets against mutual advantages for British producers within the wide field which for long to come will not interfere with Ireland's own developments. I should see nothing in this the slightest degree derogatory to her political and cultural autonomy. I should look on it merely as an act of commonsense for the preservation of the standard of life of the Irish, at a level which would alone make possible the country's new political and cultural life. To-day it is not too late to accomplish this and it would be in the interests of both countries. But with each delay it will be more difficult, inasmuch as the exclusion of Irish agricultural produce suits extremely the present trend of British agricultural policy.

But if for a complexity of reasons, good or bad, idealistic or political, I were to reject this, and were deliberately to decide to work out the economic destiny of the country on other lines, having made, so to speak, my moral decision, I should sit down to the problem with the best brains I could command to work out a slow series of experiments. No one has a right to gamble with the resources of a people by going blindly into technical changes imperfectly understood. Russia stands before us as an awful example of what ruin and desolation ill-judging and obstinate experimentation can work in an agricultural people, so that men are actually starving to-day in what was a little time ago one of the greatest, food-producing areas of the world. Agricultural processes have deep roots, work themselves out slowly, are resistant

to change and disobedient to administrative order, and, yet are frail and delicate, so that when they have suffered injury they are not easily restored. What a wound would have been inflicted on the fair face of Ireland if within two or three years her rich pastures were to be ploughed up and the result were to be a fiasco! Could a man forgive himself for such a thing if he had acted, before ascertained knowledge and careful experiment, had first shown beyond reasonable doubt that the project was a practicable success—I do not say at no cost—but at no undue cost.

Meanwhile those countries which maintain or are adopting straightforward protectionism of the old-fashioned type, refurbished with the addition of a few of the new plan quotas, are doing many things incapable of rational defence. Thus, if the World Economic Conference achieves a mutual reduction of tariffs and prepares the way for regional agreements, it will be matter for sincere applause. For I must not be supposed to be endorsing all those things which are being done in the political world to-day in the name of economic nationalism. Far from it. But I bring my criticisms to bear, as one whose heart is friendly and sympathetic to the desperate experiments of the contemporary world, who wishes them well and would like them to succeed, who has his own experiments in view, and who in the last resort prefers anything on earth to what the financial reports are wont to call "the best opinion in Wall Street." And I seek to point out that the world towards which we are uneasily moving is quite different from the ideal economic internationalism of our fathers, and that contemporary policies must not be judged on the maxims of that former faith.

I see three outstanding dangers in economic nationalism and in the movements towards national self-sufficiency, imperilling their success.

The first is Silliness—the silliness of the doctrinaire. It is nothing strange to discover this in movements which have passed somewhat suddenly from the phase of midnight high-flown talk into the field of action. We do not distinguish, at first, between the colour of the rhetoric with which we have won a people's assent and the dull substance of the truth of our message. There is nothing insincere in the transition. Words ought to be a little wild—for they are the assault of thoughts upon the unthinking. But when the seats of power and authority have been attained, there should be no more poetic licence.

We have, therefore, to count the cost down to the penny which our rhetoric has despised. An experimental society has need to be far more efficient than an old-established one, if it is to survive safely. It will need all its economic margin for its own proper purposes, and can afford to give nothing away to soft-headedness or doctrinaire impracticability. When a doctrinaire proceeds to action, he must, so to speak, forget his doctrine. For those who in action remember the letter will probably lose what they are seeking.

The second danger—and a worse danger than silliness—is Haste. Paul Valéry's aphorism is worth quoting: "Political conflicts distort and disturb the people's sense of distinction between matters of importance and matters of urgency." The economic transition of a society is a thing to be accomplished slowly. What I have been discussing is not a sudden revolution, but the direction of secular trend. We have a fearful example in Russia to-day of the evils of insane and unnecessary haste. The sacrifices and losses of transition will be vastly greater if the pace is forced. I do not believe in the inevitability of gradualness, but I do believe in gradualness. This is, above all, true of a transition towards greater national self-sufficiency and a planned domestic economy. For it is of the nature of economic processes to be rooted in time. A rapid transition will involve so much pure destruction of wealth

that the new state of affairs will be, at first, far worse than the old; and the grand experiment will be discredited. For men judge remorselessly by results, and by early results, too.

The third risk, and the worst risk of all three, is Intolerance and the stifling of instructed criticism. The new movements have usually come into power through a phase of violence or quasi-violence. They have not convinced their opponents; they have downed them. It is the modern method—but very disastrous, I am still old-fashioned enough to believe—to depend on propaganda and to seize the organs of opinion; it is thought to be clever and useful to fossilize thought and to use all the forces of authority to paralyze the play of mind on mind. For those who have found it necessary to employ all methods whatever to attain power, it is a serious temptation to continue to use for the task of construction the same dangerous tools which wrought the preliminary house-breaking.

Russia again furnishes us with an example of the crushing blunders which a régime makes when it has exempted itself from criticism. The explanation of the incompetence with which wars are always conducted on both sides may be found in the comparative exemption from criticism which the military hierarchy affords to the high command. I have no excessive admiration for politicians, but, brought up as they are in the very breath of criticism, how much superior they are to the soldiers! Revolutions only succeed because they are conducted by politicians against soldiers. Paradox though it be—who ever heard of a successful revolution conducted by soldiers against politicians? But we all hate criticism. Nothing but rooted principle will cause us willingly to expose ourselves to it.

Yet the new economic modes, towards which we are blundering, are, in the essence of their nature, experiments. We have no clear idea laid up in our minds beforehand of exactly what we want. We shall discover it as we move along, and we shall have to mould our material in accordance with our experience. Now for this process bold, free, and remorseless criticism is a sine qua non of ultimate success. We heed the collaboration of all the bright spirits of the age. Stalin has eliminated every independent, critical mind, even those sympathetic in general outlook. He has produced an environment in which the processes of mind are atrophied. The soft convolutions of the brain are turned to wood. The multiplied bray of the loud-speaker replaces the soft inflections of the human voice. The bleat of propaganda bores even the birds and the beasts of the field into stupefaction. Let Stalin be a terrifying example to all who seek to make experiments. If not, I, at any rate, will soon be back again in my old nineteenth-century ideals, where the play of mind on mind created for us the inheritance we to-day, enriched by what our fathers procured for us, are seeking to divert to our own appropriate purposes.

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Israel's bombardment of Gaza killed over 1,300 Palestinians, a third of them children. Thousands have been wounded. Many victims had been taking refuge in clearly marked UN facilities.

This assault came in the wake of years of economic blockade by Israel. This blockade, which is illegal under International Humanitarian Law, has destroyed the Gazan economy and condemned its population to poverty. According to a World Bank report last September, "98% of Gaza's industrial operations are now inactive".

The most recent attack on Gaza is only the latest phase in Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people and appropriation of their land.

Israel has never declared its borders. Instead, it has continuously expanded at the expense of the Palestinians. In 1948, it took over 78% of Palestine, an area much larger than that suggested for a Jewish state by the UN General Assembly in 1947. Contrary to International Law, Israel expelled over 750,000 Palestinians from their homes. These refugees and their descendants, who now number millions, are still dispersed throughout the region. They have the right, under International Law, to return to their homes. This right has been underlined by the UN General Assembly many times, starting with Resolution 194 in 1948.

In 1967, Israel occupied the remaining 22% of Palestine: the West Bank and Gaza. Contrary to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel has built, and continues to build, settlements in these occupied territories. Today, nearly 500,000 Israeli settlers live in the illegal settlements in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), and the number grows daily as Israel expands its settler programme.

Israel has resisted pressure from the international community to abide by the human rights provisions of International Law. It has refused to comply with UN Security Council demands to cease building settlements and remove those it has built (Resolutions 446, 452 and 465) and to reverse its illegal annexation of East Jerusalem (252, 267, 271, 298, 476 and 478). Since September 2000, over 5,000 Palestinians, almost 1,000 of them minors, have been killed by the Israeli military.

11,000 Palestinians, including hundreds of minors, languish in Israel jails. Hundreds are detained without trial. In addition, Israel is breaking international law by imprisoning them outside the occupied territories, thereby making it almost impossible for their families to visit them. Every year, hundreds of Palestinian homes are demolished. The Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza lives imprisoned by walls, barriers and checkpoints that prevent or impede access to shops, schools, workplaces, hospitals and places of worship. They are subjected to restrictions of every kind and to daily ritual humiliation at the hands of occupation soldiers and checkpoint guards.

Invasion, occupation and plantation of their land is the reality that Palestinians have faced for decades and still face on a daily basis, as their country is reduced remorselessly. Unless, and until, this Israeli aggression is halted, and the democratic rights of the Palestinian people are vindicated, there will be no justice or peace in the Middle East. Israel's 40-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza must be ended.

The occupation can end if political and economic pressure is placed on Israel by the international community. Recognizing this, the Palestinian people continually call on the international community to intervene.

We, the signatories, call for the following:

- The Irish Government to cease its purchase of Israeli military products and services and call publicly for an arms embargo against Israel.
- The Irish Government to demand publicly that Israel reverse its settlement construction, illegal occupation and annexation of land in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions and to use its influence in international fora to bring this about.
- The Irish Government to demand publicly that the Euro-Med Agreement under which Israel has privileged access to the EU market be suspended until Israel complies with International Law.
- The Irish Government to veto any proposed upgrade in EU relations with Israel.
- The Irish people to boycott all Israeli goods and services until Israel abides by international Law.

PALESTINIAN LOSS OF LAND 1946 - 2009



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