



NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

Irish-Soviet diplomatic and friendship relations, 1919-80

by

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Abstract

This thesis offers a contribution to Irish historiography with a study of Ireland's diplomatic and friendship relations with the Soviet Union in the 'short Soviet twentieth-century'. To date no such study has been produced. The study has as its central focus developments surrounding the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two states in 1973, and considers aspects of how those relations evolved down to 1980. To provide an understanding of the legacy of relations prior to formalisation of relations, the study commences with a survey of the principal diplomatic contacts from 1919 to 1972, including those that took place in America between representatives of the nascent Irish republic and Soviet Russia during the revolutionary period of 1919-21, contacts between the Irish Free State and the Soviet Union at the League of Nations in the mid-1930s, and between the Republic of Ireland and the Soviet Union at the United Nations from 1955 to 1972. It proceeds to examine in more detail events surrounding the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1973, and experiences during the first six years at the Irish embassy to Moscow, and at the Soviet embassy to Dublin. To gain insights from a wider societal perspective with oral and private archival evidence, an account of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society – a unique friendship organisation located at a conjunction of informational, cultural, academic, trade union and tourist affairs in Irish-Soviet relations – is next presented. The final two areas of study draw upon archival records of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs for the years 1974-80, which have only recently been made available at the National Archives of Ireland. Drawing in the main on the central registry series of files containing political reports sent to Dublin by Ireland's first ambassador to Moscow, Dr Edward Brennan, the penultimate focus is upon the 'island of Ireland' elements of those reports. Lastly, the thesis discusses Ireland's second relationship with the Soviet Union, as mediated through European Political Cooperation (E.P.C.), a parallel framework of the European Economic Community. This discussion is principally facilitated by the records of Ireland's involvement in a confidential subgroup of E.P.C. – the Eastern Europe Working Group – which was dedicated to an ongoing compilation of studies of the Soviet Union and its fellow member states of COMECON.

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my own work.

Signed: _____ (Candidate)

Date: _____

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Abbreviations, acronyms, and Russianisms

Abbreviation

C.I.É.	Córas Iompar Éireann, the Irish national transport network
C.N.D.	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Comintern	The third international congress of communist parties founded by the Bolsheviks in March, 1919.
C.P.G.B.	Communist Party of Great Britain
C.P.I.	Communist Party of Ireland
C.P.N.I.	Communist Party of Northern Ireland
C.P.S.U.	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
C.S.C.E.	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the organisation for the promotion of cooperation between the socialist economies of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania and Vietnam
COREU	CORrespondence EUropéenne, communication system between foreign ministries of E.E.C. member states
D.D.A.	Dublin Diocesan Archives (Roman Catholic archdiocese of Dublin)
D.E.A.	Department for External Affairs, Dublin (changed to Department for Foreign Affairs, 3 March 1971)
D.F.A.	Department of Foreign Affairs (Dublin)
D.T.	Department of the Taoiseach (Dublin)
E.E.C.	European Economic Community
E.E.W.G.	Eastern Europe Working Group
E.P.C.	European Political Cooperation
F.C.O.	(British) Foreign and Commonwealth Office
F.R.G.	Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany

G.D.R.	German Democratic Republic
I.F.S.R.	Irish Friends of Soviet Russia
I.O.C.	International Olympic Committee
I.R.A.	Irish Republican Army
I.R.B.	Irish Republican Brotherhood
I.R.D.	Information Research Department of the British Foreign Office
I.S.M.	Irish Sovereignty Movement
I.T.G.W.U.	Irish Transport and General Workers' Union
I.W.L.	Irish Workers' League
I.W.P.	Irish Workers' Party
<i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i>	<i>Red Star</i> , the Soviet armed forces' newspaper
N.K.V.D.	<i>Narodny Komissariat Vnutrennykh Del</i> – People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs
<i>Narkomindel</i>	<i>Narodny Komissariat Inostrannykh Del</i> – People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs
N.A.I.	National Archives of Ireland
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
<i>Novoe Vremya</i>	<i>New Times</i>
N.U.I.M.	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
O.C.I.	Olympic Council of Ireland
<i>Oblast</i>	An administrative region of the Soviet Union
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
P.C.E.	<i>Partido Comunista de España</i> , Communist Party of Spain

P.C.F.	<i>Parti communiste français</i> , French Communist Party
P.C.I.	<i>Partito Comunista Italiano</i> , Italian Communist Party
Provisional I.R.A.	Provisional Irish Republican Army
<i>Processus européen</i>	The process of the development of the E.E.C. towards a European union
Q.U.B.	Queen's University, Belfast
R.I.A.	Royal Irish Academy
R.S.F.S.R.	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
R.T.É.	Raidió Teilifís Éireann, Ireland's national television and radio public broadcaster
R.U.C.	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitations Talks
S.A.S.	Special Air Services
S.E.A.	Single European Act/Single Act
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin
T.D.	Teachta Dála, an elected member of Dáil Éireann
T.N.A.	The National Archives, Kew
TASS	<i>Telegrafnoye Agentstvo Sovetskovo Soyuz</i> a – the central Soviet state news agency
U.N.	United Nations
U.P.D.K.	Office of Services to the Diplomatic Corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R.
U.S.A.	United States of America
U.S.S.R.	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and as more commonly used, the Soviet Union

Introduction

This study investigates aspects of Irish-Soviet diplomatic and friendship relations after 1919, with a particular focus upon developments surrounding the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Republic of Ireland and the Soviet Union in the 1970s. Chapter one is a survey of the principal diplomatic interconnections from 1919 to 1972, including those that took place in America between representatives of the nascent Irish republic (as proclaimed by the first dáil in 1918) and Soviet Russia during the years of 1919-21. It examines diplomatic contacts, including the involvement of President Eamon de Valera of the Irish Free State and the foreign minister of the U.S.S.R., Maxim Litvinov, at the League of Nations in 1934; and a series of interactions at the United Nations – after the Republic of Ireland finally gained membership in 1955 – up until 1972, including those initiated by external affairs ministers Frank Aiken and Dr Patrick Hillery. Chapter two proceeds to examine in more detail the events surrounding the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1973, and the developments at the new embassies in Dublin and Moscow until 1980. To gain insights from a wider societal perspective, an account of the five Irish-Soviet friendship organisations that were active in Ireland during ‘short Soviet twentieth-century’,¹ especially the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society and the Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society, are presented in chapter three. The final two chapters are largely based upon newly-available records of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin (D.F.A.), at the National Archives of Ireland (N.A.I.). Chapter four, drawing on the central register series of files containing political reports (P.R.s) sent to Dublin by Ireland’s first ambassador to Moscow, Dr Edward Brennan, focuses upon the ‘island of Ireland’ elements of his reports for the years 1974-80. The chapter discusses the ambassador’s accounts of the Soviet media’s coverage of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and of the Soviet Union’s view of the theory and practice of the rise of Eurocommunism in western Europe – including the input from Irish communists. Chapter five investigates Ireland’s second relationship with the Soviet Union, that which took place through European Political Cooperation (E.P.C.), a parallel foreign policy framework of the European Economic Community (E.E.C.). This final chapter is principally facilitated by

¹ This phrase is adapted from the title of Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of extremes: the short twentieth-century, 1914-1991* (London, 2002), p. ix.

the records of Ireland's involvement in what was a confidential subgroup of E.P.C., the Eastern Europe Working Group (E.E.W.G.). To bring its findings towards a close, the chapter looks at the implications of the Supreme Court of Ireland's decision in relation to the Single European Act of 1987 for the conduct from 1974 of Irish foreign policy within E.P.C., with regard to the Soviet Union.

It should be noted at this stage that the study period's end date of 1980 was chosen for three reasons: first, it coincides with the end of Ambassador Brennan's six-year period in office in Moscow and with that of the first Soviet ambassador to Ireland, Anatoli Stepanovich Kaplin;² second, Irish state archival sources for the decade preceding the demise of the Soviet Union are not available for research at this time; and finally, it permits consideration of the thesis to present, in so far as possible, its evidence from the *zeitgeist* and sources of the 1970s – when the Soviet Union was in a commanding position on the world stage. At that time, with a multi-national population in excess of 260 million people living in fifteen republics, the Soviet Union's landmass extended east from central Europe to the Pacific Ocean and south from the Arctic Ocean to the deserts of central Asia, making it by far the largest state on earth. Based upon an industrialised economy (with an active space programme) and inspired by an official policy of Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet socialist system boasted that it provided full employment, medical care, comprehensive education, housing and cultural provisions for its diverse peoples. The Soviet Union was the most powerful member of the socialist group of countries of eastern and central Europe, Cuba and parts of Asia, from where it assisted Vietnam to finally expel American forces in 1975. Furthermore, and despite its deep ideological rift with the Peoples' Republic of China, the Soviet Union also sought to give leadership to not just to the world communist movement, but also to Third World and former colonial countries, both through the U.N. and by the provision of direct economic and military aid, in opposition to the power and influence of the United States of America (U.S.) and other western powers.

The thesis has arisen from the writer's long interest in Irish-Soviet relations since visiting the Soviet Union as part of a youth group in 1976. As a result he keenly followed the twists and turns of developments concerning the Soviet Union, and since the demise of the U.S.S.R. in 1991, he has harboured an ambition to compile an

² Ambassador Kaplin died in office, Aug. 1979.

historical account of the unique relationships and connections that existed between the two states and their citizens. This ambition has been advanced in recent years by the fulfilment of a B.A. programme at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (N.U.I.M.), and the completion of a minor thesis with a strong Irish-Soviet theme. That thesis, a part-biography of a prominent political personality in the subject area, Michael O’Riordan, has since been adapted for a general readership and published as a monograph.³ Since then the writer has made a number of PowerPoint presentations of various aspects of Irish-Soviet relations at seminars at N.U.I.M. and other Irish universities, and has recently had a journal article, ‘An account of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, 1966-92’, accepted by *Saothar*, the annual publication of the Irish Labour History Society, for its next issue, Vol. 38, due to appear before end of November 2013.

The thesis does not claim to be a study in the round of Irish-Soviet affairs, as it is chiefly a study from the Irish side in the relationship. However, the writer has made efforts to engage with the Russian language by completing three modules at N.U.I., Maynooth, entitled ‘Russian for academic purposes, learning to understand historical source materials.’⁴ These modules were of an introductory nature, but sufficient proficiency was achieved by the writer to equip him to provide some short translations for the thesis, and to gain an appreciation of Russian language items from original Soviet sources attached by Ambassador Brennan to some of his reports from Moscow to Iveagh House, Dublin, headquarters of the D.F.A. Also, for a view from the Soviet side access has been gained to a considerable number of translations from the Soviet press that were forwarded to the D.F.A. by Ambassador Brennan. Furthermore, publications in English, including the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*, and from Novosti Press, a copy of *Soviet Jews: our motherland is the U.S.S.R.* (1976), have proved to be insightful sources, with the latter on the issue of emigration rights for Soviet Jewry, of considerable assistance in discussing the concerns of Irish-Jewish groups in the 1970s.

The writer had also provided some short translations from the Irish language for the thesis, aided by Irish language modules that were part of his B.A. programme at N.U.I.M. In particular, an appreciation on the death of Lev Sedin, a Russian journalist with *Novoe Vremya* (*New Times*) who had made a very favourable impression in Dublin

³ Michael Quinn, *The making of an Irish communist leader: the life and times of Michael O’Riordan, 1938-47* (Dublin, 2011).

⁴ N.U.I., Maynooth language modules no. HY682, 2010-1.

with his portrayal of Soviet life in the 1960s, was written in Irish (see p. 131). Also, the thesis has engaged to a lesser extent with other western languages, principally French, Spanish and Italian.⁵

Existing Irish-Soviet historiography

While some valuable contributions to various aspects of the relationship between the two states are found scattered across Irish general histories and international relations studies of the twentieth-century, the topic has not yet been the subject of a published monograph. Notably, Dermot Keogh has engaged with aspects of the topic in his publications, including his *Twentieth-century Ireland* (1994), and more recently in his contribution to *A new history of Ireland*, where he included a mention of the establishment of diplomatic relations.⁶ The lack of overall attention by Irish historians has been partially filled in 2012 with the publication of Diarmaid Ferriter's *Ambiguous republic*, which has the same central timeframe as this study, the 1970s. Leaving aside the absence in the book's index of 'Soviet Union', 'U.S.S.R.', or 'Russia' (the key references for this subject area), Ferriter's section on foreign affairs recounts the establishment of diplomatic relations and the accreditation to Moscow of Dr Brennan, and to Dublin of Anatoli Kaplin.⁷ But of most interest to this study is Ferriter's analysis of the impact of E.E.C. involvement upon Irish foreign policy, and his high regard for 'Europhile' Garret FitzGerald,⁸ as foreign affairs minister. While Ferriter does allow for a 'degree of ambivalence' in this area and the primacy of Ireland's pursuit of 'as much [Regional Development] funding as possible',⁹ he raises no substantial issues concerning Ireland's participation in E.P.C. at that time. The present study will suggest that in fact questions do arise in that respect.

International relations textbooks and journals have been kinder in terms of coverage of Irish-Soviet affairs, even if again there is no published monograph, and with references also dispersed across the discipline. Perhaps the most valuable item in

⁵ It should be noted that diacriticals have been included throughout the thesis in the use of Irish and other western language words, but not for Russian words.

⁶ Dermot Keogh, 'Ireland 1972-84' in J.R. Hill (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vii: *Ireland, 1921-84*, p. 366.

⁷ Diarmaid Ferriter, *Ambiguous republic: Ireland in the 1970s* (London, 2012), p. 428.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

this area is Ó Corcora and Hill's 1982 article that provides an insightful background to the present study for an understanding of a political science approach to Irish-Soviet affairs.¹⁰ This thesis shares some of that article's conclusions, including those concerning the early decades where the initial common denominator of anti-imperialism quickly gave way to Irish antipathy towards communism and the course of development of the Soviet Union. The thesis also endorses the article's findings that the emergence of a measure of trade and secularisation in Irish society in the 1970s led to the political feasibility of the establishment of diplomatic relations.¹¹ However, this study adds to Ó Corcora and Hill's findings by bringing forward new evidence from archival and oral sources not available in the 1980s. This new evidence relates to the manner in which opposition to establishing Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations within the successive Fianna Fáil and Fíne Gael-Labour governments of the early 1970s was eventually overcome; how the British government made influential representations to postpone and influence the establishment of Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations; and how the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society enjoyed considerable success in building broad societal contacts between the two countries – significantly in excess of the 'informational role' allowed by Ó Corcora and Hill.¹²

Patrick Keatinge's general work, from his seminal publication, *A place among the nations: issues of Irish foreign policy* (1978), through to his most recent foreword in Tonra et al, *Irish foreign policy* (2012) has been an ever-present guide throughout this thesis. His 'realist' observations have illuminated many issues, from his revelation, that even during Frank Aiken's 'golden era' of independent action at the United Nations, Ireland sided with the United States three times more often than as against it,¹³ to his articulation as to why a state would support a policy that appeared to run counter to its stated values. An example of the latter development occurred within European Political Cooperation in 1974,¹⁴ when Irish foreign affairs officials agonised over ethical implications surrounding – but ultimately supported – the commissioning of legally-questionable studies of west European communist parties. Keatinge described this phenomenon: 'But the expression of a value is one thing in the form of a statement of

¹⁰ Mícheál Ó Corcora, and Ronald J. Hill, 'The Soviet Union in Irish foreign policy' in *International Affairs*, liix, no. 2 (spring, 1982), pp 254-70.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 269-70.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 258-9.

¹³ Patrick Keatinge, *A place among the nations* (Dublin, 1978), p. 76.

¹⁴ As discussed in chapter five.

principle; in the form of policy leading to government action it is something yet again.¹⁵

Also ever-to-hand has been the work of retired diplomat, author, and distinguished commentator on Irish diplomatic affairs Noel Dorr, who joined the Irish foreign service in 1960, and whose career included a close involvement in the country's relations with the Soviet Union during the 1970s. His *Ireland at the United Nations* (2010), which covers the period 1955-1972 – from Frank Aiken's leadership as Ireland broke ranks with the U.S. veto on the representation of China at the U.N. in the late 1950s (i.e. the Soviet-sponsored proposal that the People's Republic should replace Taiwan) through to Dr Patrick Hillery's attempt to seek a U.N. peacekeeping force for Northern Ireland – provides valuable background for chapter one. Mindful of one of the aims of chapter one – to get a sense of Irish diplomats' understanding of their Soviet counterparts' actions in relation to Ireland – the thesis notes that Dorr criticises aspects of the Soviet Union's support for Dr Hillery's request to the U.N. for a peacekeeping force. Dorr states: 'Dr Hillery...could be forgiven if he swallowed hard at the terms in which that support was expressed by the Soviet Union'.¹⁶ But this thesis finds that the Soviet Union's support for Dr Hillery was both soundly based and of real benefit to Ireland's attempt to bring international pressure to bear on the British government in relation to unionist hegemony at Stormont. For chapter five, Dorr's article in Ben Tonra, et al, in *Irish foreign policy* has been instructive for an understanding of E.P.C. and its relationship to the mainstream institutions of the E.E.C. during the 1970s. However, the thesis will discuss the implications of Dorr's assertion that the Single European Act (which included the elevation of E.P.C. to treaty status in 1986) retrospectively codified Irish foreign policy coordination practices within E.P.C. in the 1970s, as they applied to the Soviet Union.¹⁷

Among the unpublished theses accessed during the research, two principally relate to trade connections: Mícheál Ó Corcora's, 'Irish-Soviet trade relations and policy',¹⁸ and Caroline Mannion's 'Irish-Soviet trade'.¹⁹ Trade relations are only briefly engaged by this project, principally in chapter four's consideration of U.S. requests to

¹⁵ Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 176.

¹⁶ Noel Dorr, *Ireland at the U.N.: memories of the early years* (Dublin, 2010), p. 221.

¹⁷ See Noel Dorr, 'Ireland in an independent world: foreign policy since 1973', in Ben Tonra, et al., *Irish foreign policy*, p. 59.

¹⁸ Mícheál G. Ó Corcora, *Irish-Soviet trade relations and policy* (M. Litt. thesis, T.C.D., 1980).

¹⁹ Mannion, Caroline M., 'Irish-Soviet trade' (M. Sc. [Econ.], T.C.D., 1986).

Ireland to boycott the Moscow Olympic Games of 1980. That request prompted the Department of Foreign Affairs to take stock of the increase in Irish-Soviet trade since diplomatic relations had been established six years previously. Also, in chapter five, where Ireland's involvement in the internal debate within E.P.C. on economic rivalries between the E.E.C. and COMECON is discussed, Ó Corcora's finding – that the interactions of political and economic factors were a determinant in trade relations – and Mannion's conclusion – that by 1986 the E.E.C. had achieved a decisive advantage over COMECON – were found to be especially useful. In this regard, the thesis brings forward new archival evidence to evaluate Ireland's contribution to an E.E.C. economic strategy, described in 1976 by a senior COMECON commentator as pitting 'the united economic strength of the E.E.C. against individual countries of COMECON with the aim of receiving corresponding economic and political advantage'.²⁰ The third unpublished thesis consulted was Sarah Davis's informative study on the details of the Soviet Union's holdup, until 1955, of Ireland's application for membership of the U.N.²¹ While this thesis is in general accord with Davis's conclusion that the Soviet Union acted to block Irish membership in response to similar actions by the U.S. in relation to states with friendly relations with the Soviets, it does bring forward new evidence from Polish and Irish communist sources that adds to the debate. Indeed, this new evidence offers elements of both criticism and support of the Soviet Union's stance on this issue.

Memoirs and autobiographies play a significant supporting role in the thesis, including those of Garret FitzGerald,²² Andrei Gromyko (despite the fact that Gromyko failed to mention Ireland in his memoir),²³ Nikita Khrushchev,²⁴ and Conor Cruise O'Brien.²⁵ With the exception of Khrushchev (whose memoirs provide insights into Irish-Soviet connections at the U.N, including his 'shoe-banging' incident in 1960), the other three authors were primary actors in Irish-Soviet affairs in the 1970s. However, as O'Brien played a number of roles - a diplomat in the 1950s and 1960s, a member of the

²⁰ Professor V. Iskra of the Polish United Workers' Party, as cited by Ambassador Brennan in his political report, 61/76, 14 June 1976, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238).

²¹ Sarah Davis, 'The Soviet veto of Ireland's application for membership of the United Nations, 1946-55' (M.A. thesis, N.U.I., Maynooth, 2001)

²² Garret FitzGerald, *All in a life: an autobiography* (Dublin, 1991).

²³ Andrei Gromyko, *Memories: from Stalin to Gorbachev* (London, 1989).

²⁴ Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Khrushchev remembers: the last testament*, ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston, 1974).

²⁵ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Memoir: my life and themes* (Dublin, 1988).

cabinet that agreed to diplomatic relations, and a caustic chronicler of the events and people in matters relating to the Soviet Union (which includes attitudes of Irish and U.N. officials towards the Soviets), his memoir is unique. It also, ironically, contains a caveat about memoirs that O'Brien credited to Professor T.W. Moody, which this thesis has striven to observe:

...be particularly distrustful of memoirs. Memoirs are written in the main for purposes of self-justification before posterity. The historian should use them, but with the greatest caution. He should always greatly prefer to them papers written...for the eyes of a limited number of associates, and without any thought of posterity.²⁶

Consequently, it is to a consideration of such papers that we must now turn.

Archival Sources

The timing for this research project has been fortuitous as it has been the beneficiary of the 1986 National Archives Act, which provides for release after thirty years of state documents to researchers. This has been especially relevant to the 500-plus political reports from Moscow, and a series of files relating to the thirty-six meetings of the Eastern Europe Working Group during the period 1974-80. To this writer's knowledge, these source materials have not previously been drawn on by historians or academic researchers. Such has been the importance of these sources for the study, that key details of their contents have been captured and analysed in summary form, and attached to the study as Appendix one and Appendix two. In particular, the appendices' summaries have assisted the writer to determine a number of key questions. For example, from Appendix one: why was it that only twenty-four out of the total of 519 surviving political reports sent by Ambassador Brennan to Dublin related to Soviet interest in Ireland?

With further regard to archival sources – both from the Irish department of foreign affairs and private sources – the thesis has been conscious of Arthur Marwick's observations in this area (2001). In his taxonomy of primary sources he ranks such sources first among his list of thirteen.²⁷ Nevertheless, the thesis has again striven to

²⁶ Ibid. p. 122.

²⁷ See Arthur Marwick, *The new nature of history: knowledge, evidence, language* (London 2001), pp 165-6.

take heed of Marwick's warnings of the need for awareness of the 'accuracy and honesty' of the sources' authors, and of the possible tendency towards 'a fetishism of documents'.²⁸ Indeed, so also is it aware of advice from no less an authority than Joseph Stalin, when he chided Soviet historians as they set about writing a communist party history in 1931. George Enteen recorded Stalin's words:

'Who, except the hopeless bureaucrats, can rely on written documents alone?' he [Stalin] asked in his famous letter to *Proletarskaja Revoljutsija*, the leading journal in the field. 'Who, besides archive rats, does not understand that a party and its leaders must be tested primarily by their deeds, and not only by their declarations?'²⁹

Enteen goes on to make the logical point that historians can only gain an understanding of the deeds of men and women through a consideration of reliable sources. Nevertheless, a further observation from Marwick, that historians can comprehend the 'dreadful fallibility' of official sources, chimes with this study's sense of the need for an awareness, for example, that political reports from the ambassador to Moscow had to be assessed in the context of their impact upon Irish government thinking. While Ambassador Brennan's reports are attention-grabbing today in their own right as an intellectual and political exercise, this study has also striven to identify those reports that best vindicate the value and validity of their initial function – to inform and advise the government of the day. This link between political reports and actual government policy is one of the key questions for this study. One example highlights such a link: how far did Ambassador Brennan's reports, on Soviet media coverage of the Irish 'torture' case against Britain before the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg in 1977, inform Foreign Minister Garret FitzGerald's subsequent policy statements on the issue to domestic and international audiences? In the same vein, a second question arising from Dr Brennan's reports is: how far did the ambassador's reports on the Soviet media's coverage of the conflict in Northern Ireland correspond to the complaint made by Dr FitzGerald to his Soviet counterpart, Andrei Gromyko, in

²⁸ Ibid, p. 166.

²⁹ George Enteen, 'The Stalinist conception of the communist party' in *Studies in Soviet Thought*, xxxvii (May 1989), no. 4, pp. 259-74, p. 259, available at (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20100430?&Search=yes&searchText=history&searchText=conception&searchText=communist&searchText=stalinist&searchText=party&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dthe%2Bstalinist%2Bconception%2Bof%2Bcommunist%2Bparty%2Bhistory%26fromHomePage%3Dtrue%26acc%3Don%26wc%3Don%26fc%3Doff&prevSearch=&item=1&ttl=2464&returnArticleService=showFullText>) (8 Dec. 2012)

September 1973 concerning the portrayal of the Provisional I.R.A. as a left-wing socialist group with which the Soviet people might sympathise?

The British National Archives at Kew have also been accessed in this study, where the files of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (F.C.O.) provided an important stimulus to an enquiry into another important facet of Irish-Soviet relations, as indentified by Marcus Wheeler, ‘the sensitive triangle of relations between Ireland, Russia, and Britain.’³⁰ In particular, these files have provided valuable evidence to raise two particular questions: to what extent did British government representations to the Irish authorities have the effect of postponing the establishment of formal Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations from 1971 to 1973; and after relations were established, what was the extent and nature of cooperation in relation to the Soviet Union between Irish ministers and diplomats with their British counterparts?

The archives of the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.), handed over to the Dublin City Library and Archive, Pearse Street during the course of this thesis preparation, is a newly-available mine of information for Irish communist comment and materials. Evidence of the role of this small but strongly pro-Soviet party in Irish-Soviet affairs, has been found in this archive, as indeed it has also been found in Irish state archives. Accordingly, these resources have been explored for insights into questions including: the attitude of Irish communists to the Soviet Union’s holdup of Irish membership of the United Nations from 1946 until 1955; the attitude of Irish diplomats towards the C.P.I. as it featured in the Soviet media, and its relationship with the larger communist parties of the member states of the E.E.C.?

Oral sources

This study has been concerned to engage with a comprehensive range of interviewees so as to reflect as much as possible the totality of the relationships in Irish-Soviet diplomatic and friendship matters in the 1970s. In this regard the timing for this project has been fortuitous. Some of the Irish men and women, and their children, who had been to the fore in Irish-Soviet affairs, are still living. Interviews have been held

³⁰ Wheeler, Marcus, ‘Dublin-Moscow Accord’ in *The World Today*, xxix, no.11 (Nov.1973), pp 458-60.

with over thirty people who engaged with the Soviet Union in various areas including diplomacy, politics, organised friendship, culture, academia, sports, trade, or the Russian language. Eleven interviewees stand out as primary actors in Irish-Soviet affairs: the first ambassador to Moscow, the late Dr Brennan; his son, Barry Brennan; Reginald McHugh of Córas Tráchtála (C.T.T., the Irish export board), Ireland's first commercial attaché to the Soviet Union; Noel Dorr, the above mentioned former diplomat and now author; Professor Barra Boydell, whose father, Professor Brian Boydell, was instrumental in inviting the great Soviet composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, to visit Ireland; Angela McQuillan, the last secretary of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society; John P. Swift, son of the founding chairman of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, John Swift; Sean Edwards, son of the founding secretary of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, Frank Edwards; Barry Bruton, son of the secretary of the Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society, Bill Bruton; and Tom Redmond and Eddie Glackin, who were members of the national executive of the C.P.I. in the 1970s.

Each of the twenty-three interviewees whose testimony is cited in this present thesis has confirmed, by means of a signed consent form, his or her agreement to allow this writer to use the contents of his notes of the interviews with them, and to attribute same to them. The only exception to this is former ambassador Brennan who died in 2012. Dr Brennan had exchanged emails with the writer at an early stage in the thesis project (2010). In his five-page email Dr Brennan indicated his approval of consent by stating that just one detail of information was to be treated as confidential. Even though testimony from the ten un-cited interviewees has not been included – because their testimony was of a general nature or confined to information on sources, and because their testimony referred to events after 1980 – the writer has included their names in the bibliography.

With reference to the value of oral information, the writer notes the felicitous assessment by Arthur Marwick of the value of such sources for historical study. He judged them to be 'absolutely invaluable', but made the accompanying caveat:

Naturally it takes great skill and a mastery of whatever other knowledge is available to make effective use of what is inherently (given the fallibility of human error) a highly problematic source.³¹

³¹ Marwick, *The new nature of history* (London 2001), p. 171.

Therefore the study has sought to incorporate supplementary evidence from interviewees – a number of whom generously made available to this writer valuable manuscript items from their private collections – and from other primary and secondary sources. Most notably, this applies to chapter three, where much of the oral information was supplied by Angela McQuillan and John P. Swift. Both interviewees made available their extensive archival materials of the society, and Swift further provided a copy of his own biography of his father.³² Dr Brennan also made available a copy of his conference paper on the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy, which he delivered at a Royal Irish Academy conference in 1982, after he had been redeployed as ambassador to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia.³³ Aspects of that paper also inform this thesis.

Finally, traces of oral and societal recollections of Irish-Soviet connections of the 1970s are occasionally to be encountered in Irish media, including that aired on a recent R.T.É. 1 Sunday morning radio programme, *Miriam Meets*. Presented by broadcaster, Miriam O'Callaghan, the programme hosts partners 'connected through love, life or family ties', and in December 2012 it featured members of the band Planxty, including Andy Irvine and Donal Lunny.³⁴ Irvine and Lunny had played together prior to the establishment of Planxty in 1971. Asked by O'Callaghan where they first played, Lunny recalled they had been invited by a leading supporter of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, Seán Mac Réamoinn,³⁵ to play a short set of tunes at the society's annual gathering. The dual significance of the exchange is that it indicates that in the 1970s a prominent broadcaster and progressive young musicians were involved in a broad social scene that included the promotion of Irish-Soviet friendship; and that the opportunity to capture the details from the men and women involved in that and other more formal aspects of Irish-Soviet relations is fast receding.

Newspapers

³² John P. Swift, *John Swift: an Irish dissident* (Dublin, 1991).

³³ Dr E.J. Brennan, 'The role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy: an Irish perspective' (delivered to Royal Irish Academy conference on East-West relations, Dublin, 19 Nov. 1982)

³⁴ Listen to Andy Irvine and Donal Lunny, R.T.É. 'Miriam Meets' podcast, 9 Dec. 2012, available at (<http://podcaster.fm/podcasts/viewepisode.aspx?Podcastitemid=7134669&title=Miriam+meets...+LAPD+Liam+O+Flynn,+Andy+Irvine,+Paddy+Glackin+and+Donal+Lunny>) (24 Feb. 2013)

³⁵ Seán Mac Réamoinn (1921-2007), was a prominent linguist, broadcaster and founder of the Merriman Summer School. He travelled to the Soviet Union in 1974 and recorded a series of interviews to present an aural record of everyday Soviet life. His documentary, 'Soviet Voices' was first broadcast by R.T.É. radio on 6 Jan. 1974, and more recently by the Documentary on One series, available at (<http://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/radio-documentary-soviet-union.html>) (25 Apr. 2013).

Contemporary newspapers, principally the *Irish Times*, play an important role in buttressing other sources throughout this thesis. Marwick considers these sources as ‘very rich for attitudes, assumptions, mentalities, and values’, while warning they are not to ‘illustrate predetermined generalisations...but to illuminate the past.’³⁶ And that indeed accords with the study’s experience, for even as it attests to the *Irish Times*’ excellence as a source of record, its reports were invariably formulated (with notable exceptions) to combine news with varying degrees of anti-Soviet bias. One example from the 1970s is indicative: when the formal agreement between the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society and the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society was signed in Liberty Hall in front of a substantial number of people, the newspaper’s report prominently included details of a picket mounted outside the hall by a group of protesters concerned about emigration rights for Soviet Jewry, without any attempt to balance the protesters’ claims against the Soviet Union’s position on the issue.³⁷

Access to Soviet press coverage has been largely gained through extracts from and attachments to the Irish ambassador’s reports from Moscow to Dublin. On the credit side, this method of access has the benefit of the ambassador’s accurate translation of pertinent Soviet commentary on the topics considered by this study. Ambassador Brennan had good Russian language skills, as indicated by him to this writer in an exchange of emails.³⁸ On the debit side, this access is restricted to the ambassador’s selections from *Pravda*, etc., which he chose to best support the various topics and theses contained in his reports. Nevertheless, the study has been struck by the reliability of these selections as a valid expression of the Soviet press. To highlight but one example: based upon a July 1975 issue of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the ambassador advised Dublin that Official Sinn Féin was gaining favourable mention and recognition in Soviet circles – a report that is supported by the findings of Hanley and Millar in their recent study of the Official I.R.A.³⁹

It is hoped that this thesis will make a contribution to, and help raise the profile of, the field of Irish-Soviet studies within Irish historiography. Accordingly, having

³⁶ See Marwick, *The new nature of history*, p. 168.

³⁷ *Irish Times*, 24 Mar. 1976. This issue is addressed in chapter three.

³⁸ Email interview with former ambassador Dr Edward (Ned) Brennan (4 May 2010).

³⁹ See Brian Hanley and Scott Millar, *The lost revolution: the story of the Official I.R.A. and the Workers’ Party* (Dublin, 2009), p. 334. This issue is also addressed in chapter four.

presented its account of the factors and processes that led to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1973, it concludes by highlighting six overriding themes and questions that it will strive to address: how did the sensitive triangle of Irish-Soviet-British interests effect the establishment of Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations; what was the impact of Irish membership of the E.E.C. upon Irish-Soviet relations; what kind of a reception did the new Soviet ambassador receive in Dublin, as against his Irish counterpart in Moscow; how successful were efforts to promote Irish-Soviet friendship in the 1970s, a decade of détente when anti-Sovietism and anti-communism were noticeably reduced; and what was the role of Irish communism in Irish-Soviet affairs? But to begin, the thesis must enquire: what characterised the intermittent diplomatic engagements between the two states that took place in the decades before and during the Cold War, from the 1919 to 1972?

CHAPTER ONE

Irish-Soviet diplomatic affairs, 1919-72

Introduction

This introductory chapter examines a number of key interconnections in Irish-Soviet diplomatic affairs that began in the revolutionary period of both countries in 1919, and which continued intermittently through to the eve of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Republic of Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the U.S.S.R., or the Soviet Union) in 1973. The chapter is ordered under three periods where the business of Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations was largely conducted. The first period began in 1919 and encompassed a Dublin-New York-Moscow network in which connections between representatives of the embryonic states of the Irish Republic (as proclaimed by the first Dáil Éireann that comprised successful Sinn Féin candidates at the 1918 parliamentary elections to Westminster, which was assembled in Dublin as an alternative parliament) and of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (the R.S.F.S.R., or Soviet Russia – which arose out of the Bolshevik October 1917 revolution). Those contacts began warmly in the United States of America (U.S.), only to be terminated in Moscow in 1921. The second period is confined to 1934, and is centred on developments at the League of Nations, Geneva. There, President Eamon de Valera of the Irish Free State (the twenty-six county state that came into being in 1922 following the acceptance by the first Dáil Éireann of the Anglo-Irish Agreement) spoke and voted in favour of the admittance of the Soviet Union into membership of the League. And, the third period, from 1955 to 1972, examines contacts at the United Nations Organisation (U.N.), New York, where the Republic of Ireland – after it had endured a decade-long wait due to Cold War rivalries to secure membership of the world body – and the Soviet Union engaged in a number of standout interactions. The issues covered in this period include the Representation of China debate, 1957-71 (whereby Ireland offered some support to Soviet-sponsored efforts to have the Peoples' Republic of China replace the government of Taiwan at the U.N.); interactions in 1960 between Frederick Boland, Irish president of the U.N. general assembly, and the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev; Irish-Soviet involvement

in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 1958-68; and lastly, the Republic of Ireland's attempts in 1969, with Soviet support, to secure a pe

ace-keeping force for Northern Ireland. The chapter's principal aim is to comment in some depth upon the complex nature of those key interconnections with a view to providing a backdrop to the thesis's central focus of enquiry, the 1970s.

Historiography

In contrast to the general dearth of existing history writing on Irish-Soviet diplomatic contacts, the first subject period, which for the greater part was conducted in the U.S., has been relatively well covered by historians. Aspects of the relations are to be found in a publication by a principal actor and source for the events, Dr Patrick McCartan,¹ and in publications by authors C. Desmond Greaves,² David Fitzpatrick,³ Emmet O'Connor,⁴ Marcus Wheeler,⁵ and Stephen White.⁶ However, their work is added to by this thesis with extra information from an authoritative Soviet source,⁷ some American history publications, and from Irish state archival sources authored by Dr McCartan during his visit to Soviet Russia in 1921.⁸ In particular the chapter provides insights into the personalities and roles of the Soviet representatives in their dealings with their Irish counterparts, reveals how *realpolitik* regarding early Soviet trade with Britain took precedence over mutual Irish-Soviet anti-imperialism, and assesses the above mentioned political reports provided by Dr McCartan to Dáil Éireann of his visit to the Soviet capital.

The account for the second subject period concerning the League of Nations is centred upon de Valera's recognition of the potential for Soviet membership to strengthen collective security in mid-1930s Europe, and is also further informed by Irish state archival sources. Archival sources also predominate to bring additional evidence to

¹ Patrick McCartan, *With de Valera in America* (Dublin, 1932).

² C. Desmond Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish revolution* (London, 1971).

³ David Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2003).

⁴ Emmet O'Connor, *Reds and the green: Ireland, Russia and the communist internationals, 1919-43* (Dublin 2004).

⁵ Marcus Wheeler, 'Soviet interest in Ireland' in *Survey*, xxi, no. 3 (1975), pp 81-93.

⁶ Stephen White, 'Soviet writings on Irish history, 1917-80: a bibliography' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii, no. 90 (Nov., 1982), pp 174-86. Also, White, 'Ireland, Russia, communism, post-communism' in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, viii (1997), pp 155-61.

⁷ *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* [hereafter, *G.S.E.*], ed. A.M. Prokhorov (31 vols, London, 1979).

⁸ *Documents on Irish foreign policy* (hereinafter, *D.I.F.P.*), available at (<http://www.difp.ie/>) (17 Sept. 2013).

the events surrounding the de Valera-approved loan, secured by some czarist jewels, which was given to the Soviet representatives in New York in 1920. This saga, covered to varying extents by the above named historians and more recently in a journal article by Barry Whelan,⁹ is further informed by new evidence from state files that reveal how Irish-Soviet diplomatic negotiations in London in 1949 finally brought the saga to an ultimate, if mistrustful, conclusion.

But it is the third subject period of Irish-Soviet contacts at the U.N. that commands the greater part of this chapter, where publications by Noel Dorr,¹⁰ Dermot Keogh,¹¹ Stephen Collins,¹² and Conor Cruise O'Brien,¹³ are most relevant. Again a selection of documents from Irish state archives, together with various memoirs and biographies,¹⁴ journal articles,¹⁵ and a series of 'tracking' articles from the *Irish Times* are employed to add to those authors' contributions. Furthermore, some new evidence is brought forward from the archive of the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.), a small but significant party that commanded a place in Irish-Soviet relations owing to its membership of the world communist movement and its close links with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.).

Revolutionary contacts, 1919-22

The protracted delay until 1973 to enact formal diplomatic relations between Ireland and the Soviet Union was in contrast to the determination of representatives of the first Dáil Éireann and Soviet Russia to do so during the years 1919-1921, in America. There the Irish and Soviet representatives engaged in a warm, but brief, diplomatic/revolutionary affair. The Irish representatives were led by Eamon de Valera, president of the dáil, and three others of its elected members: Dr Patrick McCartan, Harry Boland,

⁹ Barry Whelan, 'Diplomacy: Dev, a loan, and Russian jewels', in *Irish History Review*, iii, no. 1 (Jan. 2013), pp 25-8, available at:

(<http://issuu.com/scolairetaire/docs/vol3iss1print?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml>) (22 Apr. 2013), pp 24-8.

¹⁰ Noel Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations: memories of the early years* (Dublin, 2010).

¹¹ Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-century Ireland: nation and state* (Dublin, 1994).

¹² Stephen Collins, *The Cosgrave legacy* (Dublin, 1966).

¹³ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Memoir: my life and themes* (Dublin, 1988), and *To Katanga and back* (London, 1962).

¹⁴ Principally, John Walsh, *Patrick Hillery: the official biography* (Dublin, 2008), and Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Khrushchev remembers: the last testament*, ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston, 1974).

¹⁵ Evgeny Chossudovsky, 'The origins of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons: Ireland's initiative in the United Nations, 1958-61' in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, iii, no. 2 (1990), and Con Cremin, 'Northern Ireland at the United Nations, August/September 1969', in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1980).

and Liam Mellows. Dr McCartan, from Carrickmore, County Tyrone, who had been elected to the dáil for King's County Tullamore, was also a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B., the clandestine and militaristic republican movement that had been founded in the mid-nineteenth century). McCartan's presence in America complemented an earlier and hidden task, as recounted by C. Desmond Greaves: 'the I.R.B. had despatched McCartan on his way to Russia' following the Bolsheviks' declaration in March 1917 in favour of a British withdrawal from Ireland in the hope of securing military assistance for the coming struggle.¹⁶ Harry Boland was from Marino, Dublin. Boland too had been active in the I.R.B., and the Gaelic Athletic Association (G.A.A.). He had fought in the 1916 Rising, and had been elected to the dáil for South Roscommon. Diarmaid Ferriter describes Boland's role: 'Dev's valet, shepherd and manager...he and Dev made the ideal team as Boland got to people's hearts and Dev to their heads.'¹⁷ Making up the quartet of dáil envoys was Liam Mellows, T.D. for Galway East. The youngest and, at 5 ft. 3 ins., the slightest in frame of the mission, Mellows was considered as 'jaunty' and 'fresh as paint' by his colleagues.¹⁸ He described himself as 'de Valera's John the Baptist' for his role in scouting ahead of 'the chief's' cavalcade to innumerable destinations throughout America galvanising local groups and booking venues.¹⁹ Accordingly, the de Valera mission to the U.S. was two-fold: to seek recognition for the Irish Republic from the U.S. government, and to raise funds for the national independence struggle.

Their assignment, however, soon took on an added dimension when they discovered in the American *zeitgeist* that the cause of Soviet Russia commanded considerable interest and support among political activists. Contacts with Soviet representatives were established as the Irish made their rounds. Like the Irish, the Soviets were in America seeking recognition and trade connections, and an informal Soviet bureau was established in New York. From 1919 this was headed by Ludwig Martens. He was born into a German-Russian family, the owners of a steel mill in Kursk, Russia. Despite being a 'son of a bourgeois', Martens became a trusted Bolshevik figure. This arose from his involvement in Marxist circles at the St. Petersburg Technological Institute, which resulted in his imprisonment by the czarist

¹⁶ C. Desmond Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish revolution* (London, 1971), p. 136.

¹⁷ Diarmaid Ferriter, *Judging Dev: a reassessment of the life and legacy of Eamon de Valera* (Dublin, 2007), p. 36.

¹⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland*, p. 127

¹⁹ Greaves, *Liam Mellows*, p. 210.

authorities for three years and subsequent exile abroad, including to America. There he became involved in business circles, while at the same time continuing with his political activities.²⁰ Upon the outbreak of the Russian revolution he returned to his homeland, but in furtherance of the Bolsheviks' plans for Soviet Russia he was redeployed in March 1919 to New York to continue his work at the Soviet bureau.²¹

Alongside Martens was Santeri Nuorteva (originally named as Alexander Nyberg),²² the son of a Finnish-Swedish telegraph officer and a Russian-Jewish mother. He had been a schoolteacher and a member of the Finnish Diet. Under threat of prison for criticising the imperial government, he was forced to leave for the United States with his family in 1911. He became active in Finnish-Russian and left-wing politics in the U.S., and later an officer at the Soviet bureau. Martens and Nuorteva established commercial contacts with big American firms, such as Henry Ford, J.P. Morgan Jr. and Frank A. Vanderlip. Soviet Russia urgently needed quantities of machinery, railway goods, clothing, chemicals, etc. to help kick-start Soviet plans for the development of a modern industrialised society. In exchange, the Soviet bureau, with a staff of thirty-five, offered gold and raw materials to American firms, many of whom were prepared to ignore an official U.S. government embargo and its non-recognition of the young Soviet state. To fund initial deals the embassy/bureau 'publicised Soviet official willingness to deposit \$200 million in gold in European and American banks'.²³

Martens and Dr McCartan formed a close collaboration that McCartan later described as being based upon 'that sense of brotherhood which a common experience endured for a common purpose can alone induce'.²⁴ While carefully avoiding any endorsement of Bolshevism, Dr McCartan held that British intervention in the Russian civil war justified wide-ranging cooperation between the Irish and the Soviets in their common anti-imperialist struggles. The terms of this willingness to cooperate with the Soviets is supported by Emmet O'Connor's assessment of Irish domestic support:

²⁰ This profile is informed by G.E. Evgenev and B. S. Shapik, 'Ludwig Christian Alexander Karl Martens: revolutionary, diplomat, scientist', in *G.S.E.*, xxx, p. 502.

²¹ Antony C. Sutton, *Wall Street and the Bolshevik revolution* (New York, 1974), vi, available at Studies in Reformed Theology (http://reformed-theology.org/html/books/bolshevik_revolution/chapter_07.htm) (1 Dec. 2011).

²² Auvo Kostianen, *Turbulent times: the last years of Santeri Nuorteva in America, 1918-1920*, available at Genealogical Society of Finland (<http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/art/article211e.htm>) (12 Oct. 2013).

²³ See Robert Service, *Spies and commissars: Bolshevik Russia and the West* (London, 2011), pp 232-3.

²⁴ Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland*, p. 138.

The Bolsheviks were very popular in Ireland in the immediate aftermath of the October revolution, more perhaps for their opposition to the First World War and support for national self-determination than anything else.²⁵

Increasingly, in Irish-American circles the cause for recognition of the Irish republic and support for Soviet Russia would become intertwined and a source of division. As recorded by C. Desmond Greaves, at an Irish Women's Council meeting held in the Hotel McAlpin, New York, debate centred on international support for Ireland, where Liam Mellows publicly expressed his view of Irish-Soviet cooperation: 'Russia has given more encouragement to the Irish Republic than America had'.²⁶

However, linkage with the Bolsheviks meant that opponents of the Irish Republic were emboldened with a propaganda advantage. Sensational allegations emanating from England and Switzerland that the Bolsheviks had sent millions of dollars to Sinn Féin, and that de Valera was in collusion or cooperation with them, obliged the Irish to issue ongoing denials. The following extract from the *New York Times*, carried under the headline 'DE VALERA MAKES DENIAL', illustrates the nature of the exchanges:

The idea is to try to injure the Irish cause by playing on prejudice. The purpose is that of the old cry of German gold or Bolshevik gold. I [de Valera] have specifically denied, time and time again, that our organisation has not received a mark or a rouble and I call on those who make the charges to substantiate them.²⁷

Furthermore, U.S. politicians felt increasingly threatened by the Bolsheviks' accession to power in Russia. Alexander Mitchell Palmer had been appointed attorney general by President Wilson in 1917 to combat fears that communist agents were attempting to overthrow the American government. Palmer recruited John Edgar Hoover (later the long-serving and powerful head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation) as his special assistant. The Espionage Act (1917) was employed to arrest over 10,000 suspects in swoops in twenty-three cities, termed the 'Palmer raids', on 7 November 1919 – the second anniversary of the October revolution. Included in the swoop was James Larkin, the Irish trade union leader.

Despite these pressures, by April 1920 a level of trust had been established between the Irish and Russian representatives, to the point where the Bolsheviks

²⁵ O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 2.

²⁶ Greaves, *Liam Mellows*, p. 205.

²⁷ *New York Times*, 3 July 1919.

confided to the Irish that their bureau's financial situation was in a difficult state. They had been a particular target of Palmer raids and required an injection of funds to the extent of \$20,000. Martens produced a cardboard box with a sixteen-carat diamond pendant and three sapphire and ruby brooches, saying that they formed part of the Russian crown jewels and were worth \$25,500. The czar's possessions had been confiscated and were now deemed to be the state property of Soviet Russia, to be used to assist in its promotion. The Irishmen agreed to accept the jewels as a pledge for a loan, provided that the transaction was formalised. They were given a copy of the valuation certificate and Martens signed a receipt for the money on behalf of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), 'to be repaid on demand and return of security rendered'.²⁸

But it was not just money that was being negotiated by the revolutionaries. Dr McCartan had actively entered into official talks with the Soviet representatives in New York, and he and Nuorteva together finalised a draft treaty of mutual recognition. The draft pledged the two governments to promote recognition for each other by the nations of the world, and that the official representative from the Irish republic would be empowered to represent the interests of the Roman Catholic church in Soviet Russia. It detailed procedures and privileges for trade and exploitation of the natural resources of Russia, and obliged the Irish to help facilitate the sanitary and medical relief of the people of Russia.²⁹ To this brief summary of the draft treaty can be added Marcus Wheeler's observation: 'and finally – and perhaps most remarkable – [it included] an agreement to set up, with other nations interested in bringing to an end "imperialistic exploitation", a form of a rival League of Nations'.³⁰ McCartan later recorded de Valera's ambiguous reaction that showed 'surprise at but no enthusiasm for the treaty...and it seemed as if he got more... than he really wanted'.³¹ De Valera initially refused to give McCartan credentials to conclude the treaty, as he felt that subsequent publicity could have a negative effect on efforts to secure U.S. recognition for the Irish Republic. Once de Valera finally accepted that official U.S. recognition of the Irish republic was not going to happen, he agreed to issue McCartan with the necessary credentials to travel to Moscow to ratify the treaty. Before he did so, however, he

²⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland*, p. 139.

²⁹ The entire draft treaty is included as an appendix in McCartan, *With de Valera in America*, pp 271-3.

³⁰ Wheeler, 'Soviet interest in Ireland', p. 84.

³¹ McCartan, *With de Valera in America*, p. 202.

proposed that McCartan's mission to Moscow should be enhanced, and that proper Dáil Éireann procedures should be enacted to legitimise the initiative. In March 1920 he wrote to Arthur Griffith, the acting president of the dáil during de Valera's absence in America, as follows:

Dr. McCartan might be considered by you as a delegate from our government to Russia to ask for official recognition...I think he should be accompanied by at least two others – one representative of organised labour, for example [Cathal] O'Shannon, [Thomas] Johnson, or [William] O'Brien, and one representative of industry and trade.³²

With these recommendations to Arthur Griffith, it can be seen that de Valera was thinking ahead for Irish-Soviet trade relations, but also, as the leader of the nationalist movement of Sinn Féin, de Valera recognised that the presence of additional leaders with left-wing convictions would strengthen Dr McCartan's revolutionary credentials in the Soviet capital. Three months later (June 1920) the dáil ratified the mission to Moscow by its adoption, on the proposal of Arthur Griffith, of the following motion: 'That the ministry be authorised to dispatch a diplomatic mission to the government of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic with a view to establishing diplomatic relations.'³³

It is of interest to note at this stage a recent journal article on this topic by historian Barry Whelan (2013). While Whelan's article is to be welcomed for bringing this subject matter to the fore, the basis of the article's criticism of the propriety of de Valera's actions, and of the legitimacy of pro-Soviet sentiments in Ireland during the revolutionary years, is questionable. Whelan is critical of de Valera's granting of the republican loan to Martens and Nuorteva, stating that in doing so the president had exceeded his authority, and:

accorded de jure recognition of the Bolshevik state without the prior approval of the dáil...the deal encouraged the Bolsheviks to forge closer ties, something that would have been completely abhorrent in the eyes of the influential Catholic hierarchy and the majority of Irish public opinion.³⁴

³² Eamon de Valera to Arthur Griffith, 6 Mar. 1920, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 31, N.A.I., D.E. 2/245), at (<http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1920/31.htm>) (13 Jan 2013). O'Shannon, Johnson, and O'Brien were prominent figures in the labour, trade union and pro-Bolshevik movements in Ireland during the revolutionary period.

³³ See 'Memorandum for the tánaiste', 15 Mar. 1966, in *Irish republican loan to Russia (1920) – Russian crown jewels, 1948-1969* (N.A.I., D.F.A., P135). See also O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 45.

³⁴ Whelan, 'Diplomacy: Dev, a loan, and Russian jewels', pp 25-6.

Firstly (as Whelan's article concedes), President de Valera had been granted by the dáil powers of trusteeship over funds collected in America, and was therefore in a position to make a gesture of financial solidarity to a fellow anti-imperialist entity; and secondly, as set out above, McCartan's mission to establish relations with Soviet Russia was ratified by the dáil. Furthermore, the driving force behind the first dáil was not the Catholic hierarchy, but rather the revolutionary enthusiasm of its elected members. As mentioned above, and as will be discussed further in chapter three, many in the ranks of the republican and labour movements were favourably disposed towards the ideals and expectations of the Russian revolution.

In the event Dr McCartan travelled directly from the U.S. to Soviet Russia – without left-wing or business colleagues – and arrived in Moscow on 14 February 1921. According to McCartan's own account of the visit, his arrival coincided with the attendance in the Soviet capital of Roddy Connolly – the twenty-year-old son of the 1916 Easter Rising leader, James Connolly – at the third Comintern congress as an Irish communist representative.³⁵ While the presence of Roddy Connolly indicated that the Comintern was willing to assist the embryonic Irish communist movement with political support, McCartan was soon informed that Soviet state officials were having second thoughts about ratifying the draft Irish-Soviet treaty. Following the defeat of British interventionist forces on the side of the White Russians, official Soviet government attitudes towards Britain had pragmatically changed. Anxious to normalise relations with industrialised powers to gain access to repairs for their war-torn economy, they were in the process of negotiating an Anglo-Soviet trade agreement. McCartan was first received by Santeri Nuorteva, with whom he had drawn up the draft treaty in the U.S. less than a year previously. Nuorteva, now a senior official with the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (Narkomindel), confirmed that negotiations were under way with the British, and that the Irish-Soviet position would have to 'begin in the new [sic] and not on the basis of the proposed treaty.'³⁶

On 17 February McCartan had a second meeting, this time with Commissar G.V. Chicherin. Chicherin received McCartan politely, but quizzed him closely on the possibility that President de Valera would accept home rule status for Ireland, on the

³⁵ This section is informed by 'Memorandum by Patrick McCartan on hopes of recognition of the Irish Republic from the U.S.S.R.', June 1921, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 88, N.A.I., E.S., 32, 228), at (<http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1921/88.htm>) (13 Jan 2013), pp1-6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Ulster question, and on reports that Irish republicans were hostile to communism. Chicherin also enquired after the current status of the Irish Citizen Army, which had been set up in November 1913 as a workers' defence force and had been commanded by James Connolly prior to the 1916 rising.³⁷ It may have been the case that Chicherin was cross checking with McCartan the kind of information that Roddy Connolly had supplied to the Comintern.³⁸ In the event Chicherin invited McCartan to remain in Moscow, pending the outcome of the discussions with the British. Nonetheless, it came as no surprise when a month later an Anglo-Soviet trade agreement was signed. Desmond Greaves summed up McCartan's dilemma: 'he was told frankly by Chicherin that the Russians did not propose to jeopardise their relations with Britain for the sake of a republic the Irish did not seem sure about themselves.'³⁹ Whatever lay behind Soviet thinking, Dr McCartan tried to salvage something from his visit and he spent the last few weeks in Moscow attempting to arrange for direct trade between Ireland and Russia, 'in accordance with the terms of the English agreement.'⁴⁰ But by June McCartan realised that he was wasting his time and he departed for home, empty-handed.

Among the last acts between Ireland and Russia in the revolutionary period was a gesture of Irish generosity to help alleviate the effects of famine and displacement that had arisen from the First World War and the Russian civil war. The details were succinctly recorded in a dáil report, signed by S. Ghabháin Uí Dhubhthaigh (George Gavan Duffy),⁴¹ and dated April 1922 – just two months before the outbreak of civil war in Ireland:

A sum of £1,000 has been contributed, through the Saor an Leanbh [Save the Children] committee, towards the Irish effort for relief of the famine victims in Russia; this effort is attached to Dr. Nansen's admirable organisation in South

³⁷ See Fergus A. D'Arcy, 'James Connolly (1868-1916)', in *D.I.B.* at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a1953>) (25 Apr. 2013).

³⁸ See O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, for a fuller discussion on McCartan's attitude on Roddy Connolly's relationship with the Citizen Army, pp 44-8.

³⁹ Greaves, *Liam Mellows*, p. 257.

⁴⁰ See Patrick McCartan to Mr. Weinstein, 13 May 1921, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 83, N.A.I., D.F.A., E.S. box 32, 228), p. 2, available at (<http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1921/83.htm>) (3 Oct. 2013)

⁴¹ See Gerard Hogan, 'George Gavan Duffy (1882-1951)' in *D.I.B.* at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do?jsessionid=D9B4DCD17A75C0F255F1915C1827358F>) (23 Apr. 2013). Duffy had been a plenipotentiary at the Treaty talks with the British government, and was minister for external affairs in the provisional Irish Free State government, from Jan. to July 1922. He soon became disillusioned with the Irish Free State. In later years he was a legal advisor to de Valera.

Russia; unfortunately upwards of six million lives were lost before help arrived.⁴²

What is notable here is that the money was not sent directly to the Soviet government, but rather through the offices of Fridtjof Nansen, the League of Nations' first high commissioner for refugees.⁴³ The decision to route the money through the League indicated the desire of the emerging Irish Free State government to be associated with the world body, and also one of distancing itself from Soviet Russia.

Before commenting upon Dr McCartan's final act as Ireland's representative to Soviet Russia, a short note on the fate of his two Bolshevik contacts in New York, following their return to Soviet Russia, is required for the Irish-Soviet record. The Palmer raids took their toll on American left wing and pro-Soviet circles, and foreigners were especially targeted for arrest and deportation. By late 1920 the Soviet bureau was closed, and Santeri Nuorteva got out just in time to avoid Palmer's men. He went through Canada to England, where he was jailed for a time, and eventually deported to Soviet Russia. There he was soon appointed to a high administrative position in the Narkomindel, as mentioned above. However, suspicions rose about his possible role as a British agent and he was jailed for almost one year. His arrest occurred while Dr McCartan was in Moscow, who recorded that 'he was thrown into prison on suspicion of being a British agent.'⁴⁴ He seems to have overcome this setback, and after being released he again gained an important position – this time in the government of the Soviet Karelian Republic. His life ended in a Leningrad hospital in 1929, in unexplained circumstances, according to U.S. researcher, Auvo Kostiainen.⁴⁵ However, according to Emmet O'Connor, in a more recent work, Nuorteva was arrested 'as a British spy and executed'.⁴⁶ (As O'Connor failed to provide a source for this contention, further academic research – beyond the scope of this thesis – is required.) As for Ludwig Martens, he was deported from the U.S. on 22 January 1921, accompanied by 'his wife

⁴² Dáil Éireann foreign affairs report, 26 Apr. 1922, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 277, N.A.I., D.F.A., E.S. box 1, 13), pp 1, at (<http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1922/277.htm>) (11 Jan. 2013).

⁴³ For details of Nansen's humanitarian work, see Martyn Housden, *The League of Nations and the organisation of peace* (Harlow, 2012), pp, 5, 7,16 and 62-66.

⁴⁴ 'Memorandum by Patrick McCartan on hopes of recognition of the Irish Republic from the U.S.S.R.', June 1921, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 88, N.A.I., E.S.,32, 228), at (<http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1921/88.htm>) (13 Jan 2013), pp1-6.

⁴⁵ This section has been informed by Auvo Kostiainen, *Santeri Nuorteva and the origins of Soviet-American relations*, available at Genealogical Society of Finland (<http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/art/article252e.htm>) (12 Oct. 2013)

⁴⁶ O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 47.

and two children and forty-six men and women from the Soviet bureau'.⁴⁷ After returning to Russia in 1921, he became a senior figure as a central planner in the industrialisation of the Soviet Union, and a specialist on the theory and production of diesel engines. He died in 1948, and in recognition of his contribution to the development of the Soviet state, he was buried in Novodevichy cemetery in Moscow, a burial ground reserved for outstanding figures in Soviet society.⁴⁸

To complete this opening account of Irish-Soviet diplomatic contacts, a note is required on the return from Moscow in late 1921 of Dr McCartan. Alone among those representatives who had served with de Valera in the mission to the U.S., McCartan gave his support to the Anglo-Irish treaty. Despite this support, he refused to take any kind of a job with the Free State government and tried to mediate in the civil war. Of more relevance for this study, however, was his final duty as the Irish representative to Russia: he submitted a memorandum on his impressions of the nascent Soviet Union. Displaying a strong sense of political scepticism and ideological opposition (perhaps influenced, to some extent, by the Soviets' refusal to grant recognition to the Irish Republic), the following extracts best sum up his attitude to the new Soviet order:

Though it is claimed that the present government is dictatorship of the proletariat it is nothing of the kind. It is a dictatorship of the Communist Party which represents less than one per cent of the population of Russia; and dictatorship of the Communist Party means in reality dictatorship of about half a dozen leaders of the Communist Party.⁴⁹

And for McCartan's interpretation of early Soviet attitudes towards Ireland:

There is some interest in Ireland on the part of those one meets, but the revolution in Ireland was a national one and hence it was concluded had little or nothing in common with communism or the 'world revolution'... There was some admiration for the fighting qualities of Irishmen but they were not communists and Irishmen everywhere are reactionaries, that is, they are not usually socialists... As a rule they [the Irish] are Catholics, and God and the churches are the opponents of communists. 'Religion is the opiate of the workers'... the government of Russia would recognize the Republic of Ireland any day if they could do so without injuring Russia itself.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, 23 Jan. 1921

⁴⁸ Evgenev and Shapik, 'Ludwig Martens', p. 502.

⁴⁹ 'Memorandum by Patrick McCartan on conditions in Russia', [1921, n.d., but after June] in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 89, N.A.I., D.F.A., E.S. box 14, 96), pp 1, 3-4, at (<http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1921/89.htm>) (11 Jan. 2013)

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

With those words from a disappointed emissary, the first period of Irish-Soviet diplomatic contacts was brought to an end.

Contacts at the League of Nations, 1934

When the Irish Free State was established in 1922 the formation of diplomatic relations with individual foreign states was not a priority. By 1930, relations with only five states had been formalised: Britain, the U.S., the Holy See, France and Germany.⁵¹ Evidence of a fleeting effort to propose diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union in 1929 was put forward by Fianna Fáil, shortly after the party entered the dáil.⁵² In the same year a ten-strong delegation from the Dublin Trades Union and Labour Council made the journey to Moscow to coincide with the twelfth anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution, and on their return home made a favourable progress report on Soviet successes.⁵³ Some efforts to open trade relations were made, including a proposal that arose from talks between Irish and Soviet officials in 1929 at Geneva to send a Soviet trade commissioner to Dublin to purchase ‘horses for military and other purposes, hides and skins, wool and herrings’.⁵⁴ This came to nought under the Cumann na nGael administration, and with growing levels of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism in an increasingly Catholic dominated Ireland, the question of relations with the Soviet Union ceased to arise.

When Fianna Fáil and de Valera came to power in 1932, their election coincided with the Irish Free State’s presidency of the League of Nations. Heretofore, de Valera’s regard for the League’s willingness to act as an effective instrument for world peace had been ‘marked by a qualified pessimism’.⁵⁵ However, in power De Valera was determined to assert the state’s independent attitude and avoid following bloc voting with the British Commonwealth countries. This concern specifically arose in relation to an upcoming vote on the admission of the U.S.S.R. to the League in Geneva in September, 1934. De Valera first turned down an invitation from the British delegation to attend a general meeting of Commonwealth delegates to discuss Soviet admission, as

⁵¹ See Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, appendix 2, ‘Countries with which Ireland maintains diplomatic relations’, p. 270.

⁵² As cited in Mícheál Ó Corcora and Ronald J. Hill, ‘The Soviet Union in Irish foreign policy’ in *International Affairs*, liix, no. 2 (spring, 1982), p. 261-2.

⁵³ See Michael O’Riordan, *Pages from history on Irish-Soviet relations* (Dublin, 1977), pp 3-6.

⁵⁴ Michael Mac White to Joseph P. Walshe (Dublin), 30 Nov. 1927, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 122, N.A.I., D.F.A., E.A., 104 (b), at (<http://www.difp.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=837>) (23 Aug. 2011).

⁵⁵ As noted by Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 155.

confirmed by the young Irish diplomat, Frederick Boland:⁵⁶ ‘the president [de Valera] decided that nobody from his delegation should go’.⁵⁷ More important, however, was the context and objective of the Soviet Union’s application to join the League at this stage: Adolph Hitler’s accession to power in Germany in the previous year had raised the prospects of a European war, and the resultant decision of the Soviet Union to seek a form of collective security – in line with the aims of the League. De Valera, as the leader of a small nation, shared the Soviets’ desire for stability in Europe, and defying domestic opposition from Cumann na nGael and church indignation (while making clear his opposition to Soviet domestic policies, especially on the curtailment of religion), he supported Soviet admission:

Why? Because it is obvious that anyone who has the interest of the League at heart, and looks upon the league as an instrument for the preservation of world peace, must desire to see in the league a nation of the importance of Russia. Her territory is two, perhaps three, times the size of the rest of Europe; she has a population, I believe, of some one hundred and sixty-five millions. Is it not obvious, *a priori*, that there must be a strong feeling on the part of everybody who wishes well of the League in favour of having such a nation participate in the League’s work?⁵⁸

The Soviet representative present at Geneva was the People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov. He was the ‘indefatigable advocate’ of the new Soviet policy of collective security which sought to ‘enmesh expansionist Germany in a web of multilateral guarantees and, failing this, the creation of an alliance system to contain Hitler’s wild ambitions.’⁵⁹ Theodore Draper, when writing on the American communist movement, recorded that de Valera met with Litvinov in Geneva. Sadly, Draper’s account of the statesmen’s conversation was confined to a less lofty issue than collective security: de Valera asked that the loan of \$20,000, which he had extended to

⁵⁶ Frederick ‘Freddie’ H. Boland graduated from Trinity College and King’s Inns, Dublin, where he received B.A. and L.L.B. degrees (1926). A Rockefeller research fellow, he studied at Harvard, the University of Chicago and the University of North Carolina (1926-8). See Michael Kennedy, ‘Frederick H. Boland (1904-85)’ in *D.I.B.* at <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0761&searchClicked=clicked&quickadvsearch=yes> (9 Jan. 2012). He was not a relation of the previously discussed Harry Boland. Frederick Boland was later to become prominent at the United Nations in Irish-Soviet affairs.

⁵⁷ Frederick H. Boland to Seán Murphy, 13 Sept. 1934, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 237 N.A.I., D.F.A., 26/75) available at <http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume4/1934/1606.htm>. (27 Sept. 2013).

⁵⁸ Eamon de Valera to the plenary session of the League of Nations assembly, 12 Sept. 1934, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 236, U.C.D.A., P150/2801), available at <http://www.difp.ie/search.asp?searchterms=No.+236&stype=1> (27 Sept. 2013).

⁵⁹ Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the struggle for collective security in Europe, 1933-9* (Birmingham, 1984), p. 2.

the Soviets in 1920, be repaid in return for the Czarist jewels – a request to which he ‘received no response’.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, de Valera’s vote, and his contribution towards expanding the possibility for collective security, added to Ireland’s international reputation, as was confirmed by a letter from Frederick Boland, with de Valera in Geneva. Boland wrote to the assistant secretary in the department of external affairs:

The curious thing is that the speech seems to have pleased everybody, both those who are in favour of Russia’s entry into the League and those who are against it; and a great many people here are loud in their praises of the tact and delicacy with which the president publicly discussed the question of Russia’s entry into the League at a moment at which the private, hotel-bedroom conversations on the subject were at a peculiarly difficult and delicate stage.⁶¹

However, there was to be a significant qualifying factor with Irish support for ongoing Soviet membership of the League. This became evident when the Irish permanent delegate to the League was instructed on the orders of the government to ‘immediately’ implement a *démarche* with Secretary-General Joseph Avenol against the allocation of duties in the area of social policy to Marcel Rosenberg, the Soviet Union’s appointee as under secretary-general of the League.⁶² This Irish initiative was made on the basis of ‘a fundamental conflict of principles and ideals [which] separates the Soviet Union from Christian states.’⁶³ The Irish move was informed by communications from Cardinal Secretary of State Pacelli at the Vatican, who feared that the Soviet appointee would be given charge of the League’s health committee and the formulation of policies on birth control.⁶⁴ In the aftermath of the Irish and other countries’ representations, when Marcel Rosenberg took up his post at the League’s secretariat, the Irish permanent delegate

⁶⁰ Theodore Draper, *The roots of American communism* (New Brunswick, 2003), p. 240, available at (http://books.google.ie/books?id=Bfxu61smg2EC&pg=PA240&lpg=PA240&dq=Maxim+Litvinov+Eamon+de+Valera&source=bl&ots=-VqBlkdv5q&sig=KJHrsN_6ExUwjVnp6BnpKYbMuEg&hl=en&ei=6czgTojdEIWXhQeIkqyYBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=OCBoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Maxim%20Litvinov%20Eamon%20de%20Valera&f=false) (10 Jan. 2013), p. 240.

⁶¹ Frederick H. Boland to Sean Murphy, 17 Sept. 1934, in *D.I.F.P.* (No. 238, N.A.I., D.F.A., 26/75).

⁶² See copy telegram from Department of External Affairs [hereinafter D.E.A.] to F.T. Cremins, Geneva, 9 Jan. 1935, in Appointment of Soviet under secretary-general to League of Nations (N.A.I., D.F.A., 3/126/25). The author is indebted to his N.U.I.M. Ph.D. candidate colleague, Emma Edwards, for bringing this file to his attention.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ See J.P. Walshe, secretary, D.E.A., to an t-Aire Lán Chómhachtach, Rome, 10 Jan. 1935, and F.T. Cremins to secretary, D.E.A., 10 Jan. 1935, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 3/126/25). Cardinal Pacelli subsequently reigned as Pope Pius XI, 1939-1958.

reported that Rosenberg was ‘allocated no duties of a direct nature...he is known in the lobbies as the under secretary-general without portfolio.’⁶⁵

Resolution of the Irish-Soviet \$20,000 loan, 1949

As mentioned above, Eamon de Valera got no response from Maxim Litvinov when he raised the Republic’s outstanding \$20,000 loan to Soviet Russia. However, when the matter was raised publicly in Ireland by Dr Patrick McCartan, de Valera could not ignore the matter. McCartan resurfaced in Irish public life, when he contested the 1945 presidential election as an independent, left-republican candidate, and secured a respectable 19.6% share of the vote.⁶⁶ He subsequently became a founder member of Clann na Poblachta and contested the 1948 general election in the Cork city constituency. During the election campaign, Fianna Fáil’s Seán MacEntee attempted to embarrass the leader of Clann na Poblachta, Seán MacBride, by accusing him of being associated in 1931 with the Friends of Soviet Russia organisation. This prompted McCartan to respond with a letter to the newspapers revealing the details of the Soviet loan and jewels and asked of MacEntee and de Valera: ‘if that money were ever repaid by Soviet Russia, and if not where are the jewels of which their colleagues had custody?’⁶⁷ He then went further to reveal that de Valera had sent him to Russia in 1921 and claimed therefore ‘I would have as much ground for implying that de Valera was a communist in 1920 as MacEntee has for suggesting Mr MacBride was one in 1931.’⁶⁸ This caused an immediate political kerfuffle, and de Valera was obliged to confirm in an election speech delivered in Youghal on 17 January that ‘the jewels are still safe in government keeping awaiting redemption.’⁶⁹ In fact the jewels had been passed into the custody of the state by the Boland family in 1938, (after de Valera had become taoiseach, in keeping with Harry Boland’s instructions to his mother in 1921) along with the original paperwork signed by Ludwig Martens in New York in 1920.⁷⁰ In the event Fianna Fáil lost the general election and de Valera was replaced by Taoiseach John A. Costello’s inter-party government.

⁶⁵ Permanent delegate, to secretary, D.E.A., 22 Jan. 1935 in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 3/126/25).

⁶⁶ See ElectionsIreland.org, ‘1945 presidential election results’, available at (<http://electionsireland.org/result.cfm?election=1945P&cons=194>) (31 Aug. 2010). Seán T.O’Kelly was elected president with 49.52% of the vote.

⁶⁷ Letters to the *Irish Press*, 16 Jan. 1948

⁶⁸ *Irish Times*, 19 Jan. 1948.

⁶⁹ *Sunday Express*, 11 Dec. 1966.

⁷⁰ See Roinn an Taoiseach receipt, 18 Nov. 1938 in Irish Republican loan to Russia (1920) – Russian crown jewels (1948-69) (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P135).

The new government's finance minister, Patrick McGilligan, eschewing any responsibility to consult with the Soviet Union, informed the dáil that he proposed to have the jewels valued and disposed of for the benefit of the exchequer. He sent them for public auction in London where Christie's valued them at £1,600 – significantly below the \$20,000 loan. Initially, government ministers and officials, debated whether to have Christie's sell them 'without disclosure of their origin or of the Irish government's interest in them',⁷¹ or by public auction to avoid domestic public criticism following a private sale. However, on the recommendation of the minister for external affairs, Seán MacBride, the government finally decided on 16 March 1949 that the Soviets should be given an opportunity to redeem the pledge.⁷² Whether this decision was made on the basis of an obligation to the Soviets or because of the substantial loss likely to accrue to the state from a sale through Christie's, is not recorded in the files. Nevertheless, as the decision to contact the Soviets was not made until after receiving Christie's valuation it would appear that MacBride's recommendation to his fellow ministers was made all the easier to accept on a purely financial basis.

The diplomatic channel chosen to contact the Soviets was the Soviet embassy in Britain. Irish ambassador to Britain (high commissioner for Ireland), John W. Dulanty, duly wrote in March to the Soviet ambassador, Georgi Nikolaevich Zaroubin, requesting payment of \$20,000 (without interest), in exchange for the pledged jewels. Under some pressure from Dublin to expedite a response from the Soviets, Dulanty made a number of written approaches and unscheduled visits to the Soviet embassy, without receiving a definitive response. No doubt the request put the Soviets' state records system to a significant test and while the Irish were in a position to supply copies of receipts, etc. signed by Ludwig Martens, the reported death of Martens in October of the previous year may have presented a verification dilemma. Also, the Soviet authorities had to consider the integrity of the jewels being offered: how could they be reasonably sure they were those handed over by Martens in April 1920? Meanwhile, the Irish government decided to bring the matter to a head and under instruction from Seán MacBride, Dulanty wrote to Ambassador Zaroubin insisting on a response and stating that if the payment of \$20,000 was not received 'by, say, 15

⁷¹ Memo for the government, 7 Mar. 1949 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P135).

⁷² Memo for the government, 16 Mar. 1949 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P135).

August [1949]’ the jewels would be disposed of.⁷³ This ultimatum brought a swift reply in the form of a succinct letter from Zaroubin to Dulanty, stating:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter in respect of \$20,000 received in 1920 by Mr L. K. Martenson [sic], the representative of the R.S.F.S.R. in the U.S.A. on the security of some jewels. Although this transaction has not been done in the proper way the Soviet government recognises this sum as its loan and is ready to deposit it on account of the Irish government.⁷⁴

The transaction was completed in London on 13 September 1949 when Ambassador Zaroubin called to the premises of the Irish embassy with a cheque for \$20,000 drawn on the Moscow Narodny Bank, London, and the jewels were handed over to him by Dulanty.⁷⁵ An indication of the level of suspicion and caution of Irish diplomats towards their Soviet counterparts during the transaction can be gauged from the extra care taken by Dulanty on the morning of the handover of the jewels: he had insured them in the amount of £5,000, against ‘all risks’, in respect of the period of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at a cost of £1.5s.0d., with the Eagle Star Company.⁷⁶ In this way the thirty-year saga of the Irish republican loan to Soviet Russia, entered into in a shared sense of anti-imperialist cooperation, was brought to an end.

Gaining membership of the United Nations

Ireland’s support for Soviet admission to the League of Nations was not reciprocated when it came to the launch of the League’s successor, the United Nations Organisation (U.N.). Irish membership was delayed at the Soviet Union’s insistence – as one of the permanent members of the powerful Security Council – on the ostensible basis that Ireland had remained neutral in the Second World War and had not established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ Ireland’s application did have the support of Britain and the U.S. in 1946, but it was only after some soul-searching that the British government decided to adopt this position. The foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, wrote to Prime Minister Clement Atlee to express his outright opposition: ‘my reason is because I fear that as soon as she [Ireland] became a member of the U.N. she

⁷³ Dulanty to Ambassador Zaroubin, 30 July 1949, copy sent to Frederick H. Boland (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P135, 85/431/48).

⁷⁴ Ambassador Zaroubin to Dulanty, 9 Aug. 1949, copy sent to Boland (N.A.I., 10/P135, 85/431/48).

⁷⁵ Copy letter, 14 Sept. 1949, Dulanty to Boland (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P135, 85/431/48).

⁷⁶ Dulanty to Boland, 20 Sept. 1949 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P135, 85/431/48).

⁷⁷ O’Brien, *Memoir*, pp 168-9.

would immediately raise the question of the partition of Ireland.⁷⁸ The new Labour government was taking a decidedly unionist view in relation to Ireland and was keen not to upset the sensibilities of the government at Stormont. Atlee at first supported Bevin's view but by July it was the Dominions Office's pragmatic view of the balance of forces at the U.N. that held sway in London. And the value of that decision was soon evidenced by the reception afforded to the British ambassador to Ireland, Sir John Maffey, when he informed de Valera of Britain's support at the U.N.: Maffey reported to London that the taoiseach pointedly avoided any Irish linkage between partition and U.N. membership.⁷⁹

It is interesting to note the support from the People's Republic of Poland in 1946, when its ambassador to the U.S. and delegate to the Security Council, Dr Oskar Ryszard Lange, 'the renowned economist and Marxist scholar', explained that 'the people of Poland have always throughout the whole history of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries had a great sympathy and deep feeling with the people of Ireland'.⁸⁰ Furthermore, in 1947 Poland's ambassador to Britain, Jerzy Michalowski, responded to an approach from the Irish high commissioner in London, J.W. Dulanty, by attempting to persuade the then Soviet delegate to the U.N., Andrei Gromyko, to lift the objection. Gromyko refused, telling the Pole that the Irish failure to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union 'was in the nature of an affront to their [Soviet] dignity'.⁸¹

Irish membership was vetoed several times by the Soviet Union, much to Taoiseach de Valera's frustration. De Valera was so personally committed to the importance of an active foreign affairs role for Ireland that he combined both the roles of taoiseach and external affairs minister for many years (1932-48). He gave considerable vent to his diplomatic frustration in a revealing newspaper interview in August, 1947. He stated that the latest application had been made because of his government's desire that Ireland play her full part in securing international cooperation and world peace. He described the reasons offered by the Russians to block this

⁷⁸ Deirdre McMahon, 'Our mendicant vigil is over: Ireland and the United Nations', in Michael Kennedy and Deirdre McMahon (eds), *Essays marking fifty years of Ireland's United Nations membership* (Dublin, 2005), pp 5-24, p. 10.

⁷⁹ Sir John Maffey to Dominions Office, 8 July 1946, as cited in McMahon, 'Our mendicant vigil is over', p. 12.

⁸⁰ Sean Cronin, 'Ireland's nine-year struggle to join the U.N.', *Irish Times*, 29 Dec. 1980.

⁸¹ J.W. Dulanty to F. H. Boland, 21 Mar. 1947, in Boland to heads of mission (N.A.I., D.F.A., 417/33).

ambition as ‘obviously pretence’, and on Irish neutrality in the Second World War he castigated the Soviets:

If Russia, which attacked Finland, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, can be regarded as qualifying as a peace-loving nation, it is difficult to see how a nation which kept the peace and scrupulously fulfilled all its obligations as a member of the League of Nations can rightly be regarded as not qualifying – but then...we have no diplomatic relations with Russia...⁸²

If de Valera hoped to influence the Soviets with such an undiplomatic outburst, it is likely that Soviet diplomats would have been less than impressed by his reference to military actions which the Soviets believed were necessary to improve the Red Army’s defences against the expected onslaught from Nazi Germany. Even so, there was no excusing the following contribution offered by Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky,⁸³ who shortly after de Valera’s interview told the general assembly on 17 November 1947:

We affirm that it is impossible to recognise as peace-loving such states as Ireland and Portugal which supported fascism in its struggle against peace and peace-loving people, and against the U.N., and which are even now maintaining particularly friendly relationships with Franco’s Spain, the last offshoot of fascism in Europe.⁸⁴

Vyshinsky’s ill-informed remarks – erroneously coupling de Valera’s Ireland with Antonio Salazar’s authoritarian and right-wing regime in Portugal – displayed a lack of knowledge of Irish neutrality. Had he consulted with Irish communists he would have been informed that not only had the Communist Party in Northern Ireland actively supported the Allied war effort, but that communists in the twenty-six counties had supported a policy of principled neutrality:

For all imaginable reasons, immediate and historical, there was no possible choice except neutrality; all that happened during the war and the role of British imperialism in Ireland since, confirms that neutrality was Ireland’s manifestation of anti-imperialism...⁸⁵

⁸² Eamon de Valera interview in *Irish Times*, 1 Aug. 1947.

⁸³ Vyshinsky, who was appointed to foreign affairs by Stalin in 1940, had previously been the chief procurator of the U.S.S.R. during the purge trials of the so-called ‘enemies of the people’ of the late 1930s. Andrei Gromyko, who worked alongside Vyshinsky for some years after the Second World War, described the former procurator as ‘a careerist without honour or conscience’. See Gromyko, *Memories*, pp 406-10.

⁸⁴ Sean Cronin, ‘Ireland’s nine-year struggle to join the U.N.’, *Irish Times*, 29 Dec. 1980.

⁸⁵ Sean Nolan (ed.), *Communist party of Ireland: outline history* (Dublin, 1975), p. 31.

More recently, when commenting on Minister Alan Shatter's apology and pardon in the dáil to those Irish soldiers who deserted the Irish army and fought in British forces, Diarmaid Ferriter has criticised the minister's characterisation in 2012 of Irish wartime neutrality in the context of the Holocaust as 'a principle of moral bankruptcy'. Ferriter put the case for a deeper understanding of the period:

But the important point is that the desire that existed in the 1930s and 1940s was that a state that had experienced a war of independence – against an imperial Britain with an often shameful record of misrule and oppression of the Irish – and a civil war less than twenty years prior to the Second World War, was determined to implement as independent a foreign policy as possible.⁸⁶

More fundamentally, however, both de Valera and Vyshinsky were being less than candid about the Soviet (and, by extension, that of the U.S.) policy of blocking Irish membership. Both failed to acknowledge the *realpolitik* that lay behind the Soviet veto: Cold War expectations that Ireland would support American positions at the world body. This position was more openly stated in this period by a communist representative of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society in an address to an annual conference of the Scotland-U.S.S.R. society:

For my part I want to see my country enrolled as a member of the United Nations and playing its part in the promotion of world peace and friendship. However, the fact cannot be glossed over that the Ireland of today bears no resemblance to its great revolutionary past [i.e. during the life of the first dáil, when talks were ongoing between Irish and Soviet representatives].⁸⁷

Ireland was not the only nation caught up in this East-West impasse, on which former Irish diplomat at the U.N., Noel Dorr, notes pertinent comments from political scientist, Inis Claude:

The Soviet Union acted to prevent the admission of non-communist candidates unless its own protégés were simultaneously accepted; it aimed not to exclude western countries but to secure admission for both groups...the United States was willing to have both groups rejected, to keep Soviet candidates out.⁸⁸

This analysis is also broadly supported by Sarah Davis in her thesis on this subject. While she is not as critical of the U.S. as Claude's above assessment, and is rightly

⁸⁶ Diarmaid Ferriter, *Irish Times*, 11 May 2013.

⁸⁷ Copy typed address, by unnamed representative of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society to an annual conference of the Scotland-U.S.S.R. Society, [n.d., but early 1950s], in the Seán Nolan and Geoffrey Palmer collection, archival materials of the Communist Party of Ireland at Dublin City Library and Archive [hereinafter, D.C.L.A., C.P.I.], box 9/034.

⁸⁸ Inis L. Claude Jr., *Swords into plowshares* [sic]: *the problems of international organisation* (3rd ed., New York, 1964), as cited in Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 35, fn. 25

critical of the Soviets' ill-informed position on Irish neutrality, Davis does include in her conclusion that 'the Soviet Union had no particular grievance against Ireland...[and that] by 1949 the Soviet Union decided to be practical about the issue...This led to the Soviet "package-deal" proposals.'⁸⁹ Accordingly, when Ireland was finally admitted in 1955 it was as a result of its inclusion among a balanced 'package deal' of fifteen states agreed at the Security Council.⁹⁰

Upon entry, the first head of mission to the U.N., Frederick Boland, was instrumental in drawing up a set of Irish policy positions.⁹¹ Minister for External Affairs Liam Cosgrave enunciated Ireland's policy position, which became known as 'Cosgrave's three principles':

1. Scrupulous fidelity to the principles of the U.N. charter.
2. The adoption of an independent line on all issues of foreign policy and non-association with any blocs.
3. To do whatever we can to preserve the Christian civilisation of which we are a part and with that end in view to support whenever possible those powers principally responsible for the defence of the free world in their resistance to the spread of communist power and influence.⁹²

Because of the baldness of Ireland's anti-communist and anti-Soviet positions, any meaningful implementation of 'an independent line' and 'non-association with any bloc', presented future Irish governments and diplomatic staff with very real obstacles. This soon became manifest with the return to power of Fianna Fáil, which was determined to enact more proactive policy positions at the world forum than its more cautious predecessors.

Representation of China votes, 1957-71

When Frank Aiken took up the external affairs brief after the 1957 general election, he was determined to pursue a more independent line than his predecessor, Liam Cosgrave. Aiken, while not 'out' during the 1916 Easter Rising, had shared a long

⁸⁹ Sarah Davis, 'The Soviet veto of Ireland's application for membership of the United Nations, 1946-55' (Unpublished M.A. thesis, N.U.I., Maynooth, 2001), pp 55-6.

⁹⁰ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 18. The other countries taken into membership at this time were: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Ceylon, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, and Spain.

⁹¹ Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland*, p. 234.

⁹² Stephen Collins, *The Cosgrave legacy*, p. 74.

comradeship with de Valera throughout the revolutionary years as chief of staff of the I.R.A. Thereafter he was a founding member of Fianna Fáil, and a versatile government minister in a succession of de Valera's cabinets.⁹³ Upon his arrival into the headquarters of the Department of External Affairs (located at Iveagh House, Dublin), Aiken was immediately advised by Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, the counsellor in charge of the Irish delegation at the U.N., that the best test for an independent stance was that topic which had become a 'hardy annual': the debate and vote on the representation of China.

At that time the Republic of China (Taiwan), Chiang Kai Shek's nationalist stronghold on the island of Taiwan, was recognised by the U.N. as a member state, and indeed was one of the five permanent members of the Security Council. In contradiction to this stood the claim of the People's Republic of China (mainland China) – consolidated since 1949 throughout mainland China – to replace Taiwan and to represent a single China. Taiwan was maintained politically and militarily by the U.S., and each year the Americans used their influence over other states to ensure that a majority would not vote in favour of a change in Chinese representation. The Soviet Union led the campaign for recognition for the People's Republic, and indeed withdrew temporarily from the U.N. in January 1950 when the Security Council voted down its proposal to replace Taiwan with mainland China. However, the issue continued to present itself as a test of wills at the commencement of annual assembly sessions.

Included in those who supported the U.S. in the year prior to Aiken's arrival, was Ireland's external affairs minister, Liam Cosgrave. In doing so he cited mainland China's support for North Korea against U.N. forces in the Korean war (in the absence of the U.S.S.R. at the Security Council, the U.S. was able to assemble a military expedition under the flag of the U.N. to counter the North's invasion of South Korea). But at the same time Cosgrave laid down something of a marker for member states for the future, saying: '... [we must sometime] decide whether we are going to leave the de facto government of over 500 million people without representation in the U.N., or whether we should compromise on the matter'.⁹⁴

⁹³ See Ronan Fanning, 'Francis Thomas ('Frank') Aiken (1898-1983)' in *D.I.B.*, at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0761&searchClicked=clicked&quickadvsearch=yes>) (23 Apr. 2013)

⁹⁴ Liam Cosgrave address to U.N. general assembly, 1956, as cited by Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 114.

At the twelfth session of the assembly (1957), in his address Aiken chose another stance: ‘like many here we have no sympathy with the Peking government...no country has a greater horror of despotism, aggression and religious persecution than Ireland’, but he argued that merely refusing to discuss the issue of representation would not improve the situation in either Korea or China itself; and asserted:

Our aims should be to win acceptance of the principles of the charter [of the U.N.] in China and to secure self-determination for the people of Korea. The belief of my delegation is that, in the present circumstances, progress can best be made to these ends by having a full and open discussion on the question of the representation of China in this assembly.⁹⁵

With these words Aiken was echoing de Valera’s principle – regarding collective security and the obligations of all states, big and small, to one another – as set out at the League of Nations on the question of the Soviet Union’s entry in 1934. Aiken then followed through on the courage of his convictions and voted in favour of the proposal from India to place the matter onto the session’s agenda. Despite the Irish contribution, the majority of member states maintained their predictable voting practice, and the motion was defeated.

Ireland’s vote brought something of a firestorm of invective from conservative and religious quarters. Even before Aiken cast his vote and after the Irish had given the U.S. delegation advance notice of its voting intentions, the Irish consul general in New York was subjected to a call from the archbishop of New York, Francis Cardinal Spellman. Dr. O’Brien recorded the detail, including:

His eminence wished to know whether it was true that Mr Aiken was ‘going to vote for Red China’...His eminence wanted to make his own position clear. ‘Tell Aiken’, he told the consul general, ‘that if he votes for Red China, we’ll raise the devil.’⁹⁶

True to his threat, the ‘devil’s wrath’ in Irish America stretched from Spellman’s own diocesan paper, the *Catholic News*, to the *Brooklyn Tablet* and across the Atlantic to the Irish Catholic hierarchy (especially the outspoken bishop of Galway, Dr Michael Browne), the Maynooth Mission to China, the *Irish Catholic*, and on to Fíne Gael,

⁹⁵ *Irish Times*, 5 Oct. 1957.

⁹⁶ Cardinal Spellman message for Aiken, New York, 23 Sept. 1957, as cited by O’Brien, *To Katanga and back*, p. 23.

which ‘joined with gusto in attacking the minister for his policy’.⁹⁷ But Aiken, well seasoned to such brickbats from his revolutionary past and possessed of ‘gritty integrity, conviction and stubbornness’,⁹⁸ continued to vote in similar fashion for some years. In this he could count on the support of his lodestar: Eamon de Valera. Furthermore, Aiken’s leadership emboldened Irish diplomats to stand up to church remonstrations, as was recorded by Frederick Boland’s account of a luncheon that Boland had attended in Cardinal Spellman’s palace. There, with Spellman accompanied by some colleague bishops, Boland firmly explained that Aiken’s policy on the China vote had been agreed by the government and endorsed by majority vote in Dail Éireann.⁹⁹

Even after he was elected president of Ireland in June 1959, de Valera sent diplomatic rebuffs to opponents of Aiken’s policy on the China vote. This was encapsulated in the president’s response to a letter sent to him at Áras an Úachtaráin by the ambassador from Taiwan to the Holy See, Dr. Chéou-Kang Sié. Dr. Sié had previously met de Valera in Rome, and the ambassador now chose to use the Holy See network in an attempt to maintain Irish support for Taiwan. Advance news of the contents of Dr. Sié’s letter was sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs by Leo T. McCauley, Irish ambassador to the Holy See, in a letter that read:

The purpose of his [Dr. Sié’s] visit was to say that he thought of writing a letter to President de Valera and he wanted to know if I would be willing to forward it. He explained that his letter would urge that Ireland should adopt a more benevolent attitude towards China in the assembly of the U.N...I tried to explain the minister’s policy in regard to... admittance of communist China...The ambassador however did not enter into any argument about the matter...All he said was that countries like France or England had trade interests in China which influenced their policy, but we, having a slight economic tie, could act more independently, and therefore more benevolently.¹⁰⁰

Upon receipt of Dr. Sié’s letter, President de Valera consulted with the taoiseach’s office and instructed his secretary to write a polite but short note to instruct Dr Sié upon the correct diplomatic procedure. The note simply stated: ‘I am to bring to your Excellency’s notice, article 29, 4, 1(0) of the constitution of Ireland which prescribes

⁹⁷ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 117.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁹⁹ Memorandum from Frederick H. Boland to Con Cremin, 18 Feb. 1958, in Personal correspondence with Mr F.H. Boland (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P.S. 35/1).

¹⁰⁰ Leo T. McCauley to secretary, D.E.A., 31 Aug. 1959 in Approach to President concerning Ireland's attitude to China in the United Nations Assembly (N.A.I., PRES., 2007/125/36)

that the executive power of the state in...its external relations shall be exercised by or on the authority of the government.’¹⁰¹

However, at the same time as voting with the Soviet Union to discuss representation for China in the 1950s, Frank Aiken was able to deflect some of the resultant vitriol by launching a trenchant criticism of China’s intervention into Tibet and the expulsion of the Dalai Lama. He chose to begin that criticism at home, as was captured by the *Irish Times*:

The minister for external affairs, Mr Aiken, speaking yesterday at the County Louth Fianna Fáil convention, held in Dundalk, declared that the most recent case of cruel injustice being inflicted by a powerful country against a weaker neighbour in the aggression against Tibet. This unprovoked aggression has shocked the conscience of the world, particularly that of small nations like our own, which know the evils of foreign rule.¹⁰²

And the minister then went on to the U.N. where he confounded his detractors by joining with the Federation of Malay in successfully submitting a resolution to the general assembly that called upon the People’s Republic to respect the human, cultural, and political rights of the Tibetan people. Furthermore, Aiken repositioned himself in an even more pragmatic way when the focus of the China debate was switched by the U.S. in 1961. Because of the sheer weight of extra independent membership, the Americans now dropped their objections to a discussion on the issue, and replaced it with a contention that U.N. rules required a two-thirds majority in the assembly for such an important issue.¹⁰³ This procedural tactic, raising the bar above the simple majority line, effectively bought the U.S. many more years of fending off the substantial proposal of replacing one China with the other. Aiken then amended his strategy to one of finding a mechanism to accommodate the two Chinas that would include some level of representation for Taiwan at the U.N. This he regarded as an ‘important issue’ and Ireland’s vote was thereafter cast with that of the U.S. The debate rumbled on until 1971 when support for the American tactics was overwhelmed by the increasing membership from Third World nations. The U.N.’s member states then voted in sufficient numbers (including the vote of Aiken’s successor at external affairs, Dr Patrick Hillery) to enable the People’s Republic to take over the China seat.

¹⁰¹ See copy draft reply, secretary of the president to an taoiseach, 15 Sept. 1959 in Approach to president concerning Ireland’s attitude to China in the United Nations Assembly (N.A.I., PRES., 2007/125/36).

¹⁰² *Irish Times*, 13 Apr. 1959. See also Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 120-1.

¹⁰³ See Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 125.

Nikita Khrushchev - the Irish connection, 1960

Early evidence of Ireland's promotion to a managerial role at the U.N., with direct connections to the Soviet Union, came in 1960 at the fifteenth session of the general assembly by means of the election of its president. According to the memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev, who was leading the Soviet delegation, two candidates were in the running for the post: Jiri Nosek of Czechoslovakia, supported by the Soviet Union and the socialist group of countries, and Frederick Boland of Ireland.¹⁰⁴ As a young diplomat Boland had been involved in the writing of de Valera's speech to the League of Nations indicating Irish support for Soviet membership in 1934.¹⁰⁵ But now Boland's candidature attracted the support of the U.S. and western countries, and he was duly elected president.

For some background understanding of U.S. support for Boland's candidature it is useful to note the caustic but revealing remarks from Conor Cruise O'Brien's memoirs. O'Brien had served with Boland and Aiken at the U.N. and recorded his recollections of the intricacies among the Irish delegation at the U.N., and their individual relationships with the Americans. O'Brien makes plain that the U.S. 'dominated all aspects of the workings of the U.N.', and that the positions of influence at the world body were 'in practice in the gift of the Americans.'¹⁰⁶ He then went on to state that Boland was in 'the best books of the Americans', and:

Freddie Boland at this time was already aiming at acquiring the presidency of the general assembly [of the U.N.], a position not attainable by anyone but a discreet but understanding supporter of American policy on all important matters... [He] genuinely believed that the U.S. was the leader of the free world, and deserved the unflinching support of all the other countries within the free world.¹⁰⁷

While O'Brien's recollections must be viewed in the light of his 'old rivalry' with Boland,¹⁰⁸ they do offer one insider's view of the requirements within the *realpolitik* of

¹⁰⁴ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev remembers*, p. 470.

¹⁰⁵ Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁶ O'Brien, *Memoir*, pp 180-1.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁸ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 58. Dorr criticises O'Brien's above remarks saying they 'carried the old rivalry and his (O'Brien's) combative style much too far'.

the U.N. that a candidate for high office would be expected to possess in order to attract U.S. support.

In any event, the Soviets hadn't expected 'their man' Nosek to win the vote, and Khrushchev soon came to regard Boland as a capable and fair administrator. This latter point was later confirmed by a Soviet diplomat at the U.N., Valerian Alexandrovich Zorin, who was instructed by Khrushchev to speak to Boland immediately after the Soviet leader's departure from New York. Zorin expressed Khrushchev's regret for not having been able to say good-bye to Boland, and to inform him that 'he [Khrushchev] was well satisfied with the objectivity of the chair and hoped it would continue.'¹⁰⁹ Khrushchev later recorded a revealing insight into his and the Soviet foreign ministry's attitudes towards the Irish at this time:

In fact, our sympathies were always with the Irish when they were fighting the British after World War I. Andrei Andreyevich [Gromyko] encouraged me to get to know the new speaker of the general assembly and to exchange opinions with him. As I recall he was a representative of the Irish intelligentsia, some sort of a professor. He made a good impression on me.¹¹⁰

It was during the session of the general assembly of 12 October 1960, that Khrushchev engaged in his shoe-banging episode at his desk. The precise details of the actual events of the session remain in some dispute. For the purposes of this study, the author has chosen to draw from Khrushchev's own recollection of occasion, not to offer it as a definitive record, but rather to present something of Khrushchev's motives and President Boland's handling of the heated exchanges. Khrushchev indicated that the Soviet Union would submit a proposal to the assembly calling for an end to colonialism, and he became especially upset by the response to his proposal from the Filipino delegate, Francisco A. Delago. In his contribution Delago asserted that the peoples of Eastern Europe had been colonised by the Soviet Union. Incensed, Khrushchev requested that he be allowed to make a point of order. Boland agreed, but requested speakers to avoid making attacks on fellow member countries. However, Khrushchev proceeded to accuse Delago of behaving like a sycophant of America and said 'you'd better watch out or we'll show you Kuzma's mother'. When Delago returned to the podium he asked 'who is Kuzma's mother', which provoked gales of laughter from the

¹⁰⁹ Frederick H. Boland to Con Cremin, 23 Oct. 1960 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P.S. 35/1).

¹¹⁰ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev remembers*, pp 470-1.

Soviet delegation.¹¹¹ Yet, it was later in the session that Khrushchev resorted to shoe-banging on his desk, this time in protest at the contribution from the representative of Spain, foreign minister Fernando Maria Castiella. Khrushchev's memoir records that his actions were motivated by a promise he had made to Dolores 'La Passionara' Ibaruri – the communist hero of Republican Spain during the civil war who was then living in exile in Moscow – that he would find a way of letting the Francoists know what he thought of them at the U.N.¹¹² Khrushchev's form of protest provoked President Boland, who pounded his gavel until he broke it. Boland then adjourned the session. Nevertheless, diplomatic obligations and goodwill ensured that some days later Khrushchev and Boland could chuckle together about the incident, and Boland received a crate of Russian wine from the Soviet leader with his compliments.¹¹³

More pertinent for this study is Frederick Boland's own report of his presidency of the assembly session. This comprised a four-page letter sent by Boland to Con Cremin in Dublin, just days after the events, a copy of which was forwarded to Taoiseach de Valera. It commenced with something of an understatement: 'as you will have gathered from news reports, the presidency has turned out to be a very tough assignment', and it revealed Boland's role to have been all the more 'burdensome' because of the Soviets' refusal to deal with Secretary-General Hammarskjold.¹¹⁴ Boland indicated that the Soviet delegation was at loggerheads with the secretary-general because of Hammarskjold's handling of the U.N.'s involvement in the Congo, and that this mood was further inflamed by their discovery and interception of an American U2 spy plane in U.S.S.R. airspace in May of the same year. Therefore, Boland reported, 'I had to have many more direct dealings with K. [Khrushchev] and his merry men than would otherwise have been the case'. Even so, Boland described Khrushchev as 'a complete enigma' and continued:

He is the personification of elemental violence. Moreover, like Hitler, he is power-drunk and a doctrinaire. These dangerous qualities are tempered in his case, however, by an extraordinarily sharp intelligence, a keen sense of humour and, I would say, a good deal of plain humanity...Incidentally, I am completely convinced of Khrushchev's sincerity on the question of complete and general

¹¹¹ 'We'll show you Kuzma's mother' is a Russian colloquialism meaning 'you'll see where you end up'. See Khrushchev, *Khrushchev remembers*, p. 472.

¹¹² See Khrushchev, *Khrushchev remembers*, p. 473.

¹¹³ Kennedy, 'Frederick H. Boland' in *D.I.B.*, p. 632.

¹¹⁴ Frederick H. Boland to Con Cremin, 23 Oct. 1960, in Personal correspondence with Mr F.H. Boland (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P.S. 35/1). All quotes in the rest of this paragraph are from this document.

disarmament...and that without such disarmament there will be war in a few years. I believe moreover that he dreads the prospect.

That Boland chose to inform Dublin that the Soviet leader was akin to Hitler, is surely representative of those primary sources discussed in the introduction to the thesis that were recommended by Professor Moody to Conor Cruise O'Brien: 'papers written...for the eyes of a limited number of associates, and without any thought of posterity.'¹¹⁵ Leaving aside the incongruity of comparing Khrushchev to the *fuehrer* of German fascism that brought such death and destruction to the Soviet peoples, Boland's assessment of the 'power-drunk' Khrushchev can only have sent a powerful and deprecatory message to his audience of senior government ministers and external affairs officials. Yet, on the other hand Boland could expound on Khrushchev's commitment to disarmament and alarm at the prospect of war, and of the humane aspects of his personality.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 1958-68

Chief among early Irish initiatives at the U.N. was a move to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons by means of an international treaty. This required the 'nuclear club' countries (the U.S., U.S.S.R., Britain and France) to undertake not to provide nuclear weapons or the information for their production to other states; and in turn for non-nuclear states to undertake not to make them or obtain them from nuclear powers. Aiken first raised the concept of non-proliferation in the general debate at the start of the thirteenth general assembly in September, 1958. Aiken set out the essence of the issues at stake:

How to hold our destructive powers in check, how to avoid destruction and anarchy while we evolve the perfect art of living in peace...the question for all of us is, in short, how to preserve a *pax atomica* while we build a *pax mundi*...it is therefore in the interests of the existing members of the so-called nuclear club as well as in all our interests that it should be restricted to its present membership.¹¹⁶

Ireland's resolution was accepted at the assembly by thirty-seven votes to none, but with forty-four abstentions. The Soviet Union and fellow socialist states of Eastern Europe supported the proposal, and while the U.S. and NATO members demurred, no state voted against the measure. When Ireland returned to the issue at the fourteenth

¹¹⁵ O'Brien, *Memoir*, p. 122.

¹¹⁶ Frank Aiken, 19 Sept. 1958, as cited in Chossudovsky, 'The origins of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons' in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, iii, no. 2 (1990), p. 114.

session of the general assembly, Aiken's resolution was again carried without a vote being cast against it. However, this time the Soviet Union and the U.S. had switched sides, to abstain. This arose because in the meantime the Soviets had brought forward a much more ambitious proposal of general and complete disarmament to the U.N. Their proposal, in the context of the continuing Cold War was: 'widely seen at the time as a somewhat cynical propaganda gesture.'¹¹⁷ Undeterred, Aiken stubbornly pursued approval from nation members for a commitment to a more modest but practical measure to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. Irish persistence won out when in December 1961 the general assembly adopted – without either objections or abstentions from any member-state – its resolution entitled 'Prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons'.¹¹⁸ This unanimous verdict was a crucial breakthrough. It did take the major powers another seven years to negotiate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (N.P.T.), but when it was opened for simultaneous ratification by individual member states in Washington, London and Moscow in July 1968, the Soviet government invited Aiken to sign Ireland's endorsement, in Moscow. Dorr neatly sums up the dénouement to this practical peace measure:

At a dinner on the following day he [Aiken] presented Ireland's formal instrument of ratification to the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko. As a result, Ireland became the first country to ratify the new treaty – just as it had been the first to raise the issue in the United Nations ten years before.¹¹⁹

Evgeny Chossudovsky was even more generous to the Soviet Union on their gesture to Aiken: 'and it was not just diplomatic politeness but a sense of respect and indebtedness that prompted the government of the U.S.S.R. to issue an invitation...at a time when no diplomatic relations [existed].'¹²⁰ Further, a front-page account from the *Irish Times*' correspondent in Moscow, Wesley Boyd, provides historical insights on the occasion: first, Aiken revealed to Boyd that following the outcome of the first vote at the U.N. ten years previously that was supported by the Soviets, he had told the delegation: 'if we ever get this through I'll go to Moscow to sign the treaty...I didn't think it would take so long.'¹²¹ Second, on the question of formal Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations, the newspaper speculated that 'real progress towards disarmament,

¹¹⁷ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 134.

¹¹⁸ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, pp 131-41.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹²⁰ Chossudovsky, 'The origins of the treaty on non-proliferation', p. 129.

¹²¹ *Irish Times*, 1 July 1968.

if it can be achieved, cannot but advance closer relationships'.¹²² However, it would be a mistake to conclude that Aiken's four-day stay in Moscow indicated closeness in Irish-Soviet relations in the 1960s at the U.N. or an imminent establishment of diplomatic links. Indeed, it seems Aiken did not see the need to exchange missions with the Soviets. He could circumvent domestic Irish anti-communist attitudes by conducting such business in the relative seclusion of the halls and corridors at the U.N. headquarters in New York. Finally, it is useful to conclude here on the legacy of Aiken's overall relationship with the Soviet Union at the U.N., as is demonstrated by Patrick Keatinge in his study of the voting record on Cold War-related topics: 'Ireland voted with the United States at least three times as often as against her'.¹²³

Irish attempts to secure a U.N. peacekeeping force for Northern Ireland, with Soviet help, 1969

Frank Aiken's successor as external affairs minister was Dr Patrick J. Hillery. Like Taoiseach Jack Lynch, Dr Hillery was of the new, post-revolutionary generation of Fianna Fáil government ministers. A medical doctor by profession, he successfully entered politics in the 1951 general election as the running mate of Eamon de Valera in the Clare constituency.¹²⁴ He thereafter served in a number of ministries, principally in education, where he was regarded as an effective moderniser. He was appointed to the Department of External Affairs after the general election in July 1969, at a time when the movement for civil rights in Northern Ireland was encountering increasingly violent reactions from loyalist organisations, along with ineffective and often partisan policing by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (R.U.C.) and the Ulster Special Constabulary (B-Specials). By early August conditions had become so seriously destabilised that some nationalist areas were at imminent risk from loyalist rioters. As refugees fled south across the border, Prime Minister Harold Wilson supported the Stormont government by deploying British troops to the streets of Belfast and Derry.

With tensions mounting on both sides of the border, the Dublin government's anxiety became focused on a potentially explosive event: the much enlarged Apprentice Boys' parade in Derry city set for 12 August, where expected band numbers were to rise

¹²² As quoted by Chossudovsky, 'The origins of the treaty on non-proliferation', p. 130.

¹²³ Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 76.

¹²⁴ 'Dr Patrick J. Hillery (1923-2008)', Houses of the oireachtas, Dáil Éireann members database (hereafter, Dáil members database) (<http://www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist/default.asp?housetype=0&HouseNum=19&MemberID=519&ConstID=26>) (1 Dec. 2011).

to seventy – up from seventeen for the previous year. Dr Hillery was dispatched to London to meet the foreign secretary, Michael Stewart, from whom he received a frosty reception. When the Irish minister proceeded to warn of the prospects for serious violence, unless the parade was either banned or curtailed to its usual size, he was informed by the foreign minister: ‘I must say to you that there is a limit to which we can discuss with outsiders – even our nearest neighbours, this internal matter.’¹²⁵ When the Apprentice Boys’ parade duly descended into the ‘Battle of the Bogside’ and extensive violence erupted across Northern Ireland, Taoiseach Jack Lynch made a televised address to the country. In the course of his address he indicated that as far as his government was concerned the R.U.C. and British troops were not acting in a professional or impartial manner. Therefore, he informed the country:

The Irish government have, therefore, requested the British government to apply immediately to the U.N. for the urgent dispatch of a peace-keeping force to the six counties of Northern Ireland and have instructed the Irish permanent representative to the U.N. to inform the secretary-general of this request.¹²⁶

Unsurprisingly, the British government dismissed the Irish request on the basis that internal security issues were purely an internal matter, thereby leaving the Irish government with little choice other than to bring the proposal to the U.N. themselves. The government decided to send this request to the powerful Security Council, and Dr Hillery flew to New York to present Ireland’s case. Apart from the urgency and integrity of its proposal, the Irish cause was aided by a deal of goodwill generated by the country’s impressive track record at the U.N. over the past fourteen years, especially on its contribution in the vital areas of arms control and peace-keeping. Yet, the task facing Dr Hillery and the Irish mission presented a mighty challenge for four daunting procedural reasons. First, article 2.7 of the U.N.’s charter prohibited it from interfering in essential domestic matters; second, for the issue to appear on the Security Council’s agenda – a process known in U.N. parlance as ‘inscription’ – it had to first garner nine positive votes from its fifteen members at a preliminary meeting; third, if the proposing state was not currently a member of the council it would not be heard at this first stage; and lastly, Britain – as a permanent member of the Security Council – enjoyed the right of veto on any matter that made its way on to the council’s agenda.

¹²⁵ As cited in Walsh, *Patrick Hillery*, p. 172.

¹²⁶ Extract from Taoiseach Jack Lynch’s address to the nation, 13 Aug. 1969, as quoted in Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 202.

In 1969, in addition to Britain's fellow permanent members (U.S., Soviet Union, France, and Republic of China), the ten elected members representing the U.N.'s regional areas were: two west European states, Finland and Spain; two Latin American countries, Colombia and Paraguay; five from Africa and Asia, Nigeria, Zambia, Senegal, Nepal and Pakistan; and one country from eastern Europe, the People's Republic of Hungary.¹²⁷ Consideration of the Irish request was set by the council's president, Jaimie de Pinies of Spain, for 20 August, and a flurry of consultation between representatives and their governments ensued. Dr Hillery made representations to individual council members and, as expected of the president, soundings were conducted between de Pinies and his fellow representatives. De Pinies, an experienced representative at the U.N. for Franco's Spain (his Irish-Spanish sympathies may have been influenced by Spain's time-honoured dispute with Britain over Gibraltar),¹²⁸ proved helpful with suggestions on the content of the Irish application. But having completed his soundings de Pinies indicated that the Irish could count only on seven votes – two short of the required number. Of these seven, he considered China, Colombia, Pakistan, Paraguay and Spain were most likely to support Ireland, and with the Soviet Union and Hungary 'reticent...but he thought that they too would do so'.¹²⁹ However, Dr Hillery's view of the communist states' intentions was a more optimistic one. Mindful of his ministerial experience at home, he colourfully recalled his first impressions on his contacts with the Soviets:

He later remarked to John McColgan [Hillery's private secretary] that his experience as minister for education had served him well in dealing with the Soviets: 'once you have dealt with the Irish bishops, the Russians are a doddle.'¹³⁰

In some contrast, Dr Hillery's soundings revealed that the U.S. was firmly of the view that the matter was an internal one for Britain, and also that France and Finland would not be in support of the Irish. Having learned bitter lessons over Katanga and Biafra, African countries were thought to be wary of situations connected to possible secessions (i.e. that Northern Ireland might secede from the United Kingdom). And, finally, it was felt that Nepal's vote was too unpredictable to call. So, Dr Hillery and his team had a

¹²⁷ Cremin, 'Northern Ireland at the United Nations', p. 67.

¹²⁸ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 211.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹³⁰ As cited in Walsh, *Patrick Hillery*, p. 183.

decision to make: would they push for a vote, and risk a fall at the very first hurdle of the agenda stage?

One possible alternative emerged from Dr Hillery's consultations with Secretary-General U Thant: the appointment of a U.N. special representative to Northern Ireland. In the run up to these events the Irish permanent representative to the U.N., Con Cremin, had been keeping Secretary General U Thant updated: 'It was our practice, and corresponded to his [U-Thant's] desire, to keep him informed of events in relation to the North'.¹³¹ U Thant may have felt a certain obligation to assist Ireland: back in 1962 he had approached Frederick Boland, then Ireland's permanent representative to the U.N., to seek 'our help in keeping him informed as well as our advice', in his efforts to be re-elected as secretary general of the U.N.¹³² In the event U Thant was now favourably disposed towards the Irish cause, and had even identified some prominent western personalities for selection as possible U.N. representatives to Northern Ireland.¹³³ But this option was dismissed as a complete non-runner by the British representative to the U.N., Lord Caradon. Nevertheless, Caradon, formerly Sir Hugh Foot and a brother of the future British Labour party leader Michael Foot, may have had some personal sympathy for the Irish stemming from his father's political views. The Foots' father, Isaac Foot, had been a prominent member of the Liberal Party and a supporter of Home Rule for Ireland, as was later advised by Michael Foot to the Irish ambassador to Britain, Eamon Kennedy. Indeed, Michael Foot told Kennedy that his father named him Michael in honour of Michael Davitt of the Irish Land League.¹³⁴

As negotiations continued, the Irish were offered a compromise. This emerged as an amalgam of the diplomatic manoeuvrings between de Pinies, the Finnish and Zambian ambassadors, and Lord Caradon. The compromise entailed Dr Hillery being allowed to make a statement of his case before the Security Council, which would allow him to vent Ireland's cause before the world body on live television. This was then to be followed by a rebuttal from Lord Caradon, after which the meeting would be adjourned without an adoption of the agenda. Consequently, and based upon the arithmetic of their

¹³¹ Cremin, 'Northern Ireland at the United Nations', p. 67.

¹³² Frederick Boland to Con Cremin, 11 Sept. 1962, in 'Personal correspondence with Mr. F.H. Boland' (N.A.I., D.F.A., 10/P.S. 35/1).

¹³³ Cremin, 'Northern Ireland at the United Nations', p. 68. They were Dr Ralph Bunche of the U.N.; Lester Pearson, former prime minister of Canada; and Earl Warren, a former U.S. chief justice.

¹³⁴ Ambassador Eamon Kennedy to D.F.A., 5 Feb. 1981, in Political situation in U.K. (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2011/39/169).

soundings, Dr Hillery and his team opted for this diplomatic choreography. They then carefully set about drafting a speech to combine an appeal for ‘an Irish domestic audience...with the “theology” of Irish nationalism by situating the whole problem of Northern Ireland against the background of the partition of Ireland in 1920-1’, together with an exposé of the discriminatory structure of Northern Ireland in the 1960s.¹³⁵

The meeting on 20 August unfolded according to the above scenario, but with a striking exception: immediately after Dr Hillery had made his lengthy address the representative of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Zakharov, made the sole intervention in support of adopting the agenda with the Irish proposal. The two authoritative published sources accessed by this study, Con Cremin and Noel Dorr (both of whom were participants on the Irish team), present somewhat differing accounts of the Soviet intervention. Cremin’s memoir, written in 1980, simply recounted that Zakharov: ‘spoke to support adoption of the agenda’.¹³⁶ Dorr presented the following extracts from Zakharov’s speech:

By the fact that the right to form a government ... belongs to one religious community, the Protestants ... to put an end to the persecution [of civil rights activists] ... [the British government must] see to it that the necessary conditions are created for the solution of problems in conformity with the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland.¹³⁷

Dorr gave his assessment of the Soviet representative’s contribution by stating that it:

...at least had the merit of supporting the request that the issue be put formally on the agenda. Dr Hillery no doubt welcomed support from any source, but he could be forgiven if he swallowed hard at terms in which that support was expressed by the Soviet Union...¹³⁸

While Dorr did not expand on his objection to the terms of the Soviet support (this is discussed further below), in one respect his interpretation is clear – the Irish diplomats were not entirely comfortable about the Soviets championing their cause. They viewed it as a double-edged sword: one that guaranteed a level of support, but because of East-West rivalries, such support inclined other states to look beyond the merits of the Irish case to their own interests with western powers.

¹³⁵ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 220.

¹³⁶ Cremin, ‘Northern Ireland at the United Nations’, p. 69.

¹³⁷ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 220. Dorr does not quote an archival source for these extracts from Zakharov’s contribution, but they are almost identical to that made by Zakharov’s colleague, Ambassador Malik, at a subsequent meeting of the general committee of the U.N.’s general assembly. Malik’s contribution is quoted later in this chapter.

¹³⁸ Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations*, p. 221.

In the event, and in spite of the Soviet intervention, the pre-arranged scenario got back on track. Lord Caradon articulated his government's position that the principle of non-discussion of a member state's internal affairs was at stake, but he did advise the council that London had recently agreed a reform programme with the regime in Stormont (in the form of a joint statement at Downing Street on 19 August). The Zambian representative then proposed an adjournment, without adoption of the agenda. After a total of one hour and fourteen minutes of deliberations the delegations dispersed.

Dr Hillery's efforts won broad support. The *Irish Times* quoted U.N. observers: '[They] regarded the episode as a considerable triumph for Ireland in that she had an opportunity to present her case, at the same time avoiding a negative vote', and 'admiration too at how the British handled the mechanics of the U.N.'¹³⁹ Irish communists were also supportive, as recorded in their weekly newsheet:

The presentation of Ireland's case at the U.N. has helped to internationalise not only the situation in the North, it has also raised the question of the relations between this country and Britain, and our international allies. The U.S. delegate on the Security Council was remarkable for his silence, in contrast to the U.S.S.R. delegate who supported the Irish case. Desmond Mullan of the *Irish Independent* had this to say: 'Ireland, which was thought to have friends among other countries...ironically would have had to depend on the communist vote if it came to that.'¹⁴⁰

However, the Irish quest for a U.N. peace-keeping force was not yet finished. Under pressure from the course of events at home and a Fianna Fáil cabinet anxious (to use a phrase then associated with – if not actually used – by Taoiseach Jack Lynch) not to 'stand idly by' in relation to assaults on nationalist neighbourhoods, Permanent Representative Cremin informed U Thant that Ireland wished to place the matter before the forthcoming twenty-fourth regular session of the general assembly in September. Again the Irish were obliged to go through an agenda-agreeing procedure, this time before a general committee that comprised representatives of twenty-five countries: Liberia (chair), Barbados, Chile, China, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mongolia, Nigeria, Panama, U.S.S.R., U.S., four unnamed Asian states, Pakistan, Poland, Greece, Mauretania, Congo, Brazil, and Ecuador. An international diplomatic campaign was mounted by the Department of External Affairs. Urgent letters were sent to all embassies to seek support from those listed with an accreditation with Ireland, and

¹³⁹ *Irish Times*, 21 Aug. 1969.

¹⁴⁰ *Irish Workers' Voice*, no. 654, 23 Aug. 1969.

others in a position to make representations on the country's behalf.¹⁴¹ Con Cremin lobbied the delegations of the twenty-five members assembled in New York, and wrote to advise Dublin of his findings.¹⁴² His report commenced: 'Outlook generally encouraging, we must see how far Britain is prepared to go in fighting inscription' [in the parlance of the U.N., the process of having an item added to the agenda was known as 'inscription'], and Cremin continued with summary remarks on each of his meetings. The following is his account of the meeting with the Soviet delegation:

U.S.S.R., a.m., 8 Sep. (per Dr Issraelyan, no. four in the mission, and later per ambassador Mendeleovich, no. two). Will vote for inscription. Latter noted that [the Irish explanatory] memorandum calls for attention to human rights aspect and remarked that it was on these grounds that the U.S.S.R. explained in the Security Council her intention to vote for inscription.¹⁴³

These notes were significant in that they indicated the terms of Soviet support were confined to the issue of civil rights, and did not extend into the theology of Irish constitutional issues referenced in Dr Hillery's August speech. This approach was also the one most likely to attract the widest support at the U.N., especially among the non-aligned member states (as indicated above in relation to African states). The report of Cremin's lobbying of Ambassador William B. Buffum of the U.S. mission is also revealing and worth quoting. It indicated that Cremin was candid with the ambassador about his lobbying progress, that the Americans had formed the view that the British were determined to quash the Irish measure, and (crucially) that the Americans were thinking along East-West lines. The report, written in an abbreviated style, stated: 'U.S., amb. Buffum, noon 12 Sep.: long - one hr, no commitment. Brits pulled out all the stops. Buffum of the view that given the Russian attitude, we certainly could count on Mongolia and Poland.'¹⁴⁴

The general committee finally met on 17 September to decide upon the inscription of the Irish request. This time, Dr Hillery was careful to confine his speech to the denial of human rights and to highlight precedents for U.N. action in similar situations, including South Africa. He stated, in part: 'it is now recognised by many, including the U.K. government, that a large part of the population of the North of Ireland was being

¹⁴¹ Secretary, D.E.A. to all missions, 5 Sept. 1969, in Raising of question of North of Ireland in United Nations, 5 Sept. 1969 to 30 Sept. 1969 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2001/43/848).

¹⁴² Con Cremin to Sean G. Ronan, D.E.A., 12 Sept. 1969 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2001/43/848).

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Cremin to Ronan, 12 Sept. 1969 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2001/43/848).

denied human rights and fundamental freedoms'¹⁴⁵, and pointing to the Sharpsville incident,¹⁴⁶ he asserted that those articles of the U.N. charter that enshrine a state's right of control over its domestic jurisdiction, must also be read in the light of articles 55 and 56 under which all member states had pledged to promote 'universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction to race, sex, language or religion'.¹⁴⁷ Lord Caradon's response began: '[We are] duty bound not to flout the principle of domestic jurisdiction, the agreed basis of international law on which the U.N. rests'.¹⁴⁸ He continued to claim that British troops were warmly welcomed on the streets of Belfast and Derry, and that the British government had 'strongly promoted urgent reforms [on Stormont] ... [and Caradon warned] 'that a political discussion in the U.N. might inflame controversy and might prejudice the salutary work being done'... [and he appealed] to the Irish representative in the genuine interests of the people of Northern Ireland to withdraw his request.'¹⁴⁹ But before Dr Hillery responded to this appeal, the Soviet Union intervened, and the record read:

Mr Malik, U.S.S.R, supported the request of the Irish delegation. As facts showed, it was the policy of the U.K. authorities to maintain inequality in Northern Ireland, the result of which was the division of the country along religious lines. The right to form a government was restricted to one religious community; the civil rights of the minority were suppressed. The U.K. government must put an end to the persecution of those seeking to end discrimination so that a solution could be found in accordance with the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland.¹⁵⁰

Lord Caradon soon returned to the fray to aver:

[He] objected to calumnies contained in the statement by the Soviet representative. He [Malik] had implied that there was a deliberate attempt to maintain inequality in Northern Ireland; the reverse was the case. The right to form a government was not restricted to one community; the people of Northern Ireland had the right to elect their representatives on the basis of full adult suffrage, a circumstance with which the Soviet representative was no doubt unfamiliar. Faults and failures in the observance of civil rights admittedly existed and were being investigated; the U.K.

¹⁴⁵ As cited in U.N. report, 'U.N. provisional summary record of the one hundred and eighteenth meeting, general committee, twenty-fourth session, 17 Sept. 1969 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2001/43/848), p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ On 21 Mar. 1960 South African police killed sixty-nine Africans protesting against apartheid pass laws. This was condemned by the U.N. Security Council. See 'Aftermath: Sharpsville massacre' at *South African history online* (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/aftermath-sharpeville-massacre-1960>) (18 Jan. 2012).

¹⁴⁷ 'U.N. provisional summary record, general committee' in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2001/43/848), p. 12

¹⁴⁸ 'U.N. provisional summary record, general committee' in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2001/43/848), pp 13-4.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14. The wording here is very similar to that used by his colleague Zakharov at the preliminary Security Council meeting, see p. 33 above.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

was seeking to remedy them and to guarantee full civil rights to all the people of Northern Ireland.¹⁵¹

In this exchange appears to lie the nub of Dorr's reservations concerning the basis of Soviet support at the August meeting: that, *de jure*, the electorate of the North could vote in a non-Unionist government, thus giving Caradon a chance to expound upon the fairness of British democracy in Northern Ireland. While Caradon was technically correct (and turning a blind eye to the unionist-controlled malpractice of gerrymandering), the *de facto* political structures and culture ensured that representation at the Stormont parliament and at local authority level reflected and perpetuated a divided and unequal society in Northern Ireland. As the general meeting proceeded, the Soviet representative Malik simply responded to Caradon: 'if the situation was as the U.K. representative described it, it was difficult to understand why the Irish government had proposed the inclusion of the item and why it sent its foreign minister to the U.N.'¹⁵² The U.S. representative, finding herself in an 'unhappy dilemma', said she wished to hear the Irish response to Caradon's appeal to withdraw his request.¹⁵³ Likewise, the meeting's chair, Angie Brooks of Liberia, pressed Dr Hillery for a reply, for which the record read:

He accepted the spirit in which the U.K. representative had made his appeal. His government, far from wishing to inflame the situation, had been concerned about it long before the U.K., which persisted in taking a legalistic approach to the problem. The U.K. representative assumed that the long overdue reforms now being pressed would be put into effect; he himself would like to be sure the necessary action would be taken. Before he could accede to the U.K.'s appeal he wished to reflect further on how the withdrawal of his request for inclusion of the item would affect the prospects for the early introduction of the promised reforms and improvements in North of Ireland.¹⁵⁴

The meeting then closed on a proposal from Nigeria that deliberations should be suspended for the future discretion of the chairman. However, when the twenty-fourth general assembly closed in December, the matter had not been raised again.

It is not the purpose of this study to second guess whether Dr Hillery took the wrong option in agreeing to ponder upon Lord Caradon's appeal, rather than forcing a vote for his motion to have a peace-keeping force for Northern Ireland discussed on the

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Cremin, 'Northern Ireland at the United Nations', p. 71.

¹⁵⁴ 'U.N. summary record, general committee' (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2001/43/848), pp 14-5.

floor of the general assembly. The alternative was to take on the might of western dominance at the U.N. This would have involved forging an alliance of unaligned and socialist states, in which the Soviet Union would have played a prominent role. John Walsh, Hillery's official biographer, asserts that initial indications of majority support for Ireland on the committee began to evaporate on the morning of the general meeting, and that Dr Hillery's decision represented:

A fine example of deliberate political prevarication; he had no intention of withdrawing the issue from the U.N. himself but was willing to see it deferred, so that it would be held over the British government as a potential source of political leverage in the future.¹⁵⁵

And Walsh further contends that Dr Hillery's moderate approach was privately rewarded by a general, but vague, assurance from Lord Caradon that the British government would for the future speak to Irish ministers about Northern Ireland.¹⁵⁶ However, it was to be some years before British and Irish ministers combined to cooperate (the Sunningdale Agreement was not brought forward until December 1973), and in the interregnum Northern Ireland further descended into the tragedy of the Troubles. Suffice it to say here that it was the same city of Derry, the site of the Apprentice Boys' parade that had triggered Dr Hillery's dispatch to the U.N. in 1969, which was to become the scene of Bloody Sunday killings of twenty-six civilians in January, 1972. The Bloody Sunday deaths, at the hands of British army paratroopers, took place during a civil rights march – the impact of which is discussed further in chapter two. Rather than deliver a more representative government for Northern Ireland, Britain chose to prorogue Stormont and implement direct political and military rule from London. In the aftermath of Bloody Sunday Dr Hillery was again dispatched to New York where he held a press conference at Kennedy airport. Present there was Sean Cronin of the *Irish Times*, and his subsequent report – evoking a wry sense of *déjà vu* – was headlined: 'Ireland seeking any available help may turn to East – Hillery.'¹⁵⁷ Dr Hillery told the conference that if Ireland received no help from the West it might have to look elsewhere. He claimed that the situation had totally changed after the Derry killings. However, having knocked on the U.N. door twice before, whatever prospects were there in 1969 did not re-emerge three years later. There was no going back for Dr Hillery from his decision to opt for a promise of British reforms to Stormont in return

¹⁵⁵ Walsh, *Patrick Hillery*, p. 195.

¹⁵⁶ Walsh, *Patrick Hillery*, p. 199.

¹⁵⁷ *Irish Times*, 2 Feb. 1971.

for a withdrawal of his diplomatic campaign for U.N. assistance – an initiative that had attracted Soviet support.

Conclusion

Relations between Irish and Soviet representatives began warmly in the revolutionary period of 1919-21, as was demonstrated by the draft treaty of recognition, and the Irish republican loan deal to their cash-strapped Soviet counterparts. Yet even as the two sides united in a sense of anti-imperialism, constraining factors on the Irish side were evident. In the first instance de Valera and his delegation represented an emerging national democratic republic, in contrast to the Bolsheviks who represented a state attempting to create the world's first socialist entity. With the exception of the left-leaning Liam Mellows, the Irish were not supportive of the labour or socialist movements in their own country. Nevertheless, de Valera did recognise the potential of the Russian revolution's promise for self-determination for small countries, and the prospect that Soviet Russia might in the future influence developments throughout Europe along on those lines.

It can be seen from citations employed in the chapter from Patrick McCartan's *With de Valera in America* (1932) that McCartan had not been happy with de Valera's cautious handling of the pursuit of an agreement with the Soviets. However, these complaints must be seen in the light of McCartan's subsequent distancing of himself from de Valera, commencing with his support for the Anglo-Irish treaty. Evidence of de Valera's bona fides for having the draft treaty confirmed in Moscow is supported by his recommendation to Arthur Griffith that McCartan's mission to Moscow should be strengthened with two further representatives.

The Soviets' refusal to ratify the Irish-Soviet agreement with McCartan was a salutary illustration that when the national interests of the Soviet state were considered to be at stake (i.e. that Soviet recognition of the first dáil might jeopardise the Anglo-Soviet trade deal), the state's interests took priority over political considerations. Greaves' assessment that the Soviets were not willing to risk their fledgling trade pact with Britain to help repair the economy after the civil war for 'the sake of a republic the Irish did not seem sure about themselves',¹⁵⁸ remains insightful. Yet, it can be

¹⁵⁸ Greaves, *Liam Mellows*. p. 257, as cited earlier.

concluded – even had McCartan persuaded Commissar Chicherin that the dáil would not settle with the British for anything less than a thirty-two county republic – that McCartan would not have received anything other than the same firm refusal.

The thirty-year saga of the Russian jewels represents something of a metaphor for Irish-Soviet relations up to 1949. Upon their arrival in Ireland the jewels, held in custody by the Boland family until 1938, represented a reflection of the Irish civil war divide. When the jewels were transferred to Taoiseach de Valera, their custody in government buildings became a state secret, reflecting the reluctance of the post-revolutionary Irish political elite to engage with the Soviet Union. It was only in the heat of political battle that McCartan brought the matter into the open, tellingly, in reaction to an anti-communist smear against his party leader, Seán MacBride. The manner in which the matter was resolved suggests, in a diplomatic sense, a questionable manoeuvre by the Irish government. The approach made to the Soviet Union to honour its pledge in 1949 only came after it became clear that an auction of the jewels would not recover the original loan amount. In this way the saga of the Irish republican loan to Soviet Russia was brought to an end, in a Cold War context, in the manner of a debt collection exercise – in contrast to the revolutionary atmosphere when the loan was extended as an act of solidarity between two embryonic and anti-imperialist states.

Eamon de Valera's early recognition that Soviet Russia held out some prospect for the position of small nations was carried forward into the League of Nations. De Valera rose to the occasion in Geneva to support Soviet entry into the League. The reaction to his astutely crafted speech, which balanced his concerns about Soviet religious policies with the U.S.S.R.'s right to join the League, helped sway the decision in the Soviets' favour. At the same time, de Valera supported moves at the League to restrict Soviet influence over its technical bodies, thereby showing that Ireland would not be neutral when it came to matters of social policies that clashed with the teachings of the Catholic church. Nevertheless, de Valera's fortitude – against a domestic backdrop of the rise of the church's influence as manifested by the Eucharistic Congress of 1932 – indicated that Ireland could support the Soviet Union's intentions to stiffen the League's resolve for the maintenance of peace in Europe.

Evidence presented in relation to the delay in Ireland gaining membership of the U.N. until 1955 indicates a number of shades of 'historical grey' in a topic sometimes

narrowly presented as the powerful Soviet Union vetoing an independent Ireland from playing its part on the international stage. Yet, it is the historical greys that reveal more of the complexities and contradictions that were at play. These included Polish communist attempts to have the Soviets make an exception for Irish membership, while at the same time an Irish communist representative took the opposite view when addressing a conference of the Scotland-U.S.S.R. society. However, the main feature of the holdup of Irish membership was revealed in the manner of its resolution – Ireland was included in the Soviet-sponsored ‘package deal’, which was designed to accept into membership of the U.N. states that could be expected to support in equal measure either the U.S. or the Soviet Union at the world body.

Frank Aiken’s handling of the representation of China votes issue stands out as an application of a ‘de Valerist’ approach to independent Irish foreign policy formulation at the U.N. Aiken took a principled stand to favour membership of a world forum for an outcast communist power (the People’s Republic of China was still a close ally of the Soviet Union in 1959), in spite of the resultant ire of establishment forces in the U.S. and at home. However, it was Aiken’s effectiveness as a promoter for workable disarmament measures at the U.N. that was a particular highlight in Irish-Soviet relations. Aiken’s invitation to come to Moscow in 1968 – the first for an Irish government minister – for the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, was an expression of Soviet acknowledgement of Aiken’s diplomatic skills and commitment to world peace.

Dr Patrick Hillery’s quest for a U.N. peacekeeping force for Northern Ireland exposed the sensitive triangle of Irish-British-Soviet relations to an international audience. Given Britain’s membership of the Security Council, and its ability to rely on U.S. support, the odds were always stacked against the Irish request. Nevertheless, as a tactic to internationalise the pressure on Britain regarding the North, it certainly was effective. Soviet support for the Irish, not based upon a demand that Britain bring about constitutional change but rather one confined to a civil rights solution, brought pressure to bear on the British. This was shown by the defensive response of Lord Caradon to Ambassador Malik’s contribution before the general committee on the question of the lack of Catholic political influence in Northern Ireland. However, as Britain elevated the matter onto an East-West basis, Soviet support then became a two-edged sword for the Irish as the influence of the major western powers was decisive. Nonetheless, in terms

of the advancement of Irish-Soviet relations, the affair had the value of showing that the two sides could cooperate. As John Walsh's biography of Dr Hillery indicates, the Irish foreign minister had experienced a positive relationship with the Soviets at the U.N., an experience that can only have added to other objective factors that made it possible and desirable for Dr Hillery to bring forward a proposal to his government to establish formal diplomatic relations in 1971. Therefore, it is to those objective factors and proposal that this study must now proceed.

CHAPTER TWO

The establishment and practice of Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations, 1971-80

...meets the spirit of the times and the interests of both states' peoples.¹

Izvestia, 19 Oct. 1973

Introduction

This chapter's aim is to examine diplomatic and political developments, together with the roles of the principal personalities in those events, which took place shortly before, during and for the next seven years after the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Republic of Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1973. The principal aspects include: the arrival into Dublin in 1970 of a representative of Tass, the central Soviet news agency, whose presence prompted Irish and British government officials to reconsider existing travel restrictions upon Soviet officials; the agreement in principle of the Fianna Fáil government in 1971 to establish relations, and the subsequent suspension of that decision by Taoiseach Jack Lynch; the cultural/diplomatic visit to Dublin of the great Soviet composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, in 1972; the debate among the cabinet ministers of the 1973-7 National Coalition government on the proposal of Foreign Minister Garret FitzGerald to activate diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union; and discussions between Garret FitzGerald and Andrei Gromyko to agree the details for the establishment of diplomatic missions to Moscow and Dublin.

The account of developments at the Irish embassy to Moscow up to 1980 commences with a profile of Dr Edward Brennan. Drawn in part from the author's interviews with Dr Brennan and his then teenage son Barry, the account focuses upon the procurement of the embassy building from Soviet authorities; the role of the ambassador and his staff, including Irish diplomatic and trade officials and Soviet supplied personnel; the ambassador's relationship with his E.E.C. and U.S. diplomatic counterparts; and security concerns at the embassy. Based upon an interview conducted

¹ V. Larin, 'On a firm basis', in *Izvestia*, 19 Oct. 1973 (The National Archives, Kew [hereafter T.N.A.], Foreign and Commonwealth Office [hereafter F.C.O.] 87/183/1, 301B28535/B). Translated from Russian by British embassy personnel, Moscow, 22 Oct. 1973.

with the first *Córas Tráchtála* (C.T.T., the Irish Export Board) officer assigned to Moscow, details of the Irish trade mission at the embassy are provided next. Garret FitzGerald's high profile visit as foreign minister to the Soviet Union in 1976 – which included meetings with senior Soviet government and trade ministers – forms the central plank of this section of the chapter. The account then discusses the outstanding issue of his tenure in Moscow that Dr Brennan identified for this study: events surrounding the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympic Games in the aftermath of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan.

The account of the new Soviet embassy to Dublin contains a profile of its head of mission, Ambassador Anatoli Kaplin. This is partly informed by an interview with Dr Sarah Smyth of Trinity College Dublin, who provided English language lessons to the ambassador's wife, Madame Gali Kaplin. The procurement of the Soviet ambassadorial premises (at Orwell Road and Ailesbury Road, Dublin) is discussed, as is a number of planning objections to improvements at the Orwell Road facility that were raised by certain city councillors. The award of an International Lenin Prize to former minister for external affairs and international peace activist, Seán MacBride, in 1977 is considered in some detail, and finally, the reactions in Ireland to the death in office of Ambassador Kaplin in 1979 are recalled to assess the impact made by the Soviet Union's first diplomatic mission to Ireland.

As the establishment of Irish-Soviet relations have not yet been the subject of a monograph, and as the subject has been but touched upon in general Irish histories and international relations studies, the chapter is largely reliant upon primary sources. These principally comprise: dedicated files on the topic from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (D.F.A.), now available at the National Archives of Ireland; and – reflecting the British government's robust input into the establishment of Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations – selected items from the files of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (F.C.O.), now available at the National Archives (T.N.A.), Kew. These latter materials contain substantial amounts of two-way correspondence between British ambassadors to Dublin and Moscow and their superiors in London; internal F.C.O. analyses of events and comments on political and diplomatic personalities in Ireland; reports on articles in the Soviet press on Ireland; and details of correspondence between Prime Minister Edward Heath and Taoiseach Jack Lynch.

Oral sources play a prominent part in providing evidence throughout the chapter. In addition to those mentioned above, interviewees include Professor Emeritus Barra Boydell, son of Professor Brian Boydell who initiated the visit of Dmitri Shostakovich to Ireland; John P. Swift, son of John Swift, the founding chairman of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society; and Reginald J. McHugh, Ireland's first commercial attaché to the Soviet Union.

Memoirs and autobiographies are also utilised, and in addition to those mentioned above they include those of Sir John Peck, the British ambassador to Dublin;² Andrei Gromyko's, *Memories: from Stalin to Gorbachev*,³ and Professor Brian Boydell's unpublished memoirs. To inform profiles of various government cabinet ministers, entries in the *Dictionary of Irish biography*, Conor Cruise O'Brien's, *Memoir: my life and themes* (1988), and Noel Browne's, *Against the tide* (1987) have been consulted.

Arrival of Tass representative, Ustimenko, into Dublin

The arrival of Yuri Vladimirovich Ustimenko, a thirty-four year-old correspondent of *Telegrafnoye Agentstvo Sovetskovo Soyuz* (TASS), the Soviet state news agency, in Dublin in September 1970, and his subsequent immersion into prominent Irish social circles, personified an early indicator that moves were afoot in Irish-Soviet relations. While British security authorities recorded the passport spelling of his surname as 'Oustimenko'⁴, he was known to his wide circle of contacts and friends in Ireland as Yuri Ustimenko. Described as 'an urbane, polite man with a ready smile and barely-accented English',⁵ he and his wife and one child lived at Belvedere, Harbour Road, Dalkey.⁶ The then British ambassador to Ireland, Sir John Peck, advised the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (F.C.O.) in London that Ustimenko 'is now widely referred to as the K.G.B. man or the spy, and the fact that he appears to do none of the things expected of a correspondent has virtually destroyed his cover.'⁷ Whatever about the validity of such an observation, Ustimenko certainly led a most public life. He soon became known to a wide cross-section of activists ranging from left-wingers (he

² John Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street* (Dublin, 1978).

³ Andrei Gromyko, *Memories: from Stalin to Gorbachev* (London, 1989).

⁴ See copy MS 231229Z, 23 June 1971 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 33/1621, WRR 25/3).

⁵ *Irish Times*, 21 June 1982.

⁶ Interview with Angela McQuillan of Bray, secretary of Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society (23 Mar. 2010).

⁷ Peck to F.C.O., 23 Apr. 1971 (T.N.A., F.C.O. 33/1621, WRR 25/3).

was ‘pally’ with George Jeffares of the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.), a polyglot and then the party’s leading theoretician on international affairs),⁸ to many in the mainstream media and political parties, and he and his wife frequently held social gatherings in their home. Both Charles J. Haughey of Fianna Fáil and author Tim Pat Coogan were said to have been on good social terms with Ustimenko, as was Nell McCafferty,⁹ the prominent feminist and journalist. He made a guest appearance on R.T.É.’s *Late late* show,¹⁰ and was in some demand as a speaker around the country, as is shown by his featured address to the Dundalk Debating Society, ‘Russia today’ in January 1971.¹¹ His journalistic skills cannot be doubted, either, as can be attested to by a reading of his insightful and witty article ‘Christmas and no Christmas’ in a December 1972 edition of the *Irish Times*.¹² To this can be added a more analytical piece published in the Soviet paper *Za Rubezhom (Abroad)*, in May, 1973, which was picked up by the research department of the British embassy in Moscow. Its contents are reported to have included: an explanation for the Provisional I.R.A.’s support from the ordinary people of the Republic because ‘the idea of reunification is so widely popular’; dissatisfaction that E.E.C. membership had not solved economic problems; appeals for commercial reforms to include ‘broader contacts with the third world and the socialist states’; and speculation that the newly-elected ‘Cosgrave coalition government will inevitably encounter great difficulties...because of differences between Fíne Gael and Labourites’.¹³

Ustimenko’s significance, however, extended beyond his writing talents and success as a one-man Soviet charm offensive with the Irish public: it lay in the manner and extent to which the Irish authorities chose to apply travel restrictions upon this Soviet journalist. The sensitivity and complexity surrounding this decision arose against the background of the common travel area that enabled visa-free movement of citizens between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The British government feared that the arrival of Soviet officials in

⁸ Interview with Sam Nolan and Helena Sheehan of Ballymun (9 July 2012). Nolan was then an executive member of the C.P.I. Sheehan was also a party member and was a student at T.C.D.’s Russian department under Mrs Greenwood.

⁹ *Irish Times*, 26 June 1982.

¹⁰ Martin D. Bates ‘A Russian eye on Ireland’ in *Irish Times*, 28 Mar. 1981.

¹¹ ‘What’s on today’, *Irish Times*, 14 Jan. 1971.

¹² *Irish Times*, 19 Dec. 1972

(<http://search.proquest.com/hnpirishtimes/docview/526502364/131D30D9336B4DF53C/16?accountid=12309>) (15 Sept. 2011).

¹³ R.A. Bishop to Mr Bullard, 7 June 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/183, WLE 3/303/1).

Ireland could compromise British national security. This fear was succinctly expressed by an official at the British embassy in Moscow in a letter to the F.C.O. in 1973:

There is in fact (at least under the arrangements as I last knew them) no automatic physical check on documents between Dublin and London, and ... a Russian in a Harris tweed suit and polished shoes with an ounce of confidence could probably get away without being spotted.¹⁴

But the British official in Moscow was two years behind the cut and thrust of events, for Ambassador Peck had been keeping a very close eye on Ustimenko. He had alerted London about the Russian's arrival, and while allowing that 'Ustimenko has so far given no cause for complaint' he urged: 'keep a careful look out in the B.B.C. international press summaries for any items put out in Moscow in the newspapers and radio attributed to Ustimenko.'¹⁵ It seems that Peck saw an opportunity to take the uncertain diplomatic status of Ustimenko, and resolve it on the basis of a security risk – in order to gain a British advantage in what Professor Marcus Wheeler of Queen's University, Belfast, described as 'the sensitive triangle of relations between Ireland, Russia and Britain'.¹⁶ The ambassador had been making representations to the Irish government to have travel restrictions placed on the Tass correspondent, while at the same time thinking ahead to the prospects for security controls on possible future Soviet personnel in Ireland. Peck, who had graduated from Oxford as a classicist, commenced his career at the foreign office as one of Prime Minister Winston Churchill's wartime private secretaries. He was, however, to be better remembered by his peers for his role in the early 1950s as a key organiser in the establishment of British security structures – specifically the inoffensively named Information Research Department (I.R.D.) – to confront Soviet international influence in the early stages of the Cold War.¹⁷ Peck appears to have been in contact with a senior official at the D.F.A., Ronan (first name not supplied), passing on to Ronan pertinent I.R.D. intelligence reports on the Soviets. Peck was able to advise the F.C.O. of the state of play on this issue in the D.F.A., where some officials were thought to be in favour of expanding trade with the Soviet Union, while:

¹⁴ R.B. Bone to A.C. Thorpe, 18 Sept. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/183, WLE3/303/1).

¹⁵ Peck to Sir T. Brimelow, 29 Jan. 1971 (T.N.A. F.C.O. 33/1621, WRR 25/3).

¹⁶ Marcus Wheeler, 'Dublin-Moscow Accord' in *The world today*, xxix, no. 11 (Nov. 1973), p. 458.

¹⁷ This paragraph is informed by Michael Cullis, 'Obituary: Sir John Peck', *The Independent*, 20 Jan. 1995, at (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-sir-john-peck-1568846.html>) (27 Sept. 2011).

...others including Ronan himself give higher priorities to dangers...indeed Ronan expressed his appreciation for the I.R.D. material and referred to various elements in Irish society which...would be susceptible to Russian propaganda. The matter has not yet gone to ministers for decision.¹⁸

Consequently, Peck was both well informed and well placed in Dublin in 1971 to make a decisive intervention regarding Ustimenko's travel arrangements, as encapsulated in the following extract from his communication to London:

Irish have at last reacted... McCann [another D.F.A. official] has informed me:

- (1) They feel unable to impose any restrictions on Ustimenko in Ireland itself.
 - (2) They are prepared to ask him for forty-eight hours' notice of intention to leave Ireland, including point of departure. This would include crossing into Northern Ireland.
 - (3) They will have to give a reason and propose to say that they are acting at our request.
 - (4) Before acting they wish to be sure that this is acceptable to us.
- I do not think we shall persuade the Irish government to adopt any other course. May I say this is acceptable?¹⁹

Ambassador Peck duly received instructions to so proceed, with the proviso that he also convey Britain's serious concerns regarding security problems. An internal F.C.O. memorandum expressed considerable satisfaction at the outcome. While regretting that restrictions would not be imposed on Ustimenko in Ireland itself, it noted that the main objective of eliminating the travel loophole from 'Southern Ireland' to Britain had been achieved. Also, as the Irish were now 'associating themselves with our security precautions...this could provide a useful precedent should the establishment of relations between Dublin and Moscow [ever come about]'.²⁰ Ustimenko was to confirm the application of these Irish-British restrictions on him at a luncheon hosted in his honour by the Publicity Club of Ireland in 1973, prior to his departure to Moscow to take up another posting. When asked if a future Soviet embassy would become a backdoor into Britain he responded: 'whenever I wish to go from Dublin to Britain, I have to apply for a visa in advance and notify the British authorities...I have to tell them where I will be going, what route I will follow and where I will be spending the night.'²¹

¹⁸ Peck to Brimelow, 29 Jan. 1971 (T.N.A. F.C.O. 33/1621, WRR 25/3).

¹⁹ Peck to F.C.O., 23 Apr. 1971 (T.N.A. F.C.O. 33/1621, WRR 25/3).

²⁰ G.G.H. Walden to Brimelow, 30 Apr. 1971 (F.C.O. 33/1621, WRR 25/30).

²¹ *Irish Times*, 7 Mar. 1973.

Despite the enhanced diplomatic restrictions, Ustimenko was greatly impressed by his experiences among the Irish people during his three-year stay. He went on to publish a 205-page Russian language paperback *Get to know Ireland* in 1978.²² This publication, which had a print run of 80,000 copies, is a frank account of Ustimenko's views on the events and people that impacted on him. In line with the sentiment expressed by Conor Cruise O'Brien in the *New Statesman*, 'Irishness is not primarily a question of birth or blood or language; it is the condition of being involved in the Irish situation and usually of being mauled by it',²³ the following extract from Ustimenko's book, which he included in his letter to the *Irish Times* in 1981, sums up his feelings of his time in Ireland:

Together with the people of Ireland I had gone through their pain and joy, failure and successes. Obviously, I cannot be a neutral observer, and I won't judge if this is good or bad...Ireland leaves no one indifferent. And when you come to know her well you will love her from the bottom of your heart.²⁴

Fianna Fáil government agrees in principle to diplomatic relations

It was during Ustimenko's tenure in Ireland, in November 1971, that Dr Hillery submitted a memorandum to cabinet to propose the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. His memorandum indicated that the minister had consulted his cabinet colleagues, stating:

The ministers for finance [George Colley] and industry and commerce [Patrick Lawlor] are in agreement... the department of taoiseach [Jack Lynch] has no observation to offer...the minister for justice [Desmond O'Malley] does not wish to oppose the proposals if the minister for external affairs feels they are of value but has considerable misgivings on security grounds... the department for defence [Jerry Cronin] is opposed on security even with personnel involved

²² Email interview with former Ambassador Edward Brennan of Brussels (4 May 2010). Dr Brennan wrote that Ustimenko's book was both 'very interesting' and 'it heavily criticises in Marxist terms many aspects of life in Ireland.'

²³ Conor Cruise O'Brien (under pseud. Donat O'Donnell), 'Review of Donagh MacDonagh & Lennox Robinson (eds), *Oxford Book of Irish Verse*,' in *New Statesman*, 17 Jan. 1959, available at: (http://www.ricorso.net/rx/az-data/authors/o/OBrien_CC/quotes.htm) (7 Oct. 2011). This writer is indebted to Professor Marian Lyons, N.U.I., Maynooth, for alerting him to this quotation, 28 Sept. 2011.

²⁴ *Irish Times*, 3 Mar. 1981.

under surveillance...the minister of agriculture [Jim Gibbons] is agreeable if undertakings on levels of agriculture purchases are requested.²⁵

With no record of the Taoiseach Jack Lynch expressing his view on the matter (in line with his reputed reputation for very cautious approaches to decision making) and only the minister with responsibility for military intelligence, Jerry Cronin, definitely opposed, the government decision on the proposal was confirmed and detailed in the cabinet minutes:

1. The establishment of a diplomatic mission in Moscow... of an ambassador and one or more other diplomatic officers.
2. The acceptance of a diplomatic mission of the Soviet Union in Dublin comprising a head of mission of ambassador rank or other such rank as the Soviet authorities may wish and such other staff as may be agreed upon in negotiations.²⁶

The decision thus taken, the government and some units of the Fianna Fáil organisation met public manifestations of traditional anti-communist criticisms head on. A supportive resolution arrived into government buildings, 'passed by majority vote' at the Galway East Ward cumann [branch], and read: 'That we should establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union or any country prepared to hold out the hand of friendship, but with no conditions attached.'²⁷ However, most approaches and comment to government were decidedly negative. The March 1972 editorial of the *Irish Catholic*, attempting to lead a broad campaign of opposition on religious grounds, proclaimed:

However we in this country may differ among ourselves, the vast majority of us lay claim to be Christians and to have the welfare of Christianity at heart. There is nothing natural about a decision to cousin a regime that is blatantly, unashamedly and militantly atheistic.²⁸

A self-proclaimed Fianna Fáil supporter, a Mrs Kelly of Dublin 7, wrote to President de Valera:

As is well known at present the economic and political future of our country is being destroyed by the help of the Irish Communist party, North and South. So why give them cover for further subversive activities. Surely you cannot forget what happened to Hungary and Czechoslovakia a few short years ago?²⁹

²⁵ 'Summary of memorandum for the government', 28 Nov. 1971, in Russia: diplomatic relations with Ireland, July 1970-Dec. 1973 (N.A.I., Department of the Taoiseach, [hereinafter D.T.], 2004/21/351, 305/57/132/4).

²⁶ Draft cabinet minutes, 21 Dec. 1971 (N.A.I., 2004/21/351, S.18635).

²⁷ Letter from Maureen Cunan, secretary Galway East Ward cumann, to D.T., 17 Feb. 1972 (N.A.I., D.T., 2004/21/351)

²⁸ *Irish Catholic*, 9 Mar. 1972.

²⁹ Mrs M. Kelly to the president of Ireland, 22 Mar. 1972 (N.A.I., D.T., 2004/21/351).

She was sent, by return of post, a forthright reply from the taoiseach's secretary:

We have had talks with the U.S.S.R. and other Iron Curtain countries, which led to trade agreements that were to our advantage... we are usually urged to consider opening relations but never did so but we have not ruled out the possibility...as you know the pope has received high ranking Soviet ministers 'in brotherhood' at the Vatican.³⁰

This reference to Vatican-Soviet dialogue is an allusion to audiences held between Pope Paul VI and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in 1966, and President Nikolai Podgorny in 1967. They discussed world peace issues, principally the war in Vietnam, and Vatican concerns for religious life and the functioning of the Catholic church in the Soviet Union.³¹ Gromyko was later to detail in his memoirs that he had eight meetings with successive heads of the Roman Catholic Church: once with John XXIII in 1963 and three with Paul VI, and he wrote 'the initiative for these meetings came in every instance from the Vatican.'³²

Despite its stonewalling against such traditionalist anti-communist and religious representations, Jack Lynch's government did stall the process – not owing to domestic objections – but because of representations from the British government. An examination of extracts from the F.C.O.'s records reveals that in January 1972 the F.C.O. was well informed of the very latest developments in Dublin's ongoing contacts with the Soviets. A communication from a British embassy official in Dublin, K.C. Thom, to a colleague in the F.C.O. began with an *Irish Press* report of Aeroflot's plans to operate fortnightly flights from Dublin to Leningrad, and continued with what appears to have been a clarification by an official in the Irish department of foreign affairs on recent media speculation on the state of play between Irish and Soviet officials on the exchange of embassies.³³ Thom's communication stated that the Irish: 'are prepared to allow six Russian diplomats in Dublin but the Russians have asked for a much higher figure; this disagreement alone was preventing the exchange of embassies'.³⁴ Thom further advised that recent reports in the *Irish Independent* and *Herald* claiming that the Soviets' request for staffing level had far outweighed the strict

³⁰ Rúnaí príobháideach (private secretary) of taoiseach to Mrs Kelly, 23 Mar. 1972. (N.A.I, D.T., 2004/21/351).

³¹ *Irish Times*, 31 Jan. 1967.

³² Gromyko, *Memories*, p. 211.

³³ K.C. Thom to J. L. Bullard, 17 Jan. 1972 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/183)

³⁴ *Ibid.*

necessities of diplomatic activity, had ‘originated in an indiscretion by Mr [Brian] Lenihan.’³⁵

British anxieties were immediately heightened by the expected arrival into Dublin on 28 February of a high level Soviet trade delegation and parallel talks on diplomatic relations. This prompted an urgent letter from the foreign secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, to Ambassador Peck.³⁶ Douglas-Home urged Peck to impress upon the Irish ‘in view of the common travel area, that they have some responsibility towards us in this matter’, and detailed for him a number of selling points.³⁷ But before discussing these points, this study must point to the events in Derry city of 31 January 1972 – Bloody Sunday – whose impact would extend to Irish-Soviet discussions. It could be assumed Irish-Soviet trade talks were the least of the worries of senior British ministers and officials in the fallout from the killing of thirteen civil rights marchers by British Army paratroopers. Not only had they to contend with the national and international outcry, but Ambassador Peck and his staff had to cope with a three-day siege and eventual burning of the British embassy at Merrion Square on 2 February. Nevertheless, Ambassador Peck was able to set aside the burning of the embassy and damp down pervasive anti-British sentiments in Dublin at official level. Journalist and author, Raymond Smith, later described Peck’s performance: ‘(he) emerged as a diplomat of the highest standing when the next morning he sought to cool the situation, separating overall Anglo-Irish relations and the friendship between Irish and British peoples from the terrible incidents in Derry.’³⁸ Peck went on to publish an autobiography, *Dublin from Downing Street*, and perhaps mindful of Bloody Sunday and the burning of the embassy, he prominently featured a quotation from Shakespeare’s *Othello*: ‘To mourn a mischief that is past and gone/ Is the next day to draw new mischief on.’³⁹ Disappointingly for the purposes of this study, his autobiography does not make any Ireland-related references to the Soviet Union. However, he did allow his diplomatic mask to slip a little with a recollection of the time he accompanied Winston Churchill to the Potsdam conference in 1945 – at a time British-Soviet relations were at their

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Douglas-Home to Dublin embassy, 26 Feb. 1972 (T.N.A., PREM, 15/1046)

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Raymond Smith, *Dr Garret FitzGerald: the enigma* (Dublin, 1985), p. 157.

³⁹ Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, frontispiece. When Peck concluded his career with the diplomatic service he and his wife retired to Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

warmest. With a telling remark towards the Soviet leadership, Peck wrote: 'I shook hands with Stalin – cold and clammy like a fish on a slab'.⁴⁰

To return to Douglas-Home's communication of February 1972, Peck had to respond to his foreign minister's selling points, which he considered to be too narrowly focused on British fears and interests. They included: the Russians would attempt to use Dublin as a replacement centre for the expulsion of 105 Soviet embassy 'intelligence agents' from London in September of the previous year; implications for the common travel area – similar to those discussed regarding Ustimenko; and 'the obvious point' that 'following the Londonderry shootings...it would suit the Soviet book very well to give the situation a stir'.⁴¹ Replying the same day, Peck did not hesitate to counsel his minister:

I will speak as instructed but I must point out that throughout the whole communication, the emphasis is heavily upon the Soviet threat to British interests...the Irish government are in present circumstances unwilling and indeed unable to take any action merely to please us, and any suggestion that we can expect help of as of right now decreases the chances of cooperation.⁴²

He suggested an alternative focus that arguments should coincide with common Irish and British self interests. He headlined the threat posed by the Official I.R.A., 'which is penetrated and supported by international communists' and went on to propose that the prime minister send a secret and personal message to Taoiseach Lynch.⁴³ Peck's telegram and suggestions found favour with Prime Minister Edward (Ted) Heath. As a result he was forwarded a draft of Heath's message to Lynch. It began most diplomatically: 'I gather... you are discussing... the possible establishment of diplomatic relations... with the Soviet Union. This of course is a problem for you and not for us: but after some reflection I thought it could be helpful to let you know something of our experience.'⁴⁴ Heath's draft proceeded to focus upon and to decry the 'persistence and sheer weight' of Soviet operations against his country, and laid particular emphasis upon a suggestion that his government's recent expulsion of Soviet officials was related to Soviet plans for sabotage and subversion that fitted in with the aims of the Official I.R.A. For evidence of these aims he quoted from a Soviet journal,

⁴⁰ Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, p. 82.

⁴¹ Douglas-Home to Dublin embassy, 26 Feb. 1972 (T.N.A., PREM, 15/1046).

⁴² Peck to F.C.O., 26 Feb. 1972 (T.N.A., PREM 15/1046, TELEGRAM 106).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Douglas-Home to Dublin embassy, 1 Mar. 1972 (T.N.A., PREM 15/1046, T94/72).

New Times: ‘the overthrow of reactionary governments in the north and south of the country’, and confided that a recent Soviet defector had revealed that K.G.B. officers had discussed with the general secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.), Michael O’Riordan, a request for arms for the Official I.R.A.⁴⁵ (O’Riordan’s arms request was based upon an approach from Official I.R.A. members in 1969 to procure guns as a means of self-defence for vulnerable Catholic communities in Belfast that were then subjected to organised Loyalist attacks, with the Royal Ulster Constabulary’s (R.U.C.) connivance.)⁴⁶

The prime minister’s draft proceeded to concede that he and the taoiseach had ‘problems in common, which we are seeking to solve’ but warned that the Soviets would work to aggravate such differences. Prime Minister Heath’s draft did not directly ask the taoiseach to reverse his government’s plan to proceed to an exchange of embassies, but the message was clear: in the prevailing circumstances it should be suspended and the Irish should accept his offer of ‘assistance to your people in the technical fields’.⁴⁷ Ambassador Peck was advised that the prime minister’s message was to be telegraphed as soon as possible, and the signed original would arrive by diplomatic bag on 2 March in expectation of Peck’s meeting with Mr Lynch. He was further instructed to bring with him another message to the taoiseach, concerning the report of a commission established by the British government to enquire into contentious interrogation practices employed by the R.U.C. in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s – the Parker report. (This report found that the R.U.C. utilised five techniques: wall-standing, hooding, subjection to noise, deprivation of sleep, and deprivation of food and drink. The report concluded that the practices were ‘secret, illegal, not morally justifiable’.)⁴⁸ It appears that the British government’s tactics were to demonstrate some evidence of its willingness to crack down on repressive security tactics within Northern Ireland, while at the same time requesting the Irish government to forestall its plans to implement diplomatic relations with the Soviets. In the event, the Irish government was less than impressed with the Parker report – it subsequently took the British to task at the European Commission on Human Rights at Strasbourg (as is

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See Hanley and Millar, *The lost revolution*, pp 125, 141, 188, 196).

⁴⁷ Douglas-Home to Dublin embassy, 1 Mar. 1972 (T.N.A., PREM, 15/1046, T94/72).

⁴⁸ Lord Parker, ‘Report of the committee of privy counsellors appointed to consider authorised procedures for the interrogation of persons suspected of terrorism’, published 2 Mar. 1972, available at Cain Web Service (<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hms0/parker.htm>) (22 Sept. 2011).

discussed in more detail in chapter four) – but for whatever reason Taoiseach Lynch did put the issue of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in abeyance.

These developments were soon made public by the London *Daily Express*, which reported that the ‘British ambassador to Ireland, Sir John Peck, had “warned” the taoiseach that free travel between the two countries would be revoked if a Soviet embassy was opened here’.⁴⁹ In the dáil, Labour party members Dr John O’Connell and Barry Desmond, suspecting that the government had acceded to British representations, questioned Brian Lenihan (in place of the absent Dr Hillery). Lenihan refused to be drawn and simply stated it would ‘not be appropriate to discuss publicly the establishment of diplomatic relations with a particular country’.⁵⁰ But informed members of the diplomatic press corps were not so coy in articulating the government’s position. In July Dennis Kennedy, diplomatic correspondent of the *Irish Times*, reminded his readers that it had been expected that the embassies would be established before the end of the year, but the ever-cautious taoiseach had recently decided against that event. Nevertheless, Kennedy confidently asserted ‘it remains likely that there will be an embassy and also Irish ambassadors will be accredited to, though not resident in, other east European capitals.’⁵¹ The accuracy of Kennedy’s information is borne out by the following extract from a D.F.A. memorandum:

...trade negotiations had been opened in Moscow in October 1970 at which time the U.S.S.R. delegation made it clear that it would be necessary for it to have a full diplomatic office in Dublin if a trade agreement were concluded...The Soviet government was therefore also informed in July 1972 that the Irish government was ready to discuss further questions of diplomatic relations in parallel with the resumed talks, in the expectation of a satisfactory trade agreement, the government’s mind was moving in the direction of an exchange of diplomatic missions.⁵²

However, despite the fact that the talks were successfully concluded with the initialling of the text of the trade agreement, the Soviet delegation again had to remind their Irish counterparts that the Soviet signature was conditional on the establishment of diplomatic relations. At this point the negotiations were broken off by the Irish side because:

⁴⁹ As quoted in *Irish Press*, 15 Mar. 1972.

⁵⁰ *Dáil deb.*, cclix, 13 (21 Mar. 1972) available at (<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1972/03/21/00012.asp>) (24 Aug. 2011).

⁵¹ *Irish Times*, 8 July 1972.

⁵² ‘Memorandum for the government’, 22 June 1973, in *Russia: Diplomatic relations with Ireland, July 1970-Dec. 1973* (N.A.I., D.T., 2004/21/351, 305/57/132/4).

the minister for justice could not, in the circumstances of that time provide adequate personnel for guard and surveillance duties and implementation of the government's decision was, therefore, deferred in the hope that the position might improve in some months.⁵³

This seemed to have been a curious position for the Irish to adopt at that stage in negotiations, given that they had been aware of the Soviets' requirement for over two years, and that it was at their own invitation that talks were resumed. That interval would have provided sufficient time to organise security personnel and to provide access to Russian language skills. It seems that the Irish side had come to terms with the fact, as all west European countries had already done, that an embassy at Dublin could give rise to certain security problems and that these would have to be monitored and managed. This is borne out by the balanced and realistic appreciation that a Soviet embassy in itself would not be a threat to Irish security, as is indicated by the following extract:

Internally it might be that a Soviet embassy in Dublin could afford cover for contacts between Soviet intelligence services and subversive groups in the state. Indications are however that initiative in these matters comes from Irish sources and that subversion against the state is not an objective of Soviet policy.⁵⁴

It also seems reasonable to suggest that as a close neighbour of Britain – a leading member of NATO and still a substantial world power – it did behove Irish negotiators to offer the British some reassurance on their concerns on the common travel area issue. In this regard Irish negotiators formulated a two-fold solution: to minimise the personnel numbers at the Dublin embassy, and to place restrictions on travel rights for all members of its staff, diplomatic or otherwise, in line with the 'Ustimenko restrictions' of April 1971 of which Ambassador Peck was fully aware. The Soviets had come to accept these restrictions, as was later indicated to London by an official of the British embassy in Moscow when he was informed by a senior official in the Soviet ministry of foreign affairs: 'everybody knew that only the Irish had a right to travel from Dublin to Britain without visas and that any Russians travelling would be required to seek visas'.⁵⁵ All that remained was for the Irish to finalise negotiations with the Soviets on embassy numbers, and face down British representations concerning so-called 'mutual' security fears.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ R.B. Bone to A.C. Thorpe, 18 Sept. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/183, WLE3/303/1).

The visit to Dublin of composer Dmitri Shostakovich

While the Irish hesitated over establishing official relations, the Soviets didn't take umbrage and Dublin was soon to receive a visit from a senior and respected figure among the highest ranks of Soviet culture: Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich. In spite of East-West ideological barriers, Shostakovich's acclaimed oeuvre of fifteen symphonies and numerous operas, ballets, concertos, quartets, together with thirty-six film scores, had earned world-renowned status for the sixty-six-year-old artist. From his youth, he had worked and lived at the centre of Soviet musical and political life. In 1937 he wrote an arrangement of the *Internationale* (the anthem of the world communist movement) for symphonic orchestra.⁵⁶ He did have to survive some artistic suspicion during the Stalinist period, but as he had become a fully-accepted notable in Soviet society and a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.), his visit took on the semblance of a semi-official occasion. As the principal composer of the Soviet era, Shostakovich's visit to Dublin in July 1972 was a clear signal of the warming relations between the two states. He had come at the invitation of Professor A.J. McConnell, provost of T.C.D., to accept an honorary doctorate in Music (Mus. D.), which was conferred with due pomp at a ceremony on Thursday, 6 July. The provost's invitation resulted from the suggestion of the professor of music at T.C.D., Professor Brian Boydell, himself a composer of note.⁵⁷

Boydell considered himself to be a musical 'kindred spirit' of Shostakovich's, and an admirer of the Russian's ability to express deep emotion in a modern way that was accessible to wider musical audiences.⁵⁸ Boydell's initiative followed the results of an informal poll taken among attendees at the then popular annual Dublin Festival of Twentieth-Century Music. The poll asked attendees to nominate their favourite composer of the twentieth-century, and Shostakovich duly emerged as their preference.⁵⁹ Shostakovich's visiting party included Irina Antonovna Supinskaya, his third wife, and an official from the Soviet embassy in London, Taval Nicholsevich Filatov. Dr Ronald Hill of the Political Science Department at T.C.D. provided

⁵⁶ E.V. Gippius and S.D. Dreiden, 'Internationale', in the *G.S.E.*, vol. 10, p. 340.

⁵⁷ As recorded in Professor Brian Boydell's (1917-2000) unpublished memoirs, extracts of which were supplied to this writer by his son, Professor Barra Boydell, emeritus professor of music, N.U.I., Maynooth.

⁵⁸ Interview with Professor Barra Boydell, N.U.I., Maynooth (13 July 2011). The writer acknowledges the help of fellow PhD candidate at N.U.I.M., Barbara Strachan, for putting him in contact with Professor Boydell.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

translation and logistical support throughout the visit. The visit commenced the previous day with a concert, presented by the English Language Institute, in Saint Patrick's Cathedral. The New Irish Chamber Orchestra (N.I.C.O.), conducted by André Prieur, performed Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* and Shostakovich's own *Chamber Symphony in C Minor* (Opus 110).⁶⁰ Boydell records Shostakovich's appreciation and response at the end of the performance: 'the composer took his bow and mingled among the members of the orchestra congratulating them individually'.⁶¹ Present at the concert was Charles Acton (1914-99), prominent music critic for the *Irish Times*. Commending the performance and the occasion, Acton wrote:

The N.I.C.O. and André Prieur, their conductor, gave it an absorbed and wholly convincing performance. The presence among us of one of the greatest of living composers lifted the whole concert onto a different plane.⁶²

Nevertheless, when Acton wrote an appreciation at the time of Shostakovich's death three years later, he expressed a criticism of the conduct of the visit. Lamenting the lack of access to the composer for music critics to query him on his music and his relationship with the Soviet communist system, Acton complained: 'it was however sad that Trinity [T.C.D.] kept him so cloistered in its privacy and would not permit any musical journalist here to interview him.'⁶³

The diplomatic significance of the visit was most pronounced on its third day at Áras an Úachtaráin, where Shostakovich and his party were received by Eamon de Valera, then approaching his final year as president of Ireland. It had been over fifty years since de Valera as president of the first dáil had first met representatives of Soviet Russia in America, and had sent Dr McCartan to Moscow in an attempt to establish early diplomatic relations; within scarcely fourteen months of this courtesy visit by the Soviet Union's most acclaimed composer, official relations were finally to be enacted. There was to be a coincidental symmetry between de Valera's death and the official opening of the Soviet embassy to Dublin. This was graphically depicted by a newspaper photograph of the new Soviet ambassador lowering the Soviet flag in the grounds of the

⁶⁰ Tim O'Brien, 'A Dublin day in the life of Dmitri Shostakovich' in *Irish Medical News* (Sept. 2007), at (info@shostakovichinireland.com) (9 Mar. 2010). O'Brien was advised on the details of Shostakovich's visit by Dr Hill. Interview with Hill (now professor emeritus, T.C.D.) (10 Mar. 2010).

⁶¹ Brian Boydell's unpublished memoirs.

⁶² *Irish Times*, 6 July 1972.

⁶³ *Irish Times*, 12 Aug. 1975.

embassy – the opening ceremonies had just been completed when news of the death of the former Irish president came through.⁶⁴

Shostakovich's meeting with de Valera was not his final Irish engagement, however, for on Saturday 8 July he accepted an invitation to the family home of Professor Boydell, at Bailey, Dublin where he was to engage in a *tête-à-tête* with his host. There he and his party were treated to an informal meal of fresh fish from the pier of nearby Howth, after which Boydell succeeded in having a two-hour, composer-to-composer session in his music room with his principal guest.⁶⁵ Professor Boydell happily complied with Shostakovich's expressed desire to hear some contemporary Irish works and to discuss attitudes to composition. Boydell then proceeded to enquire about 'the real position of composers in the Soviet Union', candidly stating that he understood composers in the Soviet Union were discouraged from experimenting with new techniques, and asking: 'how then can Russian music develop along with the evolution of its counterpart in the rest of Europe?' Shostakovich's reply was equally frank:

You are misinformed. Of course we are encouraged to experiment and explore new ideas; but not to inflict our experiments on the public. We discuss our new ideas among ourselves in the Union of Composers.⁶⁶

Professor Boydell summed up his impressions from the encounter:

I would say that Shostakovich has been brought up in the Soviet ideals of Lenin, just as a sincere Irish Catholic who has been nurtured with his religion as part of unquestioned faith. Then, in the Irish context, along comes a bishop whose actions and teachings seem to contradict his fundamental beliefs so strongly held for a lifetime. In Russia, the errant bishop was Stalin, whose actions didn't seem to follow the idealism of the faith in which Shostakovich had been nurtured.⁶⁷

After the croquet match and the intimate exchanges of the music room had drawn to a conclusion, all sat outside together to enjoy the Howth sunshine before the Boydells were presented with the Russians' parting gifts. Chief of these was an autographed score and recording of Shostakovich's *Symphony no. 13*. This seems to have been a symbolic present from the composer, for this symphony is themed upon

⁶⁴ *Irish Times*, 30 Aug. 1975.

⁶⁵ Brian Boydell's unpublished memoirs. Boydell recorded that he was uncomfortable with the ever-present Soviet embassy official, Filatov, who had revealed to Boydell's wife that his duties were principally of a security nature. The Boydell family successfully conspired to distract Filatov with an international game of croquet on their lawn, while Ronald Hill acted as interpreter in the music room.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

poems by Soviet poet, Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko, and chiefly includes a commemoration of the massacre by the German Nazis of thousands of Jews during their occupation of the Soviet Union in 1941 at a ravine outside of Kiev, Babi Yar (as will be discussed further in chapter three).⁶⁸ While the symphony is critical of aspects of Soviet society – principally lingering anti-Semitism – it is at the same time supportive of the Soviet system and its ability to overcome such failings. Therefore, Shostakovich’s message to his Irish colleagues suggested that he, as a leading Soviet artist, continued not just to develop his musical forms but also to maintain a socially critical role within a socialist order. Boydell described the encounter as ‘an unforgettable day’,⁶⁹ and the visit lingered long in Shostakovich’s appreciation also, as was expressed in the following letter received two years later (and after diplomatic relations had been established) by the finance department of T.C.D.:

25 September 1974, Moscow

Dear gentleman treasurer,
On 20 September 1974, I transferred via the department of the
Moscow National Bank in London (order № 185974.102)
in the address of your college 100 English pounds sterling.
Let the money be my modest contribution to
the expenditure on construction costs of student dormitories.
With very good wishes,
Signature [in Russian, legible, but a little shaky]
Dmitri Shostakovich⁷⁰

Within a year of this letter and donation, Shostakovich had died. While, in his own words he made but a ‘modest contribution’ to T.C.D.’s student accommodation fund, the diplomatic effect of his timely visit added to the pressing domestic and international demands for the establishment of official relations to enable Soviet and Irish artists to engage with one another on a more regular basis.

Establishing diplomatic relations

When Liam Cosgrave was elected taoiseach after the 1973 general election, Dr Garret FitzGerald, who had been Fíne Gael’s opposition spokesman on finance in the previous dáil, expected the taoiseach to appoint him minister for finance. But as Dr FitzGerald

⁶⁸ This symphony is discussed in fuller detail in chapter three.

⁶⁹ Brian Boydell’s unpublished memoirs.

⁷⁰ Dmitri Shostakovich to T.C.D. treasurer [in Russian], 25 Sept. 1974 (T.C.D., Brian Boydell papers, MS 7080/1). Translated by this author, July 2011. The donation was allocated to the development fund of Trinity Hall, Dartry Road, Dublin – a residence for T.C.D. students.

was regarded as the leading figure in the social democratic wing of the right-of-centre Fíne Gael party, the traditionalist Cosgrave passed over FitzGerald in favour of Ritchie Ryan, a more conservative figure. In the event, finance's loss was to be Irish-Soviet gain, for the appointment of Dr FitzGerald to the Department of Foreign Affairs (D.F.A.) ensured that the new minister would be keenly aware of the Soviet Union. While never on the socialist left of Irish politics, when he was a young journalist FitzGerald had written on the Soviet economy. In 1949 he had contributed to a British journal, *News Review*, an analysis of Aeroflot, the Soviet airline. Applying skills from his job as a young executive with Aer Lingus, he calculated that with 250 aircraft and 8,000-9,000 seats Aeroflot represented the world's largest civilian fleet, pointedly surmising that the Soviet air force could well have been of the same magnitude.⁷¹

Two days after his appointment Dr FitzGerald attended his first meeting of E.E.C. foreign ministers on foreign policy coordination. Owing to the worldwide range of topics under discussion, including issues relating to the recognition of North Vietnam, he immediately formed the view that membership of the E.E.C. now required Ireland to radically upgrade its foreign policy functions 'on the basis of *our own* information and *our own* assessments' and that: 'This could not be done credibly without an extension of our representation abroad, in particular by establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.'⁷² Apart from Ireland, at this time only a handful of states among the world community of nations, including Portugal (which remained under the influence of the ideas of the authoritarian and anti-communist rule of António de Oliveria Salazar [who had died in 1970] until 1974) and the Vatican, had not established official relations with the Soviets. FitzGerald regarded this delay as a reflection of how Irish politicians had allowed ingrained anti-communism to 'irrationally' determine their foreign policy.

Securing cabinet approval

Dr FitzGerald's autobiography simply states that he proposed to the government on 7 May the opening of an embassy in Moscow, along with embassies in 'Luxembourg and possibly Vienna and Oslo – and at a later date, perhaps, in east Africa, Brazil and China – without any difficulty'.⁷³ However, this is far from the full story, as is

⁷¹ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, pp 46-7.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.115.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

evidenced by a draft of the cabinet minutes of 29 June. This confirms he did indeed secure approval for relations with the Soviet Union, but only after a ‘for-or-against’ debate took place at the cabinet table, as follows:

Following consideration of a memorandum dated the 22 June 1973, submitted by the minister for foreign affairs [Dr FitzGerald], and a [contrary] memorandum dated the 27 June, 1973, submitted by the minister for defence [Paddy Donegan],⁷⁴ concerning the opening of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The decision of the previous government that a diplomatic mission would be established in Moscow and a diplomatic mission from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics accepted in Dublin [in handwriting] ‘was confirmed’ and the minister for foreign affairs was authorised to indicate to the foreign minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that the modalities of implementing the decision might be discussed by the ministers in September next.⁷⁵

Dr FitzGerald’s memorandum set out to achieve four fundamental objectives: first, to ensure that the government would not be vulnerable to anti-communist political attack by Fianna Fáil; second, to highlight trade opportunities for Ireland; third, to stress E.E.C./diplomatic imperatives; and finally, to list assurances to allay perceived security fears relating to a Soviet embassy. His memorandum articulated at length the previous Fianna Fáil government’s decision of 21 December 1971 to establish relations. It quoted the minister for industry and commerce, Justin Keating (Labour) and the minister for agriculture and fisheries, Mark Clinton (Fíne Gael) that relations would lead to ‘an immediate and marked improvement in the level and balance of trade’.⁷⁶ It noted that Ireland was almost alone among the countries of the world and alone among the nine E.E.C. members in not having relations with the Soviets and that this would ‘place Ireland in an inferior and parochial position *vis-à-vis* our European partners’; and it highlighted that Ireland was at odds with the Paris summit of 1972, which had expressed a general desire for détente and cooperation in Europe. It continued by highlighting the upcoming Conference on Security Cooperation in Europe (C.S.C.E.) to

⁷⁴ Patrick (Paddy) Donegan (1923-2000) was a Fíne Gael T.D. for Co. Louth. Considered to be on the right wing of the party, he was close to Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave. He is best remembered politically for his remarks directed at the president of Ireland, Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh, who had referred the government’s tough new anti-terrorist laws to the supreme court to test their constitutionality. Minister Donegan made his remarks on 18 October 1976 at a function in Columb Barracks, Mullingar. Unhappy with the government’s response to Donegan’s remarks, the president resigned, as then did Donegan. See FitzGerald, *All in a life*, pp106 and 316-7.

⁷⁵ ‘Draft cabinet minutes’, 29 June 1973, in Russia: Diplomatic relations with Ireland, July 1970-Dec. 1973 (N.A.I., D.T. 2004/21/351, S17682).

⁷⁶ Summary of memorandum for the government, 22 June 1973, Russia: Diplomatic relations with Ireland, July 1970-Dec. 1973 (N.A.I., D.T., 2004/21/351, 305/57/132/4).

be held in July in Helsinki - where any Irish attempt to promote détente without proceeding to establish relations would be viewed as 'meaningless'.⁷⁷ Finally, it set down some parameters on the nature and extent of the diplomatic missions for the embassies at both Moscow and Dublin to be discussed and negotiated with the Soviet government. The details for Moscow were scant by comparison with those envisioned for Dublin. For the Irish mission to the Soviet Union 'an ambassador and one or more diplomatic officers and such supporting staff as may be necessary' would be required, but for the Soviet embassy at Dublin numbers were to be restricted to 'approximately' twenty-two in total, including an ambassador and not more than five diplomatic officials.⁷⁸

Defence Minister Donegan's memorandum, while conceding the value of trade and political opportunities, considered that the burden of security issues outweighed the benefits in favour of diplomatic relations, and concluded with a recommendation that the 'authority to discuss and negotiate ... should not be accorded by the government.'⁷⁹ It referred to the stated insistence by the leader of a Soviet trade delegation to Dublin in early 1972 that the completion of a trade agreement would be conditional on the establishment of diplomatic relations. Donegan suggested that because of the relatively low levels of trade involved, the Soviets – for ulterior motives – were principally interested in establishing an embassy itself rather than increasing trade. Taking Dr FitzGerald's proposed maximum staff complement of twenty-two for the Soviet embassy, Donegan estimated that by allowing for spouses that figure would increase to forty-four, of which thirty would be involved in 'covert intelligence activities which are to be expected'.⁸⁰ He then proceeded to detail his fears: espionage and indirect subversion of the Irish defence forces; scientific and technical espionage; political espionage; economic espionage and third-country espionage. Finally, the minister asserted that the state did not have adequate resources in counter-intelligence to monitor all members of the embassy and assess information gathered.

No mention is recorded in either memorandum of the ministers' personal views with regard to the 'elephant-in-the-room': deeply entrenched anti-communist and anti-

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ 'Memorandum for the government', in *Russia: Diplomatic relations with Ireland, July 1970-Dec. 1973*, 27 June 1973 (N.A.I., D.T., 2004/21/351, S. 646).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Soviet attitudes in Irish society. Dr FitzGerald's view was that it was now 'irrational' to allow anti-communism to determine foreign policy, and in his memorandum he specifically stated that ministers Clinton,⁸¹ and Keating 'have no objection to this proposal'. In Justin Keating, Dr FitzGerald could count on solid support from the Labour minister with whom he had enjoyed good personal relations from the time Keating entered the dáil in 1969.⁸² More telling for this study was Keating's active membership in the 1940s of T.C.D.'s communist student group, the Promethean Society. He was listed as the first speaker in a notice for the society's First Lenin School series with a paper entitled *The foundations of Leninism*.⁸³ The notice specifically requested members to 'please read the work', and his paper's title appears to refer to a series of lectures of the same designation that had been delivered by Stalin at the Sverdlov University in 1924.⁸⁴ Keating signed, as chairman, the minutes of the society's February 1949 meetings,⁸⁵ and he was listed as a member of the Irish Workers' Party (I.W.P.) as late as 1965.⁸⁶ However, he was anxious to move on, as Noel Browne rather caustically put it in his autobiography: 'Justin, having sown his political wild oats in the Communist Party, now wished to "repent" and find his way into the Labour party.'⁸⁷ Notwithstanding such observations on the evolution of Keating's political career in the labour movement, the combination of his responsibilities as minister for industry and commerce and his familiarity with the Soviet Union suggested that his backing for Dr FitzGerald's proposal was solid.

Dr FitzGerald also stated in his memorandum that the ministers for justice and finance, Ritchie Ryan and Patrick Cooney⁸⁸ – both *Fine Gael* – 'will make their views

⁸¹ Mark Clinton (1915-2001), a long-serving T.D. for various Co. Dublin constituencies, was considered to be on the right of the party and normally close to Liam Cosgrave. However, as agriculture minister he was closely involved in negotiating Ireland's entry into the E.E.C.'s Common agriculture policy, thereby giving him a broader outlook on pan-European affairs.

⁸² Justin Keating (1931-2009), son of Mai Keating, a leading member of the pro-republican Spanish Aid Committee, and notable Irish painter Seán Keating, was a veterinary surgeon and broadcaster prior to his election as T.D. for North County Dublin. His friendship with FitzGerald, as shown by his holidaying in the south of France with FitzGerald and wife, Joan FitzGerald, in Aug. 1973, typified the *Fine Gael*-Labour ministerial relations in the 1973-77 coalition government. See FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 146.

⁸³ 'First Lenin School postcard', attached to inside cover of the minutes book of the Councils of the Promethean Society, 1945-9 (D.C.L.A., C.P.I., 8/052.).

⁸⁴ See Stalin, J.V., 'The foundations of Leninism' at (<http://www.marx2mao.com/Stalin/FL24.html>) (1 Sept. 2011).

⁸⁵ Minutes of the Promethean Society (D.C.L.A., C.P.I., 8/052).

⁸⁶ 'I.W.P. accounts and members' subscriptions, 1965' (D.C.L.A., C.P.I., 8/025).

⁸⁷ Noel Browne, *Against the tide* (Dublin, 1987), p. 250

⁸⁸ Cooney, T.D. for Longford-Westmeath, was regarded in 1973 as being in the liberal wing of the party, despite the fact that he moved to the right in later years. See FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 294.

known at the government meeting.⁸⁹ While this does not confirm that he had secured their support in advance, it seems to be an indication that they were not strongly against the measure. Yet Ryan had baggage to shed: in the 1972 *dáil* debate on Fianna Fáil's intention to establish diplomatic relations, he as *Fíne Gael* foreign affairs spokesman deplored 'the suggestion... that mother Ireland should suckle the Russian bear as a contribution to world détente.'⁹⁰ As minister for justice with responsibility for the *gardaí* and security issues at the embassy, Cooney's support would undermine Donegan's security-focused position.

Of the remaining cabinet members, four were Labour party ministers, Dr O'Brien, Michael O'Leary, James Tully and the *tánaiste*, Brendan Corish. Unfortunately, Dr O'Brien fails to mention this debate in his 1988 autobiography.⁹¹ But as discussed above, Dr O'Brien – more than anyone else in the cabinet – had firsthand experience of the Soviet Union, directly with Soviet diplomats at the U.N. While this study is conscious of O'Brien's political drift towards more conservative political positions, he might be expected to have an understanding of the practical need for Ireland to have relations with a major world power. Further, on an intellectual level his familiarity with the Russian language would at least be to the back of his mind. He and the poet, Máire MacEntee, had taken classes in the Russian language in the school run by White Russians in the County Louth village of Collon in the 1950s,⁹² and was still using Russian (in part) when writing home from the Congo (where he had been the U.N.'s special representative in the breakaway province of Katanga in 1961): 'The only other sources of any significance available to me for the period of my stay in Katanga are the letters – written, mainly for security reasons, in Gaelic sprinkled with Russian – which I sent to Máire MacEntee, now my wife'.⁹³

⁸⁹ Summary memorandum (N.A.I., D.T., 2004/21/351, 305/57/132/4).

⁹⁰ Houses of the Oireachtas, *Dáil deb.*, cclx, 413 (18 Apr. 1972), available at (<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1972/04/18/00043.asp>) (30 Sept. 2013).

⁹¹ O'Brien, *Memoir*.

⁹² Patrick Shanley, 'The story told by a Russian priest' in *Cathair Na Mart*, xvii (Westport local history society, 1997), pp 153-5. The priest in question was Fr Nikolai Kuriss; he had been a teacher at the school. Also, interview with Phil Bates, 19 Jan. 2011, as discussed in chapter three. MacEntee stated during a radio interview that she and O'Brien had taken Russian classes together in Collon in the 1950s. Listen to Máire MacEntee and Elizabeth Finn, in joint interview with Miriam O'Callaghan R.T.É. Radio 1, available at (<http://www.rte.ie/radio/radioplayer/rteradioweb.html#!rii=9%3A3319847%3A1475%3A17-06-2012%3A>) (17 June 2012).

⁹³ O'Brien, *To Katanga and back*, p. 8.

Brendan Corish's support, as tánaiste and leader of the Labour Party, would have had a strong influence on Labour ministers. Corish, a T.D. for the Wexford constituency from 1945 and leader of the party from 1960, had held ministerial offices in the two inter-party governments of 1948-51 and 1954-7. He had described himself as 'a Catholic first, an Irishman second and a socialist third' and is recorded as a probable member of the Knights of Columbanus, the Catholic secret society whose membership was confined to men of influence in Irish society.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, under his leadership Labour responded to the left-wing mood of the 1960s, as reflected in the catchphrase 'sound man Brendan: no coalition' (referring to his initial refusal to countenance an alliance with Fíne Gael), and the prophesy contained in his address to the party's annual conference in 1967 that 'the seventies shall be socialist'.⁹⁵ As this more radical stance did not bring immediate electoral rewards for Labour in the 1969 general elections, he pragmatically turned the party towards coalition and into government with Fíne Gael. It seems unlikely that he opposed Dr FitzGerald's pragmatic reasoning. His colleague James Tully, minister for local government and T.D. for the Meath constituency, was considered to have been one of the most conservative Labour T.D.s in the dáil, and was sceptical of the left-wing trend in the party in the 1960s. At the annual conference of the party in 1970 he is said to have derided some of those on the left as being 'commies' and 'smart-alecs. . . with sweat dripping on to their schoolbooks who talk about the workers of this country'.⁹⁶ However, as a trade union organiser (with the Federation of Rural Workers) and long-time Labour man it seems unlikely he would not have followed his leader's lead. In some contrast, however, there is clear evidence that the remaining Labour minister, Michael O'Leary, minister for labour and then a rising star in the Labour party, was supportive of the proposal to establish relations with the Soviet Union. He had made his views on the matter known in a dáil debate on foreign affairs in 1972:

What danger does this [relations with the Soviet Union] hold? What temptation is there? What approval would it entail of the social system in the Soviet Union? Having diplomatic relations with a country does not convey that one approves of the social system of the country involved. Nobody would suggest that the Soviet

⁹⁴ John Horgan, *Labour: the price of power* (Dublin, 1986), p. 33, as quoted in John P. Swift, *John Swift: an Irish dissident* (Dublin, 1991), p. 194.

⁹⁵ Brendan Corish, *Complete text of 'The new republic' address* (Dublin, 1968), as quoted by Sinéad Máire Ní Choncubhair, 'Brendan Corish: a life in politics' (M. Litt. thesis, N.U.I., Maynooth, 2009).

⁹⁶ Denis Boyle, 'James Tully (1915-92)', in *D.I.B.* at <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a8673&searchClicked=clicked&quickadvsearch=yes> (5 Dec. 2011).

Union's record in freedom operations is to be admired. Let us not forget Budapest or Czechoslovakia. That does not get away from the fact that the Soviet Union is a great world power with every bit as much legitimacy to be regarded as a world power as the U.S. It does not turn us all into young pioneer communists to suggest that we should have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union...It is ludicrous that we should be entering the E.E.C. without having such diplomatic relations, when every other country in the E.E.C. has diplomatic relations with eastern European countries.⁹⁷

O'Leary was regarded as eager to become an equal of his fellow ministers.⁹⁸ After all, this new administration was widely touted as a 'government of all the talents' with ministers FitzGerald, O'Brien and Keating, in particular, considered as intellectual luminaries of international experience and reputation. Not for them to keep Ireland in a diplomatic backwoods! Even so, there remained outstanding the crucial position of Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave. He personified the traditional roots of Fíne Gael, being the son of W.T. Cosgrave, the first president of the executive council of the Irish Free State from 1922 to 1932. The Cosgraves were often associated with the most conservative and anti-communist elements in the party. As discussed in chapter one, Cosgrave had demonstrated his commitment to anti-communism by enshrining it in his three principles before the United Nations. Later, he was to demonstrate more subtlety by shifting somewhat to the centre in support of the 'just society' initiative within his party, sponsored by Declan Costello. Cosgrave said in his address to the 1964 Fíne Gael árd fheis:

It is a well-known maxim that for a party to secure and retain public support it should be slightly left of centre. This does not mean any doctrinaire socialistic approach to the problem of our time. I believe we must be ever alive to the need for seeking new approaches and new means to solve our problems...In this way we can still forever the haunting spectre of a Tory ghost which is at times attributed to some who make up the party but is in fact unrepresentative of the vast majority.⁹⁹

On the other hand, Cosgrave could act unpredictably. A year after his cabinet agreed to establish relations with the U.S.S.R., he was to demonstrate in a bizarre

⁹⁷ *Dáil deb.* cclx, 480 (18 Apr. 1972) available at (<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1972/04/18/00045.asp>) (30 Sept. 2013).

⁹⁸ O'Leary (1936-2006) became leader of the Labour party in 1981, but under pressure from party members who were critical of Labour's coalition with Fíne Gael he resigned his leadership and membership of the party in 1982 to join Fíne Gael under Garret FitzGerald's leadership. See Patrick Maume, 'O'Leary, Michael', in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2011) available at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a9418>) (2 Oct. 2013).

⁹⁹ As cited in Stephen Collins, *The Cosgrave legacy* (Dublin, 1966), p. 82.

manner how he could ignore the majority decision of his own cabinet. He crossed the floor of the dáil to join with the opposition in a ‘free vote’ to defeat his own government’s bill on the control of the importation, sale and manufacture of contraceptives for married couples only – a modest attempt to open up access to birth control devices.¹⁰⁰ His fellow Dún Laoghaire constituency T.D., Barry Desmond, said of Cosgrave’s views on this matter: ‘Liam accepted without question the pope’s teaching on issues such as contraception and divorce’.¹⁰¹ However, it appears that Cosgrave’s dedication to rigid Catholic values on family planning was to prove stronger than any lingering antipathy to connections with the atheistic Soviet Union. Dr FitzGerald was presenting him with a low-key, long expected, and as described by Marcus Wheeler ‘a logical and non-controversial tidying up operation on the international scene’.¹⁰² Finally, faced with a coalition of pro-business and E.E.C. attitudes, with the political realities of cross-party support around his cabinet table, the lack of any coherent public outcry, and Fianna Fáil’s previous commitment in principle, it appears that Cosgrave chose to join his fellow conservative and Christian Democrat leaders throughout Europe and accept Soviet diplomatic relations. In the end the decision was made without any undue fuss by the cabinet on 29 June in its council chamber at a meeting of just one hour twenty minutes duration, and with only eleven of the fifteen ministers present.¹⁰³ Either by accident or design, the absentees included Justin Keating and Ritchie Ryan – two ministers that this study has identified as being to the fore on either side of the debate. In this way, the long delayed crossing of the Irish-Soviet Rubicon proved to be plain sailing.

The required arrangements and protocols took place in swift succession. Dr FitzGerald went to his meeting with Andrei Gromyko at Helsinki and said on Irish radio that the two had agreed to settle the details of the embassies at the U.N. in the autumn;¹⁰⁴ and E.E.C. ambassadors in Copenhagen were also informed by the Irish Ambassador Waldron.¹⁰⁵ Communist protocols were also attended to when a delegation from the C.P.I., comprising Michael O’Riordan, and Andy Barr and Betty Sinclair of Belfast, was received by officials of the C.P.S.U., including a candidate member of the

¹⁰⁰ See Basil Chubb, *The government and politics of Ireland* (3rd ed., Harlow, 1992), p. 179.

¹⁰¹ As cited in Collins, *The Cosgrave legacy*, p. 147.

¹⁰² Wheeler, ‘Dublin-Moscow Accord’, p. 458.

¹⁰³ Cabinet minute ledger G. 14/26, 29 June 1973 (N.A.I., D.T.).

¹⁰⁴ Galsworthy to F.C.O., 9 July 1973 (T.N.A, F.C.O., 87/183, WLE 3/303/1).

¹⁰⁵ A.A. Stark to F.C.O., 12 July 1973 (T.N.A, F.C.O., 87/183, WLE 3/303/1).

politburo.¹⁰⁶ An official communiqué on the latter meeting was published in the Soviet ‘central press’ detailing the conviction that diplomatic relations would lead to mutually advantageous commercial, economic and cultural cooperation. It went on to reveal that the discussion included the struggle for a democratic solution to the Northern Ireland question; concerns about Irish membership of the E.E.C; and the need for ‘further strengthening of connections between the communist parties of the two states.’¹⁰⁷ All that now remained was for Dr FitzGerald to proceed to Helsinki (and later to New York) to negotiate and finalise the modalities with Andrei Gromyko.

Gromyko was often negatively referred to in western circles as ‘Mr *Nyet*’ (No) for his steadfast refusal to accede to western diplomatic approaches, and for his allegedly staid personality. The Soviet foreign minister first came to prominence as ambassador to the U.S. in 1943. He participated in the subsequent Allied wartime conferences at Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta, where he was regarded as ‘one of the rising stars of the foreign commissariat’.¹⁰⁸ This brought him into close contact with Joseph Stalin, and he observed the Soviet leader’s style of negotiating with western leaders at close quarters. No doubt he absorbed the kind of advice that Stalin offered to Andrija Hebrang, a Yugoslav communist leader, when they met in 1945 for consultations on post-war plans for Europe:

In relation to bourgeois politicians you have to be careful. They are...very touchy and vindictive. You have to keep a handle on your emotions; if emotions lead – you lose. Lenin did not think it would be possible to ally with one wing of the bourgeoisie and fight with the other. But we managed it; we are not led by emotion but by reason, analysis and calculation.¹⁰⁹

Further, Ambassador Brennan had commented in a political report to the Department of Foreign Affairs on Gromyko’s ability, as described to him by a West German diplomat: ‘Never once throughout the various discussions did he seek the aid of any documentation, even on the most detailed points. He did it all right out of his head.’¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, Dr Fitzgerald – no slouch himself when it came to calculation or analysis – seems to have had no difficulty in coming to terms with the Soviet minister.

¹⁰⁶ J.E. Tyrer, British embassy, Moscow to F.C.O., 20 July 1973 (T.N.A, F.C.O., 87/183, WLE 3/303/1).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars: from world war to Cold War, 1939-53* (New Haven, 2006), p. 234.

¹⁰⁹ G.P. Murashko and A.F. Noskove, ‘Stalin and the national-territorial controversies in eastern Europe, 1945-47’ (part 1), *Cold War History*, i, no. 3 (2001), as quoted in Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, p. 235.

¹¹⁰ P.R. 27/74, ‘Visit of Foreign Minister Gromyko to Bonn’, 1 Sept. 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2005/4/75).

The outcome of their negotiations for the number of Soviet citizens to be employed at the embassy to Dublin was later reported to the dáil by Dr FitzGerald, as follows:

The position is that there are five diplomatic officers amongst the seventeen [the agreed total number]. That is, I think, no more than Nigeria has, or Japan and less than Australia. The remaining staff is engaged on other activities in the embassy, as is normal in embassies where there are diplomatic staff, secretarial staff, chauffeurs and so on.¹¹¹

The British authorities had been advised much earlier on these and other restrictions. They had come to accept that the exchange of embassies was now all but a *fait accompli*, and concentrated their representations on security matters, with an active interest from 10 Downing Street.¹¹² Later F.C.O. correspondence indicated that so effective was the line of communication established between K. C. Thom at the British embassy in Dublin and Brendan Nolan in the Irish D.F.A. that the British could conclude: ‘the arrangements agreed between the Irish and Russians...do not appear to conflict with our own interests... [regarding travel] we think that the Irish have dealt very fairly with our interests.’¹¹³ At the same time, London was keen to continue to get the maximum from the helpful Irish official: ‘you should point out to Nolan that it should be made clear to the Russians that the two days prior notification [on travel of Soviet officials to Britain] should be two working days...and say to Nolan...[that it would be desirable] if the Irish could agree to liaise with our security authorities before giving a visa to a Soviet national.’¹¹⁴

The final piece in the diplomatic jigsaw was slotted into place on 29 September 1973 when FitzGerald and Gromyko signed and issued a joint communiqué at the United Nations in New York confirming agreement to exchange diplomatic missions, and announced that the ambassadors were expected to be in place in Dublin and Moscow by early 1974.¹¹⁵ The announcement caused a brief flurry in the Irish newspapers, the most prominent being a front page report in the *Sunday Independent* that characterised it as ‘an historic diplomatic agreement’.¹¹⁶ However, Wheeler has

¹¹¹ *Dáil deb.* cclxxxix, 388 (27 May 1976), available at (<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1976/05/27/00007.asp>) (1 Oct. 2013).

¹¹² Tom Bridges, prime minister’s office, to J.D.F. Holt, F.C.O., 28 Aug. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/183, WLE 3/303/1).

¹¹³ C.J.R. Meyer to Thom, 8 Nov. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/183).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Press release, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, 29 Sept. 1973 (T.N.A. F.C.O. 87/183).

¹¹⁶ *Sunday Independent*, 30 Sept. 1973.

argued that the accord ‘excited little notice; it has long been expected’.¹¹⁷ Wheeler further pointed to Dr FitzGerald’s failure to mention specifically Ireland’s newest diplomatic partner when he addressed a gathering of American academics two days after signing the communiqué. He reported FitzGerald as only making an oblique reference, as he stated Ireland stood at ‘what can be seen as the opening of a new cycle in our foreign relations’.¹¹⁸ This coyness is in some contrast to an extensive article carried in *Izvestia*, released by the [presidium of the supreme soviet](#) of the U.S.S.R., on 19 October. The following extracts distil the thrust of the Soviet establishment’s view of its latest diplomatic associate:

The government of Ireland, making its foreign-political positions more active, is displaying...considerable interest in cooperation with the socialist countries, and, ...[their] stable markets. Ireland had joined all international treaties on the limitation of the arms race...it comes out against the disgraceful system of apartheid and racist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia, and for the abolition of colonialism... for the strengthening of the U. N. The establishment of diplomatic relations...and mutually advantageous trade, economic and cultural cooperation...between them meet the spirit of the times and the interests of both states’ peoples.¹¹⁹

So, with all parties finally content with arrangements it was over to the Irish and Soviet diplomatic corps to locate and commission their new embassies.

The Irish embassy to Moscow

A selection process within the D.F.A. chose as Ireland’s first ambassador to the Soviet Union a forty-eight year old career diplomat, Dr Edward (Ned) J. Brennan (1926-2012).¹²⁰ Brennan’s father had been an active member of the I.R.B. throughout the War of Independence, and his premature death in 1926 left his widow, Nora, to raise two young children and to run the family grocery shop on Dorset Street, Dublin. The young Edward, also born in 1926, attended the nearby all-Irish secondary school run by the Christian Brothers, Coláiste Mhuire, on Parnell Square, and he subsequently graduated from U.C.D. with a degree in law. In his teens he had met a Russian refugee through the

¹¹⁷ Wheeler, ‘Dublin-Moscow Accord’, p. 458.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Translation in full of V. Larin, ‘On a firm basis’, in *Izvestia*, 19 Oct. 1973 (F.C.O., 87/183/1, 301B28535/B).

¹²⁰ These biographical details and recollections of the Brennans’ family life at the Moscow embassy were provided to this author by Barry Brennan, who was eleven years old when the ambassador took up his posting. Interview with Barry Brennan of Dublin (21 Apr. 2010) and emails 17 April 2013.

Red Cross in Dublin who encouraged in him an interest in the Russian language and literature.¹²¹ Knowledge of languages and law proved to be a winning combination for Brennan, and when he achieved a top-ranking outcome at the civil service entrance examination he was rewarded with a highly prized appointment to the diplomatic service in 1949. His first posting was to the Irish consulate at Chicago, where he met and married Marie Therese Lally, a third generation Irish-American. He also found time to study and achieve a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Chicago, under the supervision of the international relations theorist, Hans Morgenthau. Further diplomatic appointments and promotions were to follow: to the Federal Republic of Germany at Hamburg in 1962; to London in 1967; and to Brussels in 1968 where he served, first as counsellor, and then as minister plenipotentiary at Ireland's mission to the E.E.C.¹²² A measure both of Dr Brennan's diplomatic standing on the eve of his departure to Moscow, and of the importance accorded to Dr Brennan's appointment, can be gauged from the press conference held at Iveagh House, the headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, to officially announce his appointment: it was revealed that he had 'played an important part in Ireland's E.E.C. entry negotiations, being involved in the detailed work of drafting the accession treaty and documents'; and that he was introduced to the press by both Dr. FitzGerald and Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave.¹²³

Despite the efforts of the first secretary, James Sharkey, to prepare the way for the new ambassador in Moscow, when Dr Brennan, his wife and three of their children arrived an embassy building had not yet been identified by the Soviet authorities. The embassy contingent operated out of rooms at the Hotel National, in the centre of Moscow at the intersection of Mokhovaya and Tverskaya streets overlooking the Kremlin, for eight months. This temporary accommodation was arranged by the Soviet tourist agency, Intourist. None of the premises shown to the ambassador and his wife were considered suitable by them, and it was only when Ambassador Brennan 'told our hosts that we would not therefore be establishing an embassy',¹²⁴ that a five-storey building at Grokholski Pereoluk 5, near a main thoroughfare of Prospect Mir, was made available. This was arranged by the Office of Services to the Diplomatic Corps at the

¹²¹ Dr Brennan also took Russian language classes at the school run by a White Russian couple, Nikolai and Ksana Kouriss, at Collon, County Louth. Dr Brennan excelled at exams in England run by the British diplomatic service, as advised to this author, interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013).

¹²² As cited in 'Russia: Irish ambassador in, 1974' (N.A.I., D.T., 2010/53/270)

¹²³ *Irish Times*, 26 Mar. 1974.

¹²⁴ Email interview with former Ambassador Edward Brennan, retired to Brussels (4 May 2010).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., commonly known from its Russian abbreviation, the U.P.D.K. In contrast to the Soviet embassy premises and residency in Dublin, which had been bought outright, the Irish embassy in Moscow was leased from the U.P.D.K.¹²⁵ Embassy buildings in 1970s Moscow tended to be clustered around various parts of the city, depending upon the size and status of each country. The Irish were settled next door to another building that was soon to house the Portuguese embassy, the last of the western European countries to arrive. While the building was considered adequate for the requirements of the Irish, both for embassy business and as a residence for the ambassador and family,¹²⁶ it required considerable refurbishment. Architectural and project management expertise was provided by the O.P.W., the Irish state's Office of Public Works. By 1975 the embassy consisted of the ambassador, first and third secretaries, an administrative attaché, two Irish secretaries, a commercial attaché, and some locally-supplied staff.

The Irish, however, were not without willing advisors in the setting up of their ambassadorial home in Moscow. Various items of correspondence from this period, between the British embassies to Dublin and Moscow and the F.C.O. in London, indicate that the Irish both sought and received the benefit of British expertise. The following extract from an internal F.C.O. memorandum makes Irish requests and British motivations clear from the outset:

1. The Irish government will soon be setting up an embassy in Moscow. We have in various matters tried to be as helpful and forthcoming as we can to the Irish in the hope that cooperation will be of benefit both to ourselves and to the Irish.
2. We have recently been asked by the Irish embassy in London for advice on the more practical problems of life in Moscow. We should like to show the Irish a copy of our Moscow post report with perhaps a copy of the wives guide. We did something similar for the Spaniards before they set up an embassy in Moscow.¹²⁷

Sir John Peck's replacement at the British embassy in Dublin, Sir Arthur Galsworthy, requested that the Irish be given details of a property services agency

¹²⁵ Ambassador Brennan to D.F.A., 24 Nov. 1976, in Proposal re rates and municipal tax exemption from Soviet embassy, Dublin (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2007/79/1).

¹²⁶ For Ambassador Brennan it was not a new experience to 'live over the shop' – he had been brought up living over his mother's shop on Dorset Street, per his son, Barry, interview 21 Apr. 2010.

¹²⁷ R.C.C. Cook, Eastern European and Soviet Dept., to A.F. Ward, 29 Oct. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O. 87/183/1).

familiar with the ‘bread and butter problems of building and maintenance work in Moscow’. Details of such a company, based at Croydon, England, were duly dispatched to Noel de Chenu, a senior architect with the Irish O.P.W.¹²⁸ Galsworthy’s request was also careful to state that ‘there are no security implications, in the present request at least’.¹²⁹ Galsworthy further advised London that Brendan Nolan (‘the nearest thing to a planner in the Irish D.F.A.... he is cooperative’) had taken charge of the Moscow operation, and he wanted to meet someone in the British embassy for a briefing.¹³⁰ As it transpired, any fears that Galsworthy and his F.C.O. colleagues may have had around the new Irish embassy in Moscow were to come to nought: a close relationship was to develop between Ambassador Brennan and the Dublin-born British ambassador to Moscow, Sir Terence W. Garvey. This was confirmed in 1975 by Ambassador Brennan when he wrote to Dublin to advise of Ambassador Garvey’s impending retirement, stating: ‘both he and his wife, Rosemary, were very kind to us here during the difficult months of setting up the embassy and they were very well disposed towards Ireland.’¹³¹ Dr Brennan proceeded to record that the Garveys were to retire to Dadreen, County Mayo,¹³² and he suggested to the D.F.A. that it draw upon former Ambassador Garvey’s expertise on the Soviet Union ‘within the framework of the new international relations committee which has been set up under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy (R.I.A.) in Dublin.’¹³³ Accordingly, it can be seen that close organisational, social and international relations bonds were established between the two embassies from the outset.

Nevertheless, British supportive advice only went so far. Local tradesmen were supplied through the U.P.D.K, as were the front hall receptionist and the ambassador’s chauffeur. It was a diplomatic requirement that the Irish tricolour be flown on the embassy car – a Mercedes – owned by the Irish government. The ambassador, however, was allowed recruit his own butler and cook, and a Spanish couple attended to these needs. Ambassador Brennan presented his credentials to President Nikolai Viktorovich

¹²⁸ Cook to Thom, 29 Oct. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O. 87/183 WLE3/303/1) and Galsworthy to F.C.O., 23 Oct. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O. 87/183/1, WLE3/303/1). Galsworthy succeeded Sir John Peck in July 1973.

¹²⁹ Galsworthy to F.C.O., 23 Oct. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O. 87/183/1, WLE3/303/1).

¹³⁰ Galsworthy to F.C.O., 5 Nov. 1973 (T.N.A., F.C.O. 87/183/1, WLE3/303/1).

¹³¹ Ambassador Brennan to P.J. Keating, 22 Dec. 1975 in Correspondence from Moscow, 1976-80 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1476).

¹³² The Garveys lived in their retirement home at Dadreen until their deaths: Terence (1986) and Rosemary (2011). See Rosemary Garvey obituary, *Irish Times*, 20 Aug. 2011.

¹³³ Brennan to Keating, 22 Dec. 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1476).

Podgorny, head of state and chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, on 25 June 1974.¹³⁴ The ambassador recalled that the Soviets first wanted him to present his credentials to a deputy president, but he refused ‘as this was our first embassy’.¹³⁵ Soon, the circuit of embassy receptions and close contacts with staff in other western embassies became established routine. St. Patrick’s Day was integrated onto the extensive list of national day celebrations that were honoured by the Soviet ministry of foreign affairs.

Ambassador Brennan’s son recalls that his father, because he was a Russian speaker and scholar, won a special respect from Soviet diplomats, drivers and other service personnel. It was further noted that he was an avid reader of the leading Soviet newspapers. (As will be discussed in chapter four, there was a utilitarian purpose for Dr Brennan’s attention to the Soviet media: his compilation of political reports for Dublin.) Ambassador Brennan’s son also recalled that the Irish were thought to be subject to and suspicious of ongoing surveillance, in common with all western embassies. Consequently, all Irish staff and family members were forbidden to develop close relations with Soviet citizens. It was the view of embassy staff that the clustering of embassies assisted Soviet security services in their monitoring duties. Despite this, leeway was shown to the Brennan children who developed friendships with neighbouring children.¹³⁶

Finally, Barry Brennan’s recollections of his family’s time in Moscow included his father’s friendship with and high regard for the ‘number two’ at the U.S. embassy, Jack F. Matlock.¹³⁷ Like Dr Brennan, Matlock was a Russian scholar and a keen observer of Soviet society.

Irish trade mission at Moscow

The Moscow embassy also housed the Irish trade mission to the Soviet Union, which was represented by Reginald ‘Reggie’ J. McHugh of C oras Tr acht ala (C.T.T., the Irish

¹³⁴ V. E. Louis and J.M. Louis (eds), *Information Moscow* (Moscow Sept. 1975), p. 92.

¹³⁵ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

¹³⁶ Barry Brennan recalled that he frequently had his Muscovite buddies climb over the embassy wall to Irish territory to swap popular Soviet badges and paraphernalia for chewing gum and L.P.s – without encountering censure from either the Soviet surveillance or his parents (Interview, 21 Apr. 2010).

¹³⁷ Barry Brennan’s recollection accords with the listing for the American embassy in the 1975 directory for foreign diplomats, which lists Matlock, as ‘Minister-Counsellor’, next after Ambassador Walter J. Stoessel. See V.E. Louis and J.M. Louis (eds), *Information Moscow* (Moscow, Sept. 1975), p. 104.

export board).¹³⁸ Born in 1945 and educated by the Christian Brothers in Athy, County Kildare, McHugh graduated with a degree in engineering from U.C.D. in 1967. After gaining three years' experience in the engineering trade in England and Ireland, he began his employment with C.T.T. in 1970. He was first posted to C.T.T.'s Vienna office. Vienna was then the business gateway and a centre for links to COMECON, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance established in 1949 to promote cooperation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. For the next four years until he took up the Moscow position, McHugh travelled into many of these states learning the unique skills of promoting Irish exports to a myriad of centralised state purchasing institutions. One of the abiding recollections of his apprenticeship was how he struggled with the logistical difficulties: paperwork and customs clearance at airports, poor hotels, internal travel, currency purchase, and especially with his sense of insecurity relating to officialdom in these countries.

Prior to accepting the Moscow job, he was careful to ensure that he had secured diplomatic accreditation, which meant not just swifter passage through airports, but more importantly that he would be afforded a status of 'credibility with business organisations, and protection from the vagaries of the Soviet legal system'. McHugh was allocated a double apartment in a complex dedicated to diplomatic staffs for himself and his wife, their two young children, and an *au pair*. Diplomatic status also qualified McHugh for a private car, a *Zhiguli* (better known in Ireland as a Lada), and access to diplomatic shops where he could purchase a selection of products with special coupons purchased from a foreign trade bank with western currencies. He first attended full-time Russian classes in a London language school for two and a half months – 'not sufficient time to become anywhere near fluent', he felt.

McHugh was supplied secretarial support by the U.P.D.K. but his first secretary, who had previously been assigned to Ambassador Brennan, proved not suitable and she was replaced by an 'excellent' woman, Elena Schidlovskaya. Schidlovskaya spoke good English and travelled with him to business meetings for translation purposes. McHugh soon discovered the useful English language business directory, *Information Moscow*, which was produced bi-annually to provide members of the foreign diplomatic and commercial corps with comprehensive listings of services and contact details. (He

¹³⁸ This following section is informed by, and all quotations cited are taken from the author's interviews with Reginald 'Reggie' J. McHugh of Drogheda (3 Nov. 2010 and 14 Aug. 2013).

kindly loaned his souvenir copy to this writer). McHugh found telephone calls to be slow, especially to Ireland. The embassy had telex machines, and the use of a diplomatic bag that was dispatched each Friday through Scandinavian Airlines flights out of Moscow. These services were considered by McHugh and colleagues to be secure, but it was generally believed among western missions to Moscow that U.P.D.K. staff members were passing on information to Soviet security forces. However, McHugh later qualified this impression when he met his former secretary in Moscow, after the ending of the Soviet Union in 1991. Madam Schidlovskaya assured McHugh that she had not informed any Soviet authority of the affairs of the Irish embassy, and McHugh was convinced by that assertion.

McHugh's Soviet counterparts were at the Irish desk in the ministry of foreign trade, and he recalls that his chief contact there was Vladimir Checklin. But Irish export orders were secured at another level, from various foreign trade organisations, which had the responsibility for placing orders with western companies on behalf of Soviet enterprises. McHugh recalled two examples: he facilitated Donnelly Mirrors of Naas, County Kildare, to supply a range of mirrors for Soviet motor manufacturers through the offices of Avtopromimport, importers of 'automotive equipment';¹³⁹ and Janelle of Finglas, Dublin, to supply a consignment of raincoats to Soviet retail outlets through Raznoexport, importers of 'light industrial and consumer goods.'¹⁴⁰ However, McHugh discovered that such import companies could be a barrier to developing new business opportunities, and he enjoyed some success in developing direct contacts with manufacturers and retailers and linking them with Irish exporters. An important part of the process was for him to meet representatives of Irish companies at Moscow airport, assist them with clearance, and accompany them to Soviet customers and importers.

McHugh further indicated in the interviews that Irish commercial representatives cooperated in a degree of economic intelligence gathering and sharing with their counterparts from the E.E.C. They met in secure rooms, often in the British or West German embassies on a monthly basis. They shared and discussed information, compiled aggregate reports, and having submitted them for approval to their ambassadors, the reports were sent to Brussels. McHugh recalled that Ambassador Brennan took these meetings very seriously, which McHugh felt was largely prompted

¹³⁹ For further details of this company, see Louis and Louis (eds), *Information Moscow*, p. 12

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

by Brennan's involvement in Irish entry talks to the E.E.C. Chairmanship of meetings was rotated in line with the E.E.C. presidency. During the Irish presidency in 1975, McHugh facilitated the group's compilation of a study on the Soviet merchant marine. To his dismay, McHugh recalled that when reading an issue of the *Economist* (which he received through the post by subscription), he discovered that it contained 'verbatim' some of the information on Soviet ports that he had included in the above confidential report. Little wonder, then, that he told this writer that Brussels was 'like a sieve'.

McHugh also recalled the travel restrictions placed upon all foreign diplomats in the U.S.S.R. Diplomats were obliged, if they wished to travel outside of the Moscow *oblast* (c. 100 kilometre radius), to officially inform the ministry of foreign affairs in writing in advance of their travel plans. Diplomats' cars also displayed a unique foreign car registration code, which in the case of Ireland was number thirty-seven.¹⁴¹

Reggie McHugh headed up the trade mission for three years, until July 1977. With regard to his relationship with the ambassador, he felt that Dr Brennan was a 'talented and capable ambassador, but sometimes had poor people skills'. This may have reflected a degree of demarcation tension between the roles of diplomatic and trade mission staffs. In this regard it is revealing to note the following reply from Ambassador Brennan to this writer's query on the trade mission in his embassy: 'the C oras Tr acht ala officer worked independently of me'.¹⁴²

Finally, McHugh recalled that one of the striking events of his tenure in Moscow was the occasion on which Ambassador Brennan led an Irish delegation of officials in 1974 from the departments of foreign affairs and industry and commerce (including Reggie McHugh) to inform the Soviet foreign trade ministry that Ireland could no longer implement the 1973 Irish-Soviet trade agreement, which had taken so many years to negotiate. This had arisen from the E.E.C.'s Common Commercial Policy (C.C.P.) that obliged member states to renounce, by 1975, agreements with third-party countries in favour of E.E.C.-approved agreements. McHugh recalled that a senior Soviet ministry official, Manzhulo, reacted angrily to being so informed, and retorted: 'you Irish are more Catholic than the pope'. However, effective diplomacy found a way around this impasse, as indicated by former Ambassador Brennan:

¹⁴¹ See Louis and Louis (eds), *Information Moscow*, p. 12.

¹⁴² Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

as it was smoothed over by the end of 1974 by an exchange of aide-mémoires, which provided that the ‘most favoured nation’ [M.F.N.] clauses of the trade agreement, which were in fact the most important part, would remain in force.¹⁴³

The ambassador’s assertion is supported by Mícheál Ó Corcora’s thesis, which affirms: ‘reciprocal M.F.N. treatment remained as effective after 1975 as it had been when embodied in the 1973 agreement’.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, a replacement agreement within E.E.C. rules was signed during a visit by Dr FitzGerald to Moscow in 1976. Accordingly, it is to that week-long visit – perhaps the foremost public and diplomatic event in Irish-Soviet relations during the subject period – that this study now turns.

Garret FitzGerald’s visit to the Soviet Union, 1976

Preparations for Garret FitzGerald’s official visit to the Soviet Union in 1976 – the first by an Irish foreign minister – began in earnest at a meeting between the minister and Ambassador Kaplin in the Stephen’s Green Club, Dublin. Noel Dorr, then the assistant secretary of the D.F.A., accompanied his minister and recorded details of the meeting.¹⁴⁵ Among the items discussed were headline meetings with President Podgorny, Foreign Minister Gromyko (for the third time in three years) and officials at the Soviet ministry of foreign trade. It also emerged that the itinerary would comprise a round trip of the cities of Moscow-Tbilisi-Leningrad-Moscow, and that a joint communiqué would be issued at the end of the visit.

The record of a follow-up meeting between Ambassador Kaplin and Noel Dorr indicated the aims of the two sides for the visit. Dr FitzGerald’s priority was to achieve a commitment to rectify the trade imbalance between the two countries, which had favoured the Soviets ever since formal relations had been established. He also wished to broach the subject of a number of human rights cases in the Soviet Union, which had been brought to his attention by members of the Irish public. For the Soviet side, Dorr’s account indicated they wished to raise the matter of Comecon/E.E.C. trade relations – the contentious issue of the relationship between the economic cooperation body of the Soviet Union and its socialist allies in eastern Europe, with the E.E.C. (This matter is discussed in more detail in chapter five of this study). The Soviets also wished to arrive

¹⁴³ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

¹⁴⁴ Mícheál G. Ó Corcora, ‘Irish-Soviet trade relations and policy’ (M. Litt. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1980), p. 146.

¹⁴⁵ See ‘Minister’s visit to the Soviet Union, 14-20 Dec. 1976, discussion at lunch’, 9 Nov. 1976, in Proposed visit of the minister for foreign affairs to the U.S.S.R., Dec. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2012/59/2074).

at a joint understanding of the status of détente in Europe, to include a mention of mutual ‘cooperation on the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.’¹⁴⁶ The term ‘principles of peaceful coexistence’ was a formulation of the Soviets’ view of détente, as is also discussed in some detail in chapter five. Suffice it to say here that under the Irish presidency in June of the previous year, representatives of member states of the E.E.C. had agreed that each member would avoid inclusion of that term when formulating future bilateral communiqués with the Soviet Union. On this note, when the embassy in Moscow was updated on the details of the visit and the communiqué, Ambassador Brennan was advised by D.F.A. headquarters:

We will, of course, have to watch for particular formulations or phrases which might constitute a ‘trap’ in that we might unknowingly accept something with a particular significance which we did not intend.¹⁴⁷

The two sides entered into a back-and-forth process between the Soviet foreign ministry, the D.F.A., and Ambassador Brennan to agree the communiqué. The Soviet first draft was closely considered, and many counter proposals were put forward by the Irish.¹⁴⁸ The Irish were determined that mention of the trade imbalance and of a Soviet commitment to rectify same would be written into the communiqué. However, Ambassador Brennan counselled a more practical course on this topic: ‘A consideration not to be lost sight of is that our aim is not to get the Soviets to confess their sins in public but to get some sort of assurance which can be invoked for the future, e.g. at a cooperation committee meeting.’¹⁴⁹ With regard to a joint understanding on the international political climate, the D.F.A. indicated its aversion not only to the term ‘peaceful coexistence’ but also for a preference for the term ‘relaxation of international tension’ in place of ‘détente’. And on the question of Comecon/E.E.C. relations, the Irish decided to adopt a cautious approach: ‘so as not to undermine community [E.E.C.] competence and negotiation stance, we should simply listen to what the other side has to say [with the] communiqué reflecting this.’¹⁵⁰

Alongside the behind-the-scenes negotiations, Irish commitment to a successful and high profile visit was indicated by the makeup of Dr FitzGerald’s visiting party.

¹⁴⁶ See ‘Travel, acquaintance with Soviet life’, n.d. but Nov. /Dec. 1976, in Draft communiqués following the visit of Garret FitzGerald to the U.S.S.R., 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2011/47/5).

¹⁴⁷ Dorr to Ambassador Brennan, 11 Nov. 1976 in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2012/59/2074).

¹⁴⁸ See ‘Travel, acquaintance with Soviet life’, n.d., but Nov. /Dec. 1976, in Draft communiqués following visit of Garret FitzGerald to the U.S.S.R., 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2011/47/5).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

The minister was joined by his wife, Joan (in spite of her aversion to air travel);¹⁵¹ Paul Keating, secretary of the D.F.A., and assistant secretaries Dorr and Heaslip; and a contingent of journalists from the national newspapers and R.T.É. Trade interest in the visit was augmented by a letter to Dr FitzGerald from Pat Rabbitte of the I.T.G.W.U.'s national fishermen's branch. Rabbitte enclosed a three-page proposal from his union's research department to develop fish exports to the Soviet Union, which the report claimed would 'help remedy the trade imbalance between our two countries and at the same time contribute to the development of the fishing industry in Ireland.'¹⁵² On the day of Dr FitzGerald's departure, the *Irish Times* editorialised the visit as: 'a sign both of Ireland's enlarged horizons in terms of trade and foreign policy generally and a new reality which has replaced old inhibitions and postures.' The same newspaper included a pullout four-page supplement, featuring articles and images of Soviet life, the state of play on trade relations, and an account from Mikhail Kuzin, chairman of the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society, on his society's work to promote cultural connections between the two states. The supplement also featured an alluring article by journalist Maeve Binchy on a brief love affair that she had recently experienced in the Soviet Union. Entitled 'A romantic interlude in Leningrad', the article gave an early indication of a talent that was soon to lead to her career as Ireland's best-selling novelist.¹⁵³

When the Irish party arrived in Moscow they were greeted by Deputy Foreign Minister Kamskov, and a delegation that included the trade official with responsibility for Irish trade, Vladimir Checklin. The scene was captured in a front page photo in the *Irish Press* of Dr and Mrs FitzGerald in winter wear, beneath the headline 'warm welcome in Moscow snow'.¹⁵⁴ Dr FitzGerald later described in his memoir (1991) his discussions with President Podgorny and Gromyko as 'fairly stilted and formal',¹⁵⁵ but the *Irish Times* reported at the time that the Podgorny meeting was 'a long session mainly on Northern Ireland'.¹⁵⁶ FitzGerald detailed Dublin's view on the North, and the president raised the possibility of concluding an air agreement for reciprocal landing rights for Aeroflot and Aer Lingus, and a joint cultural agreement. Of his discussions

¹⁵¹ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 113.

¹⁵² Patrick M. Rabbitte to Dr FitzGerald, 9 Dec. 1976, in 'Proposed visit of the minister for foreign affairs to the U.S.S.R., Dec. 1976' (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2012/59/2074). Rabbitte is currently the Irish government minister at the Department for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources.

¹⁵³ *Irish Times*, 14 Dec. 1976

¹⁵⁴ *Irish Press*, 15 Dec. 1976.

¹⁵⁵ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 179.

¹⁵⁶ *Irish Times*, 16 Dec. 1976

with the foreign minister, Dr FitzGerald detected that ‘behind the rhetoric’ Gromyko revealed the Soviets’ unhappiness with the Arab countries (in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur war of 1973) and their ‘unqualified support for Israel’s right to exist’. And again Gromyko could not resist another barb about the English: ‘I see that Joyce and Yeats and Shaw are all Irishmen. Why do you allow the English to steal your great writers?’¹⁵⁷ In the vein of such exchanges and in the context of Dr FitzGerald articulating Ireland’s foreign policy position for Gromyko, the following insight which Noel Dorr shared with this author is appropriate to record at this point. Mr Dorr recalled Gromyko’s caustic understanding of what FitzGerald had said: ‘you are not aligned, but not aligned with the non-aligned!’¹⁵⁸ Finally, Dr FitzGerald recalled that at the end of the meeting he handed over a list of human rights cases to Gromyko. FitzGerald does not include details of cases involved, but he noted Gromyko’s reaction: ‘He accepted them without demur – or commitment.’¹⁵⁹

Of central importance to the visit were the trade talks, and the signing of the agreement between the government of Ireland and the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the development of economic, industrial, scientific and technological co-operation in Moscow on 16 December. The respective delegations were led by Dr FitzGerald and acting Soviet foreign trade minister Kuzmin. According to typed notes relating to the discussions, the opening exchanges were candid and businesslike. The Irish minister made it plain that he was ‘frankly disappointed at growth of exports to the Soviet Union’ and that for the current year they would only amount to £1 million of worldwide Irish exports totalling £800-900 million.¹⁶⁰ In response Minister Kuzmin began by quoting a Russian maxim ‘nobody can sell produce not available, nobody can buy produce not needed’, and while saying that his side ‘did not bear grudges’, he indicated that ‘abrogation’ of the 1973 agreement by Ireland had disturbed activities.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, he concurred with Dr FitzGerald that the new cooperation agreement offered the possibility of improvement, saying:

¹⁵⁷ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 179.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013). Dorr could not recall precisely at which of the meetings he and FitzGerald had with Gromyko when the Soviet minister made this observation.

¹⁵⁹ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 179.

¹⁶⁰ See ‘Delegation welcomed by acting foreign trade minister, Mr Kuzmin’, 16 Dec. 1976, in Proposed visit of the minister for foreign affairs to the U.S.S.R., Dec. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2012/59/2074), p. 4. All citations in this chapter are taken from that document.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 2.

We on the Soviet side would like to assure you that we have a strong desire to find new ways to cooperate with Ireland; but what is required are active efforts on both sides and a painstaking search for our mutual interests.¹⁶²

As an indication of his bona fides, Mr Kuzmin stated he was immediately willing to purchase 10,000 tons of Irish beef, subject to terms on price and finance. To conclude, Dr FitzGerald expressed his belief that Ireland had a range of suitable products for export, and ‘that if trade expands it is easier to defend a policy of relationships with the Soviet Union.’¹⁶³

The Soviets provided a special plane for the trip to Georgia where the Irish party enjoyed the scenery, meeting the Georgian people, and the state’s architecture. But it was on the onward flight from Tbilisi to Leningrad that a minor embarrassing incident occurred. As the plane crossed the Caucuses the visitors were much taken by the views from the Sea of Azov to the Caspian. The interpreter, noting their interest, lent them a map. Dr FitzGerald recorded that one of his officials, conscious that the airline map was an accurate one (as opposed to the commonly held belief that most Soviet maps were inaccurate for security reasons), ‘slipped the map quietly into his briefcase’.¹⁶⁴ In the event the interpreter was attentive and insisted upon its return. Surprisingly, in recounting the incident Dr FitzGerald failed to include any sense of disapproval or regret at his official’s undiplomatic action.

In Leningrad the Irish ministerial party enjoyed the city’s cultural treasures with a night at the Kirov Ballet and a morning at the Hermitage in the Winter Palace, followed by a visit of respect to Piskarevskoye cemetery where half a million victims of the Nazi siege of the city from 1941 to 1944 lay buried in mass graves. On the final night of the visit Dr FitzGerald succeeded in impressing and charming his hosts at a reception given in his honour by the Leningrad City Soviet. In his after dinner speech he recalled that Peter the Great had been a great planner, and while noting that the departure time of the last train from Leningrad to Moscow at 23:55 was the same as in 1914, the Soviets had succeeded in reducing its travel time by five-and-a-half hours. But if Dr FitzGerald was charming to his hosts, he employed an amount of sarcasm in his memoir by describing the Leningrad soviet as ‘presumably descended in apostolic

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁶³ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁶⁴ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 179.

succession from the body that had launched the Bolshevik Revolution'¹⁶⁵ and concluded his impressions of Soviet leadership and its 'ruling elite' in strident terms:

We were put off by the rigidity of what seemed to be a hereditary caste system that had grown up as a result of the way in which untrammelled power had corrupted their society...the contempt that they spoke of 'the common working people' and it seemed as if the attitudes of the rulers of Tsarist Russia had been transferred to their successors two generations later.¹⁶⁶

Notwithstanding Dr FitzGerald's personal observations published at a time when the Soviet Union was in the process of being dismantled, he had summed up the import of the occasion before his departure from the Soviet Union by informing the press that 'the visit had completed the process of normalisation of relations between Ireland and the Soviet Union' and that the principal task now remaining was a commercial one of building upon the cooperation agreement. He was also careful to give his political assessment of the visit, and its relationship to Ireland's membership of the E.E.C.:

Ireland had to play her part in developing E.E.C. contacts with the Soviet Union, and...it was important that she make her own contribution to the formation of E.E.C. policy and not be entirely dependent upon the views and information of other member states.¹⁶⁷

In this context the minister briefed a meeting of E.E.C. ambassadors in Moscow before his departure for home,¹⁶⁸ and following his return to Dublin there is evidence from British F.C.O. files that E.E.C. missions in Dublin were also briefed on the details of the Irish visit. A communication from the British embassy in Dublin states that an Irish official 'covered the same ground as his minister did in the Moscow briefing'.¹⁶⁹ These briefings must be viewed in the context of a framework for ongoing political cooperation among member states of the E.E.C. (as is discussed in chapter five), and that Britain held the presidency of the E.E.C. for the first six months of 1977. The same item of communication stated that Dr FitzGerald had also given a more detailed account to John Hickman, a counsellor at the British diplomatic service, the 'most interesting parts' being:

FitzGerald was struck by Gromyko's relative flexibility on the Middle East...his comment on Palestinian participation in the [forthcoming international]

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ *Irish Times*, 20 Dec. 1976.

¹⁶⁸ *Irish Independent*, 17 Dec. 1976

¹⁶⁹ This paragraph is informed by R.M. Harris, British embassy, Dublin to R.J.M. Lyne, 6 Jan. 1977 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/605, WLE 020/303/1).

conference. On southern Africa...Gromyko explicitly recognised [that] the white population were indigenous and had a right to stay. This applied not only to South Africa but also to the whites in Rhodesia and Namibia.¹⁷⁰

It is the Irish-Soviet communiqué, released simultaneously in Moscow and Dublin on 20 December, which stands on the record as the official reflection of the visit and of a closely considered expression of state relations as they stood on that date. As is often the case in such documents, the communiqué confirmed that the talks had taken place in a ‘friendly atmosphere and in a spirit of mutual understanding’. But the integrity of the commitment to ‘continue to improve and expand the relations’ was given substance by the ratification during the visit of an agreement on economic, industrial, scientific and technological cooperation, which included the provision for an intergovernmental Irish-U.S.S.R. joint commission to monitor trade achievements. Accordingly, from an Irish perspective, the commitment by the two sides to achieve a ‘better balance and structure of trade’ accorded with Dr FitzGerald’s main goal for the talks. Also, there were no references to Soviet ‘traps’ in relation to concepts of peaceful coexistence, or any mention of COMECON/E.E.C. relations. Finally, it is in highlighting those aspects of international affairs where the two states had cooperated in the past at the U.N. – principally in pursuit of world peace and disarmament – and in its resolve to oppose colonialism and apartheid in South Africa, that the communiqué resonated most eloquently.

Finally, the official visit served to prompt Michael O’Riordan of the C.P.I. to write his booklet on Irish-Soviet relations.¹⁷¹ Having traced the revolutionary links between the Russian revolution and Irish independence, the booklet focused upon Soviet successes in uniting the different nationalities and ethnic groups of the U.S.S.R. O’Riordan contrasted this development with the disharmony of Northern Ireland, which continued to suffer from ‘years of British imperialist policies of “divide and rule”’.¹⁷² Confident that the seeds of proletarian solidarity sown in poisonous times had survived, O’Riordan declared they were now ‘beginning to bloom into roses of Irish-Soviet friendship’.¹⁷³ The author was also sufficiently impressed by the symbolism of a separate Irish-Soviet friendship event in 1976 in Moscow – the celebration by the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society of the sixtieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising – to

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Michael O’Riordan, *Pages from history: on Irish—Soviet relations* (Dublin, 1979).

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 10-1.

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 76.

assert that the commemoration ‘would have undoubtedly pleased Lenin and thrilled [James] Connolly.’¹⁷⁴

Moscow Summer Olympic Games

When asked to nominate the most memorable events in his mission to Moscow, former Ambassador Brennan replied: ‘The 1980 Summer Olympic Games were about the only stand-out issue.’¹⁷⁵ The issue arose as a result of the military intervention in Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in support of the Democratic Republic in December 1979. The Soviet action – which Eric Hobsbawm described as ‘military support for a friendly government in Afghanistan against American-backed and Pakistan-supplied guerrillas’¹⁷⁶ – elicited an immediate U.S. response. As a retaliatory tactic, President Carter decided that unless Soviet forces were withdrawn within a month he would call for a worldwide boycott of the Olympic Games due to commence in Moscow in July 1980. Accordingly, a battle of wills between the world’s two superpowers ensued, in which the International Olympic Committee (then under the chairmanship of Irishman, Lord Michael Killanin) and the countries of the world – both their governments and their national Olympic movements – were obliged to respond.

The Irish government’s reaction was to officially condemn the Soviet action as an unjustifiable violation of the U.N. charter. Strong expressions of concern and disapproval were sent directly to the Soviet embassy in Dublin (where Ambassador Alexey Efremovich Nesterenko was to replace the late Ambassador Kaplin in February 1980), and made jointly with fellow member states of the E.E.C. to the Soviet government. Immediately thereafter the Irish government came under sustained U.S. pressure to join in President Carter’s campaign. The first U.S. approach came in the form of a telegram that was erroneously directed to the president of Ireland, rather than the government. The telegram advised that President Carter had informed the United States Olympic Committee that he could not support American participation in Moscow, and concluded with the hope: ‘that you will urge your own Olympic committee to take similar action.’¹⁷⁷ This was followed by a series of approaches from the U.S. ambassador to Ireland, William V. Shannon, to various government ministers,

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 75.

¹⁷⁵ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

¹⁷⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of extremes: the short twentieth-century, 1914-1991* (London, 2002), p. 237.

¹⁷⁷ See President Jimmy Carter to President Patrick Hillery, 20 Jan. 1980, in *Olympic Games in Moscow: information communicated to and from missions abroad* (N.A.I, D.F.A., 2010/19/154).

commencing with Foreign Minister Brian Lenihan. The ambassador requested, in addition to support for the Olympic boycott, that Ireland take ‘certain steps’ to join in U.S. economic sanctions against the Soviet Union, including:

Computer firms would not make up for shortfall due to the American ban; the proposed arrangement with Aeroflot at Shannon Airport might be postponed...and also the question of dairy products.¹⁷⁸

Minister Lenihan gave no commitment on any of these matters, and he advised Ambassador Shannon that his department would have to give consideration to legal and E.E.C. implications involved. In spite of Shannon’s suggestions, the day after that meeting, Noel McMahon, secretary of the department of tourism and transport, and Sergei Pavlov of the Soviet ministry of aviation, signed an air transport agreement between Ireland and the U.S.S.R. at Iveagh House, headquarters of the D.F.A. in Dublin.¹⁷⁹ Undaunted, one week later Ambassador Shannon continued with his lobbying of the government at a meeting with Taoiseach Charles Haughey.

The Irish government did not rush to accommodate the Americans, but instead took careful stock of the general international situation, western reactions, Irish interests, and – in particular – the current status of Irish-Soviet relations. Evidence for this is contained in a four-page document drawn up at senior level in the D.F.A., entitled ‘Afghanistan crisis – suggested Irish reaction’. To begin, the document attempted to make sense of the Soviet action:

It seems likely that [the Soviets] invaded Afghanistan because they believed that the situation there, where it has long been involved indirectly, was getting out of control, as it always has feared serious instability in a state on its borders. This does not justify the invasion but, if true, it means that the Soviet Union did not simply cynically decide to abandon détente policies but rather felt obliged to risk damaging detente because of its security needs.¹⁸⁰

And while the document conceded the difficulty of comprehending Soviet motives, it continued:

It is not unfair to say privately that the Soviets may have felt that they were gaining little from détente...in view of certain American and western policies

¹⁷⁸ See A. O’Rourke, ‘Note’, 21 Jan. 1980 in Olympic Games in Moscow: information communicated to and from missions abroad (N.A.I, D.F.A., 2010/19/154), p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Press release on behalf of department of foreign affairs, n.d. [but 23 Jan. 1980] in ‘Olympic games in Moscow: information communicated to and from missions abroad’ (N.A.I, D.F.A., 2010/19/154).

¹⁸⁰ ‘Afghanistan crisis – suggested Irish reaction’, initialled ‘N.D.’ [Possibly, Noel Dorr], 30 Jan. 1980, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/153, folder 2 of 2).

over the past year or two to delay in ratifying Salt II [talks that had begun in 1969 between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to restrict strategic armaments]; decision to modernise NATO weapons in Europe, etc.¹⁸¹

Commenting that President Carter was anxious to act as a ‘tough-minded’ leader in his re-election year (he was being challenged by the Republican Party’s nominee for the 1980 presidential election, Ronald Reagan), and that the U.S. was supported by ‘Prime Minister Thatcher’s disposal to take a hawk-like view of the Soviet Union’, the document was more anxious to take account of reactions from fellow E.E.C. governments. Set against the dichotomy of Ireland’s membership of the E.E.C. and its non-membership of NATO (the alliance formed by western countries thirty years earlier to specifically combat Soviet influence), the document grappled with the prospect of joining in a western campaign against the Soviet Union. That prospect was summed up as follows:

The logic of our past attitude in even more difficult times (Second World War neutrality; decision to stay out of NATO) would suggest that we should now take a position distinct from that of our partners who are in NATO. But the difficulty is how to reconcile this with our general commitment to foreign policy coordination within the Nine,¹⁸² and our wish not to accentuate our differences from partners with whom we have many, and growing, interests in common.¹⁸³

At the same time, while a number of Ireland’s E.E.C. partners shared the U.S. /U.K. analysis, the document noted that some were apprehensive about the use of sport as a tactic in East-West political confrontations, and many were fearful that the gains of détente would be lost in a return to the Cold War. Yet, in the end the document predicted western powers would come out publicly with the U.S. for fear the Soviet Union would attempt to exploit divisions within western ranks. Finally, the document is notable for its inclusion of some element of a balance between condemnations of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and lack of condemnations of similar actions undertaken by western powers within the past generation:

The Vietnam War, Suez [where British, French and Israeli forces intervened to oppose Egypt’s nationalisation of the Suez canal in 1956]; France in the Central

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² The Irish commitment to E.E.C. foreign policy cooperation is discussed in detail in chapter five.

¹⁸³ ‘Afghanistan crisis – suggested Irish reaction’, initialled ‘N.D.’ [Possibly, Noel Dorr], 30 Jan. 1980, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/153, folder 2 of 2).

African Republic in 1979; the U.S. in Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, etc., which we [Ireland] did not feel obliged to condemn openly or retaliate against.¹⁸⁴

In its consideration of the up-to-date position of Irish-Soviet relations, the department's assessment began in the following East-West terms:

It [support for the U.S.-led campaign] may force us to choose between offending the Soviet Union by taking action with consequent damage to our interests (which are recent and vulnerable); or losing goodwill in the U.S. where our basic interests and shared values are much greater.¹⁸⁵

The principal focus of the assessment was on trade developments. The efficaciousness of the economic cooperation agreement signed by Dr FitzGerald in Moscow in 1976 was cited for the subsequent growth in trade, and by the holding of three annual meetings of the oversight joint Irish-Soviet commission.¹⁸⁶ An earlier report from the department's economic division showed that the Soviets were supplying six percent of Ireland's oil needs. Imported by Tedcastle's of Dún Laoghaire, the oil was forwarded to two essential public utilities, the Electricity Supply Board (E.S.B.) and Córas Iompar Éireann (C.I.É.). The Soviet Union was judged a 'reliable source of supply not subject to political upheavals and not under the control of American and other multinational companies.'¹⁸⁷ The report pointed out that in the summer of 1978 British and Italian railways had been forced to cut services for energy supply reasons, while C.I.É. had not. The report concluded: 'To sum up, Soviet oil provides an extra margin for manoeuvre, and if at all avoidable its supply should not be put at risk.'¹⁸⁸ However, in terms of both rectifying the Irish-Soviet trade imbalance and for an indication of how trade interests were making some impact upon Irish political calculations, a note forwarded from the managing director of Bord Baine (the Irish dairy export board) to the D.F.A. was perhaps the most telling. It indicated that Bord Baine had in the last few days secured orders for an additional 10,000 tons of butter for sale to the Soviet Union. Therefore, the managing director was moved to:

¹⁸⁴ To this list may be added the U.S. government's campaign to destabilise Chile soon after President Salvador Allende's democratically elected socialist government was established in 1970. On 11 Sept. 1973 Allende's government was overthrown by a *coup d'état* planned and executed by General Augusto Pinochet. See Edwin Williamson, *The Penguin history of Latin America* (New York, 1992), pp 500, 505.

¹⁸⁵ See 'Afghanistan crisis – suggested Irish reaction', initialled 'N.D.' [Noel Dorr], 30 Jan. 1980, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/153, folder 2 of 2).

¹⁸⁶ See 'Ireland-USSR relations', n.d. [but after June 1979] in 'Olympic Games in Moscow' (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/152). The joint commission was provided for under the terms of the cooperation agreement.

¹⁸⁷ As cited in Martin Mansergh (economic division), 'Oil supplies from the Soviet Union', 14 Jan. 1979, in Olympic Games in Moscow (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/152).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

Express the wish that no political action would be taken here (in light of the invasion of Afghanistan)...the total value (including E.E.C. restitution payments) of the sale to the economy will be of the order of £20 million.¹⁸⁹

Based upon such analyses, the D.F.A.'s advice to the taoiseach, immediately after his meeting with the U.S. Ambassador Shannon on 30 January, was to continue to prevaricate in the face of early American pressure. In a letter to the taoiseach's deputy secretary, the department supplied details of its reports and analyses, and advised the taoiseach not to reply to President Carter (i.e. to the above mentioned telegram to President Hillery) at this time, but rather that it was now in the country's interest 'to temporise'.¹⁹⁰

From the outset, Lord Killinan gave the lead to the international Olympic movement, stating that athletes must not be obstructed from attending the Games 'by political, racial or religious discrimination.'¹⁹¹ The Olympic Council of Ireland (O.C.I.) determined that it would send a team to Moscow, a position that had widespread public support. This was confirmed when sixty-eight per cent of respondents to a Lansdowne Market Research poll believed that Irish athletes should participate.¹⁹² Even when on 16 May the government finally gave in to American pressure and issued a statement stating it 'strongly advised' that an Irish team should not to be sent, the O.C.I. did not waver from its decision. After government funding and big business sponsorship were withdrawn from the team, alternative funding was sourced from 'hundreds of individuals, small businesses, and voluntary groups...the I.T.G.W.U. [contributed] a cheque for £5,000.'¹⁹³

Meantime, on the diplomatic front in Moscow – and before the government issued its final decision on 16 May – Ambassador Brennan decided on his own initiative without prior sanction from the D.F.A. to join in a western boycott of a high profile Soviet public holiday celebration. For the purposes of this study, he frankly admitted: 'Because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, I made a mistake in deciding off my

¹⁸⁹ M. McCloskey to Mr O'Connor, 9 Jan. 1980, in Olympic Games in Moscow (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/152).

¹⁹⁰ Noel Dorr to Dermot Nally, Department of the Taoiseach, 30 Jan. 1980, in Olympic Games in Moscow (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/153, folder 2 of 2).

¹⁹¹ *Irish Times*, 3 Jan. 1980

¹⁹² *Irish Times*, 3 Mar. 1980

¹⁹³ Sunday Tribune, 16 July, 2000 (<http://www.tribune.ie/archive/article/2000/jul/16/when-politics-is-master/>) (25 June 2011).

own but not to attend the May Day parade.’¹⁹⁴ This development was reflected in a newspaper article headed ‘Ireland joins boycott’ which read: ‘Dr Brennan said his absence from the parade was due to an international decision, but would not say whether it was connected with moves to boycott the Moscow Olympics’.¹⁹⁵ That report is supported by a copy telex from the ambassador to Dublin, which recorded Dr Brennan’s attendance at the meetings of fellow E.E.C. ambassadors: ‘I said I would follow whatever consensus developed among the Nine’.¹⁹⁶ In the course of events the ambassador’s indiscretion was overtaken within a fortnight by the government’s decision to ask the O.C.I. to boycott the Games.

Despite the government’s advice, Ireland’s team proceeded to the Moscow Games, and joined over 6,000 athletes from eighty-one national teams in the Soviet capital. Despite the call of many western governments to support the boycott, only athletes from the U.S., West Germany and Japan were absent from western countries.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, when President Leonid Brezhnev opened the Games before a crowd of 100,000 in the Lenin Stadium, several teams from the West were represented in the ceremony not by their athletes but by flag bearers carrying name-banners and Olympic flags. The Irish athletes were also absent, and *chef de mission* Ken Ryan carried his team’s standards – ‘not specifically in protest against events in Afghanistan, but as part of a campaign to take nationalism out of the Olympics.’¹⁹⁸ This development was in keeping with the thinking of Lord Killanin who had held talks with both Presidents Brezhnev and Carter in an attempted to defuse the boycott by downplaying the role of national emblems. Telexes to the D.F.A. revealed little of Killanin’s meeting with Brezhnev other than to record that observers ‘were certain’ proposals to denationalise the Games were discussed.¹⁹⁹ After Killanin’s meeting with Carter, a telex reported that when Killanin asked for the boycott call to be lifted, ‘the American president, who had

¹⁹⁴ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

¹⁹⁵ *Irish Times*, 2 May 1980.

¹⁹⁶ Ambassador Brennan to Deputy Secretary Dorr, D.F.A., 8 May 1980, in ‘Olympic Games in Moscow: information communicated to and from missions abroad’ (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/154).

¹⁹⁷ This paragraph is informed by Conor O’Clery’s article in the *Irish Times*, 19 July 1980. He reported that while eighty-one national teams competed in Moscow, twenty-nine joined the U.S.-led boycott, and twenty-nine others stayed away ‘for other reasons, mostly financial.’ O’Clery was the Moscow correspondent of *Irish Times* during the 1980s.

¹⁹⁸ *Irish Times*, 19 July 1980.

¹⁹⁹ As cited in copy telex, ‘Olympics --lead Killanin 2 (Moscow)’, n.d. [but 7 May 1980], in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/153, folder 2 of 2).

been smiling up until then, suddenly changed his expression and simply replied ‘no’.²⁰⁰ In a memoir (1986), Killanin briefly referred to the Moscow Games and asserted: ‘in my opinion flags are essentially political emblems which divide rather than unite.’²⁰¹

Two final observations on the Moscow Games issue highlight unique aspects of Irish involvement. First, there was a minor, but distinguishing, diplomatic point of difference between the Irish mission and all its E.E.C. counterparts. While Ambassador Brennan and his staff did not attend the Games, he remained at his post in Moscow throughout, while all other E.E.C. missions were absent from their embassies. And lastly, the above mentioned fear of the managing director of Bord Baine that Irish political action could jeopardise new butter exports to the Soviet Union proved unfounded. Trade figures returns showed Irish exports to the Soviet Union for 1980 reached a record high of £24 million, and for the first year exceeded the value of imports that totalled £23.5 million.²⁰² To that official record can be added evidence supplied to this writer by Ludmila Snigireva, then a young interpreter for Sovincentr, a department of the Chamber of Commerce of the U.S.S.R., whose duties included facilitating athletes and officials with registration procedures, and communications between athletes and cooks in the Souyz Hotel. When asked if she could recall any Irish involvement, Madame Snigireva replied:

I remember that there was Irish butter in our restaurants, where Olympic participants were eating. They enjoyed Baileys [Irish Cream liqueur], and Irish whiskey; and our cooks were amazed with the quality of meat they were cooking, saying that the meat was Irish.²⁰³

She also recalled that one of the barmen in the Souyz Hotel created a popular new hot drink at that time by adding Irish Baileys to coffees instead of milk.

The Soviet embassy to Dublin

When the first Soviet ambassador to Ireland, Anatoli Stepanovich Kaplin, arrived in Dublin in August 1974, 75 Ailesbury Road, Ballsbridge, became his new

²⁰⁰ As cited in copy telex, ‘Olympics --lead Killanin 3 (London)’, n.d. [but between 7 and 23 May 1980], in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/153, folder 2 of 2).

²⁰¹ As cited in Lord Killanin, *My Ireland: a personal impression* (London, 1987), p. 179.

²⁰² As calculated from Central Statistics Office (C.S.O.) in Caroline M. Mannion, ‘Irish-Soviet trade’ (M. Sc. [Econ.], T.C.D., 1986), table 2.1, p. 30. In 1970 Irish exports were £0.02 million, and imports were £1.50 million.

²⁰³ Email from Ludmila Snigireva of Galway (27 May 2013). Madame Snigireva currently delivers Russian language classes as part of N.U.I.M., Department of History’s M.A. programme on European studies.

home.²⁰⁴ The property was acquired for approximately £100,000 from businessman Dermot Ryan, and was located in the heart of Dublin's 'embassy land'.²⁰⁵ This reflected the prestige the Soviet state intended for their new mission to Ireland. Together with the new embassy building to be developed at 184-186 Orwell Road, Rathgar, the Soviets had arrived and set up home in some style, in keeping with their world superpower status. The agreed maximum number of Soviet citizens at the embassy was seventeen, and as it was Soviet policy to employ only their own citizens, this figure included staff involved in housekeeping duties. Kaplin, then fifty-four years old, had trained at the Gorky Institute to become an historian before he fought for two years as a Red Army soldier on the Moscow and other fronts during the 'Great Patriotic War' (the Soviet designation for the 'Second World War'). Prior to the end of the war he was assigned to a school of diplomacy in Moscow and served in the diplomatic service, principally in Scandinavia, until his appointment to Ireland. He was a published author in the Soviet Union; his best known work being a study of Lenin's diplomatic policies after the Bolshevik revolution. This is said to have achieved a print run of 100,000 copies. John Horgan, editor of the *Education Times*, who met Kaplin in Moscow immediately after his appointment had been announced in *Pravda*, provided a short profile of the new ambassador:

He is a tall man of almost military carriage. His demeanour is as impassive as that of any copy-book diplomat, but in private conversation his sense of humour is quickly and naturally displayed...it is difficult to avoid the impression that the ambassador would make an excellent poker player...perhaps this is why he has been chosen.²⁰⁶

His wife, Gali, had been an eye-surgeon and gave up her career to join in her husband's diplomatic role.²⁰⁷ They had two adult children, neither of whom accompanied their parents to Ireland.

Political scientist Ronald Hill, who had been involved in organising Shostakovich's visit to Dublin two years previously, was also a frequent contributor to

²⁰⁴ *Irish Times*, 24 Jan. 1975.

²⁰⁵ The residence of the French ambassador and the embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany were closely adjoining Ambassador Kaplin's residence. See *Thom's Dublin Street Directory* (Dublin, 1975-6 edition), p. 10. Also, according to *Thom's* the property remained in the ownership of Dermot Ryan until 1976 and no name was entered against it until 'Embassy of the U.S.S.R.' appeared in the 1985 edition, with a rateable valuation of £74.

²⁰⁶ *Irish Times*, 10 Apr. 1974.

²⁰⁷ This chapter has been informed by an article announcing the death of Kaplin, *Irish Times*, 4 Aug. 1979.

the Irish media on matters relating to the Soviet Union. In a feature article in the *Irish Times* concerning the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, Hill predicted the short-term strategy of the Soviet embassy in Dublin:

These Soviet diplomats will quickly size up the Irish scene, set up contacts with business, trade and cultural organisations and before you know where we are, Soviet exports to Ireland could be booming.²⁰⁸

Yet, the embassy was careful to reach out to an inclusive and egalitarian cross-section of Irish society. This was shown by journalist Christina Murphy's report on the party hosted by the embassy to celebrate the fifty-seventh anniversary of the 'Great October Revolution' in the Burlington Hotel, Dublin, entitled: 'Left, middle and right mingle at Soviet ambassador's reception'.²⁰⁹ Therein she recounted the guest list, which read as a virtual 'who's who' of Irish society: Lord Killanin, head of the Irish Olympic Council; the chief justice, William Fitzgerald; the ceann comhairle, Sean Tracey; the tánaiste, Brendan Corish; the papal nuncio, Gaetano Alibrandi; the leader of the Opposition and Fianna Fáil, Jack Lynch; Roddy Connolly, son of James who had met Lenin in Moscow in Petrograd in 1920,²¹⁰ and – as discussed in chapter one – Dr Pat McCartan in Moscow in 1921; Charles J. Haughey ('sipping vodka');²¹¹ John Swift and Frank Edwards of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, proudly sporting Lenin centenary medals; prominent trade unionist and communist Andy Barr;²¹² trade unionist militant Matt Merrigan;²¹³ and an unnamed importer of Russian oil, who informed the journalist: 'one seventh of our consumption comes from here'.²¹⁴ There was no mention of Michael O'Riordan of the C.P.I., but Peadar O'Donnell,²¹⁵ now in his eighty-second

²⁰⁸ 'Our men in Moscow', Ronald Hill. *Irish Times*, 23 Apr. 1974

²⁰⁹ *Irish Times*, 8 Nov. 1974.

²¹⁰ See photo in O'Connor, *Reds and the Green*, p. 84.

²¹¹ Haughey and author Tim Pat Coogan were said to have been on good social terms with Yuri Ustimenko, the Dublin representative of the Soviet State news agency, Tass, in the early 1970s. Ustimenko later published a book in Russia about his Irish experiences, entitled: *Get to know Ireland*. Mentioned to this writer by Angela McQuillan, Irish-U.S.S.R. Society and confirmed by email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

²¹² Barr was a communist trade unionist leader in Short's aircraft factory, Belfast, and in 1974 was President of the Irish Council of Trade Unions. See C.P.I., 'Andy Barr (1913-2003)' (<http://www.comunistpartyofireland.ie/s-barr.html>) (22 May 2010).

²¹³ Matt Merrigan (1922-2000) was leader of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union and chairman of the Socialist Labour Party. He was critical of the Soviet Union from a neo-Trotskyist perspective. See O'Connor Lysaght, *Matt Merrigan: a political assessment*, at (<http://www.workersrepublic.org/Pages/Ireland/Trotskyism/merriganobit1.html>) (22 May 2010).

²¹⁴ This person may have been a representative of Tedcastle Oil Products, Dublin, the main importer of Soviet fuels.

²¹⁵ O'Donnell had been Ireland's representative to the Krestintern or Peasants' International (1921-37), a section of the Comintern. See O'Connor, *Reds and the Green*, p. 7.

year and a direct link to the Comintern of the 1920-30s looked on at them all – guests, ministers and diplomats with ‘satisfaction and a twinkle in his eye’ and declared “‘but I’m looking at it all with a bit of a giggle in my heart.’”²¹⁶

Like their Irish counterparts in Moscow, the Soviet staff had initially to reside in hotels, but they had immediate use of the former Irish Management Institute headquarters and grounds on the Orwell Road. This site of over five acres was purchased for a reported sum of ‘in excess of £520,000’.²¹⁷ The change of ownership was reflected by the entry for 184 Orwell Road in the 1974 edition of *Thom’s Dublin Street Directories*.²¹⁸ The building proved inadequate for the needs of the embassy and within two years Dublin Corporation had received an application for demolition of the existing building and planning permission for an administration space and chancery, a block of eighteen flats and a services centre with a cinema and library – at an estimated total cost ‘in the region of £1.4m’.²¹⁹ This application was to attract considerable media interest and planning appeals. It also served to provide a means for objectors to magnify fears about the nature and levels of staffing, as had been hinted at in Ronald Hill’s above mentioned *Irish Times* article:

We should encourage the Russians to maintain a small staff... it is likely to prove difficult to restrict the size...they normally insist on bringing employees ...right down to charwomen and chauffeurs...full-time trade official, a cultural secretary...an observer of the Irish scene... a K.G.B. man to keep his eye on other diplomats and who knows what else?²²⁰

But even before the application for the proposed complex could be considered, three local residents had lodged specific objections in relation to the building of a perimeter wall around the embassy. This led to media comparisons between the ‘Orwell Road Wall’ and the Berlin Wall.²²¹ However, the objectors themselves were taken to task by a letter writer to the *Irish Times* who invited them to lodge objections to the 7 ft. 10 in. wall being built around an itinerant settlement by the corporation in Rathfarnham, to appease objections from local residents.²²² Embassy officials met with their Orwell Road neighbours to assuage their concerns but there was no dialogue with

²¹⁶ *Irish Times*, 8 Nov. 1974.

²¹⁷ *Irish Times*, 3 Sept. 1976.

²¹⁸ *Thom’s Street Directory* (Dublin, 1974 edition), p. 593

²¹⁹ *Irish Times*, 3 Sept. 1976.

²²⁰ ‘Our Men in Moscow’, Ronald Hill, *Irish Times*, 23 Apr. 1974.

²²¹ *Irish Times*, 17 Sept. 1975.

²²² Patrick Egan, Artane, Dublin, letter to *Irish Times*, 26 Nov. 1975.

a minority of city councillors who sought in vain throughout the latter part of 1976 to block the building of the new embassy complex. The most prominent was the independent councillor Sean Loftus,²²³ who claimed that ‘this embassy would be used to further the philosophical concept of Russian imperialism.’ A number of solicitors representing religious objectors, the Irish Council of European Freedom and the Irish-Czechoslovakia Society, were also vocal at the public hearings.²²⁴ In contrast, Socialist Labour Party Councillor Billy Keegan gave support, saying ‘the Russians should be congratulated on the fine plan before them’,²²⁵ and Senator Ruairi Quinn, an architect by training and later leader of the Labour Party, said to his colleagues:

They must look on the application according to the planning criteria. The Russians had been very helpful and cooperative and it was wrong to be making remarks which might affect our good diplomatic relations with them.²²⁶

Councillors from Fianna Fáil and Fíne Gael generally kept a low profile on the issue. The fears of a large complex being erected were not borne out by the annual rateable valuation of the property, which remained unchanged at £59.25 from its purchase year of 1973 to 1985.²²⁷ In the event all objections were overruled and the complex was completed.

In May 1977 Ambassador Kaplin was able to present to the internationally prominent Irish figure and former minister for external affairs, Seán MacBride, a letter confirming that he was to be awarded one of the most prestigious awards of the Soviet Union – the International Lenin Peace Prize. Kaplin indicated that the prize committee was honouring MacBride for his ‘outstanding merits in the struggle for maintaining and strengthening peace’.²²⁸ Already a Nobel peace prize-winner, in accepting the Lenin prize MacBride became the first member of an exclusive club of public figures to have been awarded both peace prizes. This club now includes Nelson Mandela of South

²²³ Councillor Loftus (1927 - 2010), lecturer in law in the Dublin Institute of Technology and T.D. during 1981-2, was perhaps better regarded as a pioneering campaigner on ‘green’ issues affecting the greater Dublin Bay area. He notably changed his name by deed poll to ‘Sean D. Dublin Bay Rockall Loftus’. See Houses of the oireachtas, ‘Dáil members database’, (<http://www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist/default.asp?housetype=0&HouseNum=22&MemberID=13&ConstID=88>) (26 Aug. 2011).

²²⁴ *Irish Times*, 1 Dec. 1976

²²⁵ *Irish Times*, 15 Sept. 1976.

²²⁶ *Irish Times*, 5 Oct. 1976. Ruairi Quinn is currently the Irish minister for education and skills.

²²⁷ See *Thom's Street Directory* (1973 and 1980 editions), p. 593 and p. 728.

²²⁸ *Irish Times*, 2 May 1977.

Africa, the last recipient of the Lenin prize.²²⁹ However, MacBride was not the only other Irish recipient of a Lenin prize. That distinction had already been bestowed upon John Desmond Bernal in 1953. Bernal had combined a brilliant career as professor of physics at Birkbeck College, London, with a life-long commitment to Marxism and support for the Soviet Union.²³⁰

Kaplin informed MacBride that he had been nominated for the prize by a number of international groups, including African groups. MacBride had served as the United Nations commissioner for Namibia during 1973-6, when the U.N. was attempting to end the occupation of that country by South Africa. The Soviet Union also had particular interest in African affairs in the 1970s, supporting liberation movements and new states emerging from Portuguese colonialism, whose leaderships were taking non-capitalist paths to national development. The relevance of these developments is illustrated by two of MacBride's co-recipients of the Lenin prize in that year: Presidents Machel of Mozambique and Neto of Angola.²³¹ During his tenure in Namibia, MacBride had worked closely with its U.N.-recognised liberation movement, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). Kim Wallis, in *History Ireland*, recounts how MacBride's principled stand in Namibia led to opposition from U.S. and other interests at the U.N.:

At the beginning of 1976 he incurred severe criticism from the U.S. and the secretary-general [of the U.N., Kurt Waldheim of Austria] for saying that if SWAPO invited Cuban forces [which had come to the aid of Angola when it was invaded by the South African army in 1975] into Namibia to help them liberate their country, he did not think the U.N. would do anything about it. From this moment he faced real opposition amongst colleagues in the U.N. and the U.S.²³²

There were some Irish expressions of disquiet at the award, as was expressed in Ronan Keane's biographical essay on MacBride: 'the award to him of the Lenin Peace Prize in 1977 by the Soviet Union was greeted with less general enthusiasm; it was seen by

²²⁹ See Nelson Mandela, 'Address upon receiving the international Lenin Peace Prize', 28 Oct. 2002, available at Sweetspeeches (<http://www.sweetspeeches.com/s/1967-nelson-mandela-address-upon-receiving-the-international-lenin-peace-prize>) (8 Dec. 2011).

²³⁰ See Vincent Morley, 'John Desmond Bernal' (1901-71), in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009) at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0624>) (13 June 2013).

²³¹ *Irish Times*, 2 May 1977. The two further recipients were Janus Kadar, the Hungarian communist leader; and Hortensia Bussi, the widow of President Salvador Allende of Chile.

²³² Kim Wallace, 'Seán MacBride and Namibia' in *History Ireland*, xiv, no. 4 (July/Aug. 2006), pp 30-4.

some as a dubious honour for an advocate of human rights.²³³ No doubt the author was referring to issues relating to Soviet dissidents. Whatever about such reservations, MacBride's acceptance of the prize must be assessed in the light of his wider perceptions of Soviet policies, particularly in relation to disarmament. This he had articulated in his acceptance speech for the Nobel prize in 1974:

The socialist countries do not have a profit-motivated industrial-military complex...disarmament means an automatic switch from increased arms production to increase in production for industrial development...This, no doubt, accounts for the more sincere and far-reaching approach of the Soviet Union to general and complete disarmament than that of the western powers.²³⁴

When the Lenin prize was presented to MacBride by Nikolai Blokhin, chairman of the committee on International Lenin prizes, a correspondent of the *Irish Socialist* was present to record the proceedings. Blokhin praised MacBride's courage and consistency for international peace and his earlier struggle for Irish national independence. In his response, MacBride:

Referred to that struggle... recalled that it was Lenin who had described the 1916 Easter Rising as the first tremor of the world upheaval that was to lead to the demolition of colonialism and the establishment of socialism in vast areas of the world.²³⁵

MacBride also used the occasion to urge that resources then being spent on arms research and production be redirected to solving the problem of declining energy sources by their replacement with new sources such as sun, wind and tide. Prionsias Mac Aonghusa, a member of the Irish Peace Group, and assistant to MacBride during his term as U.N. commissioner in Namibia, pointed out that as minister for external affairs in 1949 it was Seán MacBride who had ensured that Ireland retained its neutrality despite great pressure to join NATO.²³⁶ However, Mac Aonghusa may have been somewhat kind to MacBride concerning the latter's actions on NATO when he had been minister for external affairs. Elizabeth Keane records that MacBride also made approaches to the U.S. 'about abandoning neutrality and joining NATO in exchange for American support for ending partition.'²³⁷ Yet, it must be appreciated that MacBride's

²³³ Ronan Keane, 'Seán MacBride (1904-88)', in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009) at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5109>) (18 June 2013).

²³⁴ As cited in Elizabeth Keane, *Seán MacBride: a life* (Dublin, 2007), p. 219.

²³⁵ *Irish Socialist*, Oct. 1977.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ See Elizabeth Keane, *Seán MacBride*, p. 154.

later international experiences engendered in him empathy for Soviet state and people. He articulated his view in an essay for an Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society publication, as is exemplified by the following extract:

It takes time to understand the character and reaction of Russian people. They are somewhat cautious in their contacts with foreigners until you get to know them. Many attempts have been made to use them and often to misquote them. Never forget that twenty million Russians were killed during the course of the last war. There is no family that has not suffered...²³⁸

When the fifty-nine year-old Ambassador Kaplin died in office in August 1979 while holidaying in Moscow, the reaction in Ireland to the news reflected a palpable sense of warmth for ‘one of the best-known members of the diplomatic corps since his arrival five years earlier.’²³⁹ Garret FitzGerald’s memoir provides an insight into Kaplin’s professional demeanour from their discussions on the formalities of planning the official visit to the Soviet Union in 1976. FitzGerald recalled his expectation that Kaplin would be taken aback at his knowledge of Aeroflot flight times from Moscow to Tbilisi, from Tbilisi to Leningrad, and of the last train from Leningrad back to Moscow. FitzGerald wrote: ‘Diplomats are trained not to show any emotion, including surprise. He [Kaplin] did not bat an eyelid, but noted down my suggestions.’²⁴⁰ Yet it was said by others that his outer reserve belied a humorous and sociable personality, exemplified by enthusiastic holiday ventures to the south-west of Ireland (which Ambassador Kaplin and his wife, Gali, claimed to be the equal of Russia’s best scenery), attendance at Croke Park games, and the granting of an interview for a school newspaper produced by the Christian Brothers’ school in Carrick-on-Suir. However, his warmest friendships with Irish citizens seem to have been reserved for members of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. society, especially its chairman John Swift. Swift received from the embassy a bottle of the best Soviet brandy every birthday, and Kaplin was an occasional customer of a son of Swift’s, Grosvenor, who ran a chip shop in Ranelagh in the 1970s.²⁴¹ Kaplin presided over the foundation of the embassy, steered it safely past the planning obstacles and political protests, and skilfully fulfilled both his diplomatic duties and established societal relationships. At the same time his mission was challenged by various issues and campaigners concerned about Soviet dissidents. To these he

²³⁸ Seán MacBride, ‘Ireland – U.S.S.R.’ in Brian Kavanagh (ed.), *Ireland-U.S.S.R., 21st anniversary* (Dublin, 1987), p. 28.

²³⁹ *Irish Times*, 4 Aug. 1979.

²⁴⁰ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 178.

²⁴¹ Interview with John P. Swift, 15 Sept. 2010.

responded with staunch defence of his government's position, most notably by his reported refusal to accept a petition on such an issue containing the signatures of 100 members of the oireachtas. The petition was brought to his residence by 300 protestors, who were led by members of Amnesty International, Ben Briscoe T.D. of Fíne Gael, and Robert Bradford, a Unionist M.P. for Belfast.²⁴²

Some personal details of the ambassador and his wife, which were given to this writer by Dr Sarah Smyth of the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies at T.C.D.,²⁴³ reveal that the Kaplins had complicated backgrounds. Kaplin's family background was one of the 'old believers' in the Volga River city of Gorky (now reverted to its pre-1917 name, Nizhny Novgorod). 'Old believers' were descendants of dissenters who in the seventeenth-century had rejected liturgical reforms introduced by the Orthodox Church. They were then banished to remoter parts of Russia, became associated with the merchant class during the intervening centuries, and were accordingly regarded with some suspicion during the opening decades in the building up of the Soviet Union. Gorky was also a 'closed city', decreed out-of-bounds to foreigners in an effort to preserve the security of Soviet military establishments.²⁴⁴ Also, Gali Kaplin's parents were 'taken' during the Stalinist period of the 1930s, a fact that she believed restricted her own career thereafter.²⁴⁵ This study cannot confirm the accuracy of these details. However, as they have been supplied on good authority, they are included here to indicate that beyond the diplomatic correctness of even the highest Soviet officials, some Irish citizens became aware of the complexities and contradictions within Soviet society.

Ambassador Kaplin's death in office resulted in three official expressions of Irish sympathy: President Hillery to the Soviet government, Taoiseach Lynch to Mrs Kaplin, and foreign affairs minister, Michael O'Kennedy, to his opposite number, Andrei Gromyko. Further condolences were presented to Mrs Kaplin by Garret and Joan FitzGerald (Garret had then become leader of Fíne Gael), expressing their 'shock and distress at the news by the untimely death of her husband, whose friendship they

²⁴² *Irish Times*, 4 Aug. 1979.

²⁴³ Sarah Smyth was a student at the department in the 1970s, and she was assigned to teach Mrs Kaplin English in the ambassador's residence. Interview with Dr Smyth of T.C.D. (31 May 2010).

²⁴⁴ Interview with Dr Smyth of T.C.D. (31 May 2010)

²⁴⁵ Dr Smyth later met Gali Kaplina in Moscow after the demise of the Soviet Union. Kaplina informed Smyth that she had gained access to her parents' security files, which confirmed the suffering that they had endured. Interview with Dr Smyth of T.C.D. (31 May 2010)

had enjoyed since they both arrived here five years ago'.²⁴⁶ Trade unionists, too, marked his death with a telegram of condolence and a public statement from the I.T.G.W.U., in whose Liberty Hall Kaplin had attended a number of meetings. Kaplin, their telegram read, 'was a true friend of the Irish people and helped to build an awareness of the many features which Ireland and the Soviet Union have in common'.²⁴⁷ An article of appreciation was also contained in the pages of the *Irish Socialist*, the C.P.I.'s monthly newspaper. To underline the late Soviet ambassador's uniqueness among the diplomatic corps to Ireland, the article's closing words read: 'appropriately enough his last public appearance prior to returning to the Soviet Union for a holiday and medical treatment was at the unveiling of the statue of "Big Jim" Larkin [on O'Connell Street, Dublin] by President Hillery. He was the sole diplomat present.'²⁴⁸ To close this account of the public reactions to Ambassador Kaplin's death it is fitting to include in full the text of the handwritten letter (in English) sent privately by his widow, Gali Kaplina, in response to the taoiseach's letter of sympathy:

Dear taoiseach, Mrs Lynch, I appreciate deeply your sympathies to me and my family in connection with the passing of my husband. I shall keep in my heart forever the memory about years spent in Ireland.²⁴⁹

Conclusion

The positive reception to the immersion of Tass representative Ustimenko into Irish society from 1970 was a clear indication that his arrival was timely. His range of acquaintances across the political spectrum, and his ability to access the print and broadcasting media to present his portrayal of 1970s' Soviet life, spoke eloquently of an atmosphere of increasing tolerance in Irish society for the possibility of establishing formal diplomatic relations between the two states. That prospect was recognised by the British embassy, and Ambassador Peck quickly seized the initiative with the Irish authorities to lobby for the imposition of travel restrictions on Ustimenko. Such was the effectiveness of Ambassador Peck's diplomatic skills – despite widespread anti-British feelings in the country in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday and the burning of the British embassy – that he could build upon his 'Ustimenko' representations to exploit Irish security fears to the extent of postponing official diplomatic relations. While Dr Hillery

²⁴⁶ *Irish Times*, 4 Aug. 1979.

²⁴⁷ *Irish Times*, 11 Aug. 1979.

²⁴⁸ *Irish Socialist*, Sept. 1979.

²⁴⁹ Gali Kaplina to Taoiseach Lynch, 22 Oct. 1979, in *Russia: ambassador to Ireland, 1974* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/53/271).

had laid much of the groundwork by finalising trade talks and securing agreement in principle from his Fianna Fáil cabinet in 1971, the establishment of relations was postponed at Peck's behest. The government was prepared to face down latent domestic anti-communism – as typified by Taoiseach Jack Lynch's reply to Mrs Kelly's anti-Soviet objections – but crossing the Rubicon to formalise Irish-Soviet relations after so many decades required a further act of decisiveness. Nevertheless, British security-centred representations proved but a temporary restraint against the confluence of trade, political, E.E.C. membership and cultural pressures for the enactment of diplomatic relations. The visit by Dmitri Shostakovich chimed with the desire of influential music aficionados and academics for closer Irish-Soviet cultural exchanges.

Within a short few weeks of his appointment Garret FitzGerald determined that diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were a priority. The foreign minister marshalled the support of other key ministers to steer the decision through the cabinet so effectively that in the end it seems he only had to contend with token resistance from Minister Donegan. Unspoken anti-communist bogies counted for little when faced with the promise of new markets for an expanding Irish economy. Crucially, Dr FitzGerald could remind the cabinet that Ireland's fellow members of the E.E.C. had extensive experience of accommodating Soviet missions. In this way the decision was made from a position of strength. It was a reflection of the maturity of the Irish state and its institutions, and the self-confidence of the collective of politicians around the cabinet table, conservatives and social democrats together. Moreover, the coalition government had nothing to fear from Fianna Fáil: the latter prepared the diplomatic ground, but had lacked the resolve to see it through. And to complete the process, Garret FitzGerald displayed sufficient dexterity in agreeing with Andrei Gromyko staffing levels for the Soviet embassy in Dublin that met the needs not just of the Soviet Union, but also the security concerns of both the Irish and British authorities.

In its selection of the country's ambassador to the Soviet Union, it is difficult to conceive that the government could have chosen an appointee better equipped than Ambassador Brennan to implement policies espoused by Dr FitzGerald. With expertise in the Russian language, diplomatic and philosophical training in the U.S., and experience in negotiating Ireland's accession to the E.E.C., Ireland's first mission to Moscow was in safe hands. Any suggestions that Ireland's non-membership of NATO would lead to a role distinctly out of step with western policies was dispelled by Dr

Brennan's closeness to the British ambassador, Sir Terence Garvey, and his friendship with Jack Matlock of the U.S. embassy.

The principal outcome of Dr FitzGerald's official visit to the U.S.S.R. in 1976 was the ratification of the new commercial cooperation agreement. But beyond trade matters two fundamental factors in Irish-Soviet relations emerged during Dr FitzGerald's week in the Soviet Union: first, the Irish were implacably opposed to concessions to Soviet requests to associate with Soviet analyses of *détente*, as was evidenced by the omission of such terminology in the agreed communiqué; and second, the Irish indicated that while the country's policies were independent, they would be exercised in the context of the government's commitment to E.E.C. involvement and institutions. Soviet frustration at this twin track approach was tellingly exposed by Noel Dorr's recollection of Gromyko's 'you are not aligned, but not aligned with the non-aligned!' quip. Furthermore, this study's account of FitzGerald's visit has revealed the importance of the E.E.C. in Ireland's relations with the Soviet Union. This was signalled publicly by Dr FitzGerald's meeting with the E.E.C. group of ambassadors in Moscow, and privately by the briefing from the Irish minister and his officials of representatives of the E.E.C. and Britain in the aftermath of the visit.

Ronald Hill's prediction that the Soviet mission to Dublin would be focused and organised was borne out under Ambassador Kaplin's competent leadership. To begin, and in keeping with the status of Soviet power, only the best would do for Soviet ambassadorial properties: high-profile for the ambassador's residence on Ailesbury Road; more modest, functional and self-contained for the embassy complex itself on Orwell Road. The 1974 Burlington Hotel reception was a diplomatic success – no doubt the attendance of so many notables from Irish society was a tribute to a combination of curiosity and an Irish welcome for the exotic new arrivals, together with a sense of pride for the veteran supporters of the Soviet Union. However, the diplomatic honeymoon soon gave way to politically-driven planning objections and human rights issues from a mix of independent/conservative councillors and activists determined to seize publicity for their various causes. But by 1980 such had been the increase in trade and the regard for the Soviet mission to Dublin (as witnessed by the respectful reaction to Ambassador Kaplin's death) that the department was careful to take ample time to evaluate Irish interests with the Soviet Union before giving a considered response to the entreaties of the Americans to boycott the Games and disrupt new Irish-Soviet business in response

to the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. The decision to ratify the Aeroflot-Shannon deal in spite of Ambassador Shannon's suggestion to the contrary, and the D.F.A.'s reminder to Taoiseach Haughey that western powers had been guilty of military adventures of their own, showed that within six years of the establishment of relations some serious regard had to be afforded to ties with the Soviet Union. When the government did eventually accede to President Carter's official request to ask the I.O.C. not to send a team to Moscow, it did not result in a Soviet cancellation of trade with Ireland. That the Irish team participated in the Games with public approval, and unlike his E.E.C. colleagues that Ambassador Brennan was at his post in Moscow (albeit at a remove from the Games), may well have contributed to the context within which the Soviets decided to treat its Olympian guests to premium Irish beef and alcoholic refreshments.

Finally, this chapter concludes with a note of a missing feature in Ireland's first mission to Moscow – any meaningful involvement in cultural contacts. This lacuna was brought to the attention of this writer by Ambassador Brennan, who stated candidly: 'cultural links were barely non-existent and not a big area of work. Soviet cultural organisations did not make use of the embassy to engage with Ireland'.²⁵⁰ Accordingly, the study now advances to its account of an Irish society which was dedicated to the promotion of Irish-Soviet cultural relations, the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society.

²⁵⁰ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

CHAPTER THREE

An account of Irish-Soviet friendship organisations, with a principal focus on the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, founded in 1966

Introduction

Five Irish-Soviet friendship organisations were active in Ireland during the ‘short Soviet twentieth-century’ years of 1917-91:¹ first, the Irish Friends of Soviet Russia (I.F.S.R.), established in 1928 in Dublin, which remained active until the mid-1930s; second, a Belfast branch of the Friends of Soviet Russia, which was still active in 1937; third, the Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society, founded in Belfast in the aftermath of the Second World War and which continued until the mid-1970s; fourth, the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society, established in Dublin in December 1945, which continued in operation until the fifth society, the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, emerged in Dublin in 1966 – without ‘Friendship’ in its title, to indicate that the society had started anew. Following the establishment of formal Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations in 1974, that society increased in membership and influence, and continued in operation until the Soviet Union’s demise in 1991.

The chapter begins with an account of the pre-Second World War organisations in Dublin and Belfast by adding to existing information from Emmet O’Connor’s *Reds and the green* (2004) with newly-sourced primary documents from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (P.R.O.N.I.) concerning the activities of the Belfast branch of Friends of Soviet Russia during the 1930s. Also, contemporary newspaper reports, and Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.) sources, including its *Outline history* (1975) and the party’s website, are employed.

Staying north of the border, the chapter will next present the first scholarly account of the Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society. That society sprang from public support in Belfast for the Allied war effort, and the Red Army’s role in the allies’ victory over Nazi Germany. The account is largely based upon oral evidence of a surviving member, Barry Bruton, who is also the son of the society’s long-serving

¹ This phrase is adapted from the title of Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of extremes: the short twentieth-century, 1914-1991* (London, 2002), p. ix.

secretary, Bill Bruton. The account will also feature two booklets published upon the return of separate delegations of Belfast-based trade unionists and teachers who travelled to the Soviet Union in the 1950s.

However, it is the post-Second World War societies south of the border that command the greater attention of the chapter. Again, as these societies have not previously been the subject of an historical study, this writer has contacted surviving society members and the immediate family of deceased members. This section opens with a brief biography of Margaret ‘Daisy’ McMackin whose membership of the three Dublin-based societies spanned five decades, and was complemented by her work as a Russian language lecturer at Trinity College Dublin (T.C.D.) and with some details of its founding officers in 1966. The society’s relationship with its counterpart society in the Soviet Union – the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society – will be looked at, as will the Irish society’s relationship with the Soviet embassy to Dublin. The prominent public figures, who visited the Soviet Union at the society’s invitation, will be a particular focus. Also of prominence is the chapter’s discussion on two Jewish organisations in Dublin that campaigned against the Soviet Union’s policy on emigration rights for Soviet Jewry, whose activities included picketing of events organised by the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society.

It should be noted that this chapter extends beyond the 1980 end date of the other chapters in this thesis. It does so by continuing with its account of the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society until mid-1992, six months after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In contrast to the other chapters whose Irish archival sources are largely restricted by the state’s thirty years’ rule, this chapter’s end date has been determined by its access to primary sources for the final years of the society. Those sources principally comprise interviews with the society’s surviving officers and members, and access to comprehensive archival materials of the society in their care. Accordingly, the chapter is in a position to give an account of the society’s last years, when its membership, leadership and programme evolved in response to the *perestroika* and *glasnost* period, and beyond that to the collapse of the U.S.S.R.

Irish Friends of Soviet Russia

Enthusiasm for the Russian revolution in Ireland was demonstrated by the attendance of 10,000 people at a rally in and around the Mansion House, Dublin on 4 February 1918. Such was the revolutionary atmosphere of the rally that thousands remained in the

vicinity of Dawson Street to bear witness to the city's acclamation for the revolution. Resolutions lauding its promise of an end to war, self-determination for small countries, and social progress were eagerly adopted.²

Ten years later the Irish Friends of Soviet Russia (I.F.S.R.) was established when the spirit of the Mansion House rally remained alive among some activists in republican and labour movement circles, and at a time when anti-Soviet and anti-communist attitudes had not yet been embedded in Irish society. The organisation was founded in 1928 by 'Big' Jim Larkin, trade union leader and then the most prominent communist in Ireland, and Charlotte Despard,³ at the Tivoli Theatre, Dublin, following a lantern slide show depicting advances being made in Soviet Russia. In January 1930 about 250 people attended the society's congress in Banba Hall, Dublin, of whom approximately one hundred signed up as members, and a committee dominated by republicans was selected. Despite the Irish government's refusal to issue passports to five trade unionists to attend the 1931 May Day celebrations in Moscow,⁴ two other delegations visited Russia in this period. Among those who travelled was Mick Fitzpatrick, a trade unionist and member of the I.R.A. army council, and he was co-opted by the comintern onto the presidium of the newly established International Friends of Soviet Russia.⁵ On their return the I.F.S.R. organised a series of public meetings around the country to present firsthand accounts of the participants' experiences. The reports centred on advances for the status of Soviet women, and workers' control in factories, as speakers applauded the popular sense of determination and sacrifice being displayed by Soviet citizens to achieve the targets of the state's Five Year plan. Dismissing reports of problems arising from rapid industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture as anti-Soviet propaganda, the accounts from these experienced and respected Irish visitors helped promote the view expressed by Helena Molony of the Irish Women Workers' Union in *An Phoblacht* of 1 February 1930: 'the Soviet regime had more popular support than the Free State'.⁶ The largest group that secured visas to visit the Soviet Union consisted of eight trade unionists and republicans, including Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, then the assistant editor of *An Phoblacht*, and

² O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 132, 136, 141. Despard (1844-1939), born into an Anglo-Irish family, was a prominent suffragist and member of Cumann na mBan. She was a patron of the James Connolly Workers' Club, also founded in 1928.

⁴ O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 150.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

Charlotte Despard. Their tour took them to Leningrad, Moscow, Rostov on the Don, and Baku on the Caspian Sea, where they visited factories, collectives, state farms, schools, courts and prisons.⁷ Their visit commanded some mainstream media attention, and Sheehy-Skeffington was reported to have been:

specially struck by the attention given to children and by the various welfare schemes...and by the absolute and perfect equality enjoyed by the women of Russia, where every post is freely open to them and where they are given every opportunity for development.⁸

This coverage was more than balanced by a hostile report that was featured in the same issue of the *Irish Independent* column immediately above the I.F.S.R. article. It was headlined: ‘More light on Russia – Scarcity of food – “Astonishing”, says English visitor’. Credited to R. R. Hyde of the Industrial Welfare Conference at Oxford, it reported on conditions that he witnessed in Leningrad:

...a dull and drab city. There were no stocks in the shops, and the people were ill-clad and wore worn-out shoes. Yet the girls were plump and cheerful... people queuing up for clothing and food...factories were working hard for the export trade but in the main the machinery was out of date.⁹

Such seemingly contradictory reports on Soviet living conditions in 1930, and the way they were presented to the Irish public, are early examples of what was to become a common feature of the Irish media. But the I.F.S.R. was adamant that its version of Soviet efforts to build up a socialist society in a vast country that had been amongst the most backward in Europe was accurate, and it protested against negative coverage in *Irish Independent*.¹⁰

It was against this background of support for communism among sections of the working class and republican movement that Irish Catholic bishops set about an offensive against communism. Buoyed by the success of the church’s centenary celebrations of Catholic emancipation in 1929, and by the highlighting of Pope Pius XI’s denunciation of reports of religious repression in Russia by Armagh’s Cardinal MacRory, the gloves were now off for Soviet friendship and Irish communism. The situation was made all the more precarious for Soviet friendship when in 1932 Jim Larkin withdrew from participation in communist politics and related activities,

⁷ *Irish Independent*, 9 Sept. 1930.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ O’Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 150.

although Larkin ‘remained a lifelong champion of the Soviet Union and Stalin’s leadership.’¹¹ By 1933 conditions on the ground in Dublin had taken an unpleasant turn. The Great Strand Street premises of the Revolutionary Workers’ Group (a forerunner body of the Communist Party of Ireland) were attacked by a hymn-singing crowd. Members and I.R.A. supporters kept the attackers at bay for two days, until ‘reinforced by Blueshirt and criminal elements, watched from a distance by the Garda Síochána’,¹² the building was gutted as its defenders managed to escape over adjacent rooftops. The attackers then proceed to the home of Charlotte Despard at 63 Eccles Street, which also functioned as the headquarters of the I.F.S.R.¹³ However, owing to the efforts of a large crowd of defenders, damage there was confined to broken windows. While the I.F.S.R. was still active in 1934, it appears that in such increasingly difficult circumstances its activities petered out.

Belfast branch of Friends of Soviet Russia

Soviet friendship activities were sufficiently established in Belfast city by 1933 for organisers to have secured premises on the top floor of Esperanto Hall at 5 Rosemary Street. From there a circular was issued to organisations in the city to seek affiliations and memberships, and to advise that lectures were being conducted each Thursday evening. The circular was issued in the name of the Belfast branch of Friends of Soviet Russia.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that ‘Irish’ was not included in the title, a factor which may well have assisted in the branch’s ability to attract support from both Protestant and Catholic communities. The *Irish News* reported that the branch’s objects were ‘to foster friendly relations between the people of the Soviet Union and the workers of this country, and to give the true facts of what is actually taking place in the Soviet Union’.¹⁵

The same issue of the *Irish News* went on to say that the Belfast Trades Council had considered a motion, proposed by a Mr R. Dorman, to affiliate to the Friends of

¹¹ O’Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 168.

¹² C.P.I., ‘Charlotte Despard (1844-1938)’ (<http://www.communistpartyofireland.ie/s-despard.html>) (29 June 2013).

¹³ See also Frances Clarke, ‘Charlotte French Despard (1844–1939)’ in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009) available at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2542>) (1 July 2013).

¹⁴ ‘Notice from W. Bishop, secretary, 22 Aug. 1933’, in Soviet friendship societies in Belfast, 1930s-60s (P.R.O.N.I., LA/7/3A/184).

¹⁵ *Irish News*, 6 Oct. 1933.

Soviet Russia. Lamenting that the motion was only defeated by eighteen votes to sixteen, the newspaper editorialised: ‘A majority of only two [votes] is a most unsatisfactory answer to this impudent attempt to foster communism in our midst’.¹⁶ But it is a report from the inspector general’s office of the R.U.C., in 1937, marked ‘secret’, that provides the clearest evidence of the branch’s ability to attract considerable support in the city.¹⁷ The report recorded that the branch’s meeting held on 3 November in the Co-Operative Hall, Frederick Street, had attracted an attendance of 600 persons. For a fee of 2s for balcony seats and 1s for the arena, attendees viewed a screening of a film, *Youth*, which showed Stalin and his staff in Red Square, Moscow, reviewing youth and physical culture displays, and a play, entitled ‘Russia 1917-37’, was also staged. Betty Sinclair¹⁸ appealed to all present to join the Friends, as did a Mr. McQuoid for the Left Book Club.¹⁹ The meeting concluded with a film on the Spanish civil war, *They shall not pass*.

No records of activities by the branch of Friends of Soviet Russia during the Second World War have come to light, but the fortunes of the Communist Party of Northern Ireland (C.P.N.I.) are of relevance for that period. Initially, C.P.N.I. members were subjected to harassment by the authorities (leading members were imprisoned, and the party’s premises in east Belfast were wrecked in an R.U.C. raid),²⁰ but popular pro-Soviet sentiment, as displayed by the numbers in attendance at the above discussed meeting in Co-Operative Hall, was to rise even higher during the course of the war.²¹ C.P.N.I. members threw themselves into the war effort against fascism, and after Nazi Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union the party campaigned for the opening of a second front in Europe. Committees were formed in the Harland and Wolff shipyards and Shorts aerospace factory to help maximise naval and aircraft production. Party meetings attracted thousands of people, and its membership increased to 1,000. At

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Inspector general’s office, R.U.C., Belfast, to ministry of home affairs, 8 Nov. 1937, in Soviet friendship societies in Belfast, 1930s-60s (P.R.O.N.I., LA/7/3A/184, 26/1021/25).

¹⁸ Elizabeth ‘Betty’ Sinclair, from a unionist background, became a millworker and trade union activist from the age of fifteen. She joined the communist party in the early 1930s, and attended the International Lenin School in Moscow from 1933 to 1935. See C.P.I., ‘Betty Sinclair (1910-81)’ (<http://www.communistpartyofireland.ie/s-sinclair.html>) (28 June 2013).

¹⁹ By 1938 the Left Book Club movement had a membership of 58,000 across Britain and Ireland. See John Simkin, *Left book club*, available at The Education Forum (<http://educationforum.ipbhost.com/index.php?showtopic=15806>) (28 June 2013). Branches were active in Dublin and Belfast in the late 1930s. See also O’Connor, *Reds and the Green*, p. 216.

²⁰ For details see O’Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 194.

²¹ The following section is informed by Nolan (ed.), *Communist party of Ireland*, pp 38-9.

elections to the Stormont parliament, held immediately after the end of the war, communist candidates attracted impressive support. In the east Belfast Bloomfield constituency, W.H. McCullough tallied 5,802 votes, and Betty Sinclair scored 4,130 votes in the Cromac constituency.²² While no communist candidate was elected, and party membership declined sharply in the early post-war period, these developments were to feed into the relaunch of a Soviet friendship organisation in Belfast, the Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society, in or around 1950.

Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society

The following account is based upon interviews with Barry Bruton, a surviving society member and son of William ‘Bill’ Bruton (1909-2006), the secretary of the society from approximately 1957 to the mid-1970s.²³ Originally from Essex, Bill Bruton had worked as a young seaman, and subsequently as a farm worker in Australia, before he settled in Belfast in 1935. Like many trade unionists in wartime Belfast, Bruton joined the C.P.N.I. In 1957 he was excused from party work to concentrate on the Soviet society. Other active members of the society at this time included Bruton’s wife, Annie (she had run the C.P.’s bookshop in Church Lane from the Second World War years to the mid-1950s), John Warren, Sam Justice, Alan Gordon (a housepainter and trade unionist), Lance Noakes of the C.P.N.I. (who used to sell copies of *Soviet Weekly* in Shorts Aerospace company). The society met in a Belfast city centre hotel, the International, before it acquired rented premises in the late 1950s. These comprised two rooms on the top floor of 4 Alfred Street, off May Street, Belfast. The society attracted considerable support from citizens of all backgrounds in the city, principally among teachers, intellectuals, trade unionists and the wider circles and contacts of the C.P. who were interested in the cultural, engineering and scientific achievements of the Soviet Union. This awareness was heightened by launch of the Sputnik programme in 1957 and the first spaceflight by Yuri Gagarin in 1961 – of which the technical accomplishments involved were not lost on an engineering city such as Belfast.

The period from the 1950s through to the early 1970s was to become the highpoint for the society. Its premises at Alfred Street functioned as a part-time cinema, with seating for up to forty people. The portable projector was Soviet supplied, and a

²² Mike Milotte, *Communism in modern Ireland: the pursuit of the workers’ republic* (Dublin, 1984), p. 212.

²³ Interviews with Barry Bruton of Belfast (26 Jan. 2012 and 15 Nov. 2012).

range of educational films on Soviet life was shown. Russian language classes were delivered by William Moles, headmaster at Grosvenor High School, east Belfast, also with the aid of materials supplied from the Soviet Union. Barry Bruton further recalls from his own school days in the city's Beechfield Primary School that the headmaster, Dan McCall, went around the classrooms telling the pupils of his impressions of his visit to the Soviet Union in the 1950s. The society provided a welcoming service to crews of visiting Soviet ships into Belfast harbour by organising tours of the Belfast area. Chess tournaments were organised for the Soviet seamen against a local Christian Brothers' social club. A number of Soviet captains returned the hospitality by hosting society members on board. Soviet ambassadors and diplomats to Britain paid visits to the city, and a supportive Unionist member of Belfast City Council arranged for receptions at City Hall. A first secretary at the Soviet embassy to London,²⁴ who became friendly with Bill Bruton, was later appointed head of the British and Irish section in Friendship House, Moscow. He then became a contact person for Northern Irish visitors to the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

Unfortunately, Barry Bruton was unable to provide this study with the society's surviving materials (see below footnote no. 27, page 126, regarding possible future access). Nevertheless two society publications from the early 1950s, available at Marx Memorial Library, London, have been consulted. The booklets were produced to record the impressions of two visits by some members and supporters to the Soviet Union, and the following are brief details extrapolated by this writer. The first, *What we saw in Soviet Russia: seven Belfast men give their impressions*, stated in its preface that the seven were trade unionists 'of widely varying shades of beliefs on politics', and led by their chairman, W.J. Alexander, they contributed articles to the booklet, as follows: John Warren (a fitter with the company, T.A.B.), 'The Soviet trade unions'; Alexander McCormick, 'The collective farm'; Edward A. Menzies (a newsagent on Templemore Avenue; he and his wife Sadie were the parents of the prominent C.P. member and civil rights activist from the 1960s, Edwina Stewart), 'Education and mother and child care'; Joseph Quayle (sheet metal worker), 'The textile industry'; and David Scott (non-party, militant trade unionist), 'Engineering industry and its workers.' J. Samuel Justice also

²⁴ (whose name Barry Bruton could not recall)

contributed to the publication.²⁵ The second booklet, *Northern Ireland teachers and education in Russia: impressions of Soviet education by Northern Ireland teachers*, contained four articles: S. B. Wynburne (a lecturer at Stranmillis Teacher Training College, Belfast), 'Teachers and pupils'; J. D. Stewart (a prominent Belfast journalist and humanist), 'U.S.S.R. – 1932-55'; A. Woodrow, 'Education in a primary school in U.S.S.R.'; and Frank Edwards (a Dublin-based teacher who was later to become the central activist in the southern society) 'Children on holiday.'²⁶ All articles, drawing upon the authors' personal experiences as active trade unionists and teachers, gave favourable impressions of advances made by the Soviets in industry and education.

Owing to the increase of bombings and sectarian killings from the late 1960s, it became increasingly difficult to organise public meetings and events in parts of Belfast city. The society's Alfred Street premises, alongside a nationalist area, were considered especially vulnerable. This proved all too true when, in 1976, they fell victim to a bomb attack by the Provisional I.R.A. on the next-door car parts business run by the renowned international car rally driver, Paddy Hopkirk. The resultant fire spread to number four, but some records of the society were rescued by Barry Bruton, and remain in his possession.²⁷ While the society was not formally wound up, it effectively ceased to function after the loss of its premises.

Finally, on the question of the northern society's relationship with its counterpart in the south, Barry Bruton had some salient recollections. The northern society was independent and separate. This was partly due to diplomatic protocols, which obliged the society to conduct travel arrangements, etc. to the Soviet Union through the Soviet embassy to London. Yet the two societies cooperated in their common cause, which principally took the form of arranging for transfers over the border for ongoing visits from officials and tourists from the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, Bruton mentioned his father's view that there was a certain amount of uneasiness in Belfast that the society in the south received the greater level of attention from Friendship House in Moscow (headquarters of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendly and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries), especially after the Soviet

²⁵ Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society, *What we saw in Soviet Russia: seven Belfastmen give their impressions of life in the U.S.S.R.* (Belfast, undated, but c. 1953). The brief biographical notes of the various authors were provided by Barry Bruton.

²⁶ S. B. Wynburne (ed.); J. D. Stewart; A. Woodrow; F. Edwards, *Northern Ireland Teachers and education in Russia: impressions of Soviet education by Northern Ireland teachers following a visit to the U.S.S.R.* (Belfast, undated, but c. 1955)

²⁷ They are secure in the attic of Barry Bruton's home, but were unavailable to this study due to renovations.

embassy was opened in Dublin in 1974. However, before considering that period, the thesis must recommence its account of Soviet friendship in Dublin by beginning in 1945.

The Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society (1945-66)

The Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society was established on 6 December 1945 at a meeting attended by about sixty people. Its aims were to promote friendship and understanding between the two countries' peoples; to press for the establishment of diplomatic and trade relations; acquaint the Irish people with the Soviet system; and 'to combat all falsehoods designed to misrepresent the peaceful aims of the Soviet Union'.²⁸ The officers elected – all women – were: president, Helena M. Early; joint secretaries, Hilda Verlin (also known as Hilda E. Allberry) of 37 Fitzwilliam Square, and Margaret 'Daisy' McMackin; and treasurer, Anne Peache. The committee of eight persons included two stalwart communists, Sean 'Johnny' Nolan who ran the party bookshop, and R.N. 'Robin' Tweedy, an engineer whose professional interest in turf technology had taken him to the Soviet Union in 1935.²⁹

Further details of the founding meeting were provided in a communication to the archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, by a member of the clergy. A catalogue summary of the contents of the communication, available at the Dublin Diocesan Archives (D.D.A.), is instructive of the anti-communist stance of the Catholic church in the city at that time, and of the clergy's ability to enlist members of the garda to act on its wishes. The catalogue summary reads:

Handwritten letter to + [Archbishop] McQuaid from Fr Denis McGrath. Refers to a meeting in a newspaper cutting regarding the formation of the Irish-Soviet Society [sic] in Dublin. The meeting took place in Hynes Restaurant, Dame Street. The proprietor is Mr Hess, a Swiss convert. A sergeant in the guards gave him a flier announcing the meeting. He visited Mr Hess and asked him not to allow the meeting to take place as it was a communist meeting. He agreed but

²⁸ *Irish Times*, 8 Dec. 1945.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, and C.P.I. 'R.N. Tweedy (1863-1956)' (<http://www.comunistpartyofireland.ie/s-tweedy.html>) (22 June 2012). See also 'The production and use of turf in the U.S.S.R. with proposals for a planned power economy in Ireland: a paper read by Robin N. Tweedy on 11 Nov. 1935, at [a meeting of] the Engineering and Scientific Association of Ireland' (D.C.L.A., C.P.I., 15/019).

the group ignored his protests and carried on. He will not allow them use his restaurant again.³⁰

Details of what was perhaps the society's first public meeting, held in January 1946 in the Mansion House, Dublin, are contained in a handbill headed '8,000 miles through Russia – a travel talk by Major A.J. Hooper'.³¹ Hooper, a former British Army officer, was advertised as an expert on the Red Army, and his talk was illustrated by images taken by cameraman J. Allen Cash before the war,³² of Leningrad, Kharkov, Rostov, the Caucasus, Tiflis, Armenia, Yalta, Odessa and Kiev. The handbill promised an insight into conditions in the Soviet Union in 1946: 'since some of these cities have been destroyed by the Germans, these pictures are now historic.'³³ A second meeting was held later in the year, again in the Mansion House, to host another British speaker, Dr Hewlett Johnson, the dean of Canterbury. It was billed as: 'What I saw in Soviet Russia'. Reverend Johnson was known as 'the red dean of Canterbury' for his espousal of Christian-Marxist dialogue, and pro-Soviet convictions.³⁴ The meeting was attended by a large gathering. However, it was interrupted by a small number of protestors, said to be students. The *Irish Times* report included the following:

While the dean was speaking, some young men in the balcony stood up and flung two Nazi German flags over the rails.... shouts of "up Franco" and "down with Jews" were heard, as the stewards battled to keep back the crowds.³⁵

It is perhaps significant that after the ensuing disturbance and confusion, proceedings were taken by the garda against two stewards who were alleged to have assaulted a protester. The charge was heard before a judge and jury. The stewards were convicted and sentenced to three months' hard labour, or an alternative payment of a fine and

³⁰ Fr Denis McGrath to Archbishop McQuaid, 8 Dec. 1945, in Archbishop McQuaid papers, communist section (D.D.A., A.B.8, B. XXIII, 728). The writer acknowledges the help of fellow PhD candidate at N.U.I.M., Ciaran Bryan, for bringing this archival source to his attention.

³¹ Handbill, '8,000 miles in Russia', 14 Jan. 1946 (D.C.L.A., C.P.I. 8/123).

³² Cash (1902-74) was a founder of the British Guild of Travel Writers. His work is still accessible, see Allan Cash Picture Library (<http://www.allancashpicturelibrary.com/search.asp>) (31 July 2012).

³³ Handbill, '8,000 miles in Russia', 14 Jan. 1946 (D.C.L.A., C.P.I. 8/123).

³⁴ Reverend Hewlett is the subject of a recent biography: John Butler, *The red dean of Canterbury: the public and private faces of Hewlett Johnson* (London, 2011). Reverend Hewlett was awarded the Stalin international peace prize, which was renamed the Lenin prize in 1953.

³⁵ *Irish Times*, 26 Nov. 1946, as quoted in Manus O'Riordan, 'Frank Edwards: portrait of an Irish anti-Fascist' in *Ireland and the Spanish civil war* at (<http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-Edwards.htm>) (10 Apr. 2010).

compensation totalling ninety-five pounds.³⁶ That the main speakers at both events were British suggests that the Irish society was looking to the British-Soviet society for ideas, and this is supported by the existence of a copy of the latter's constitution in the C.P.I. archive from that time.³⁷

The friendship society chose a more discreet affair for a 1947 event, as is revealed by a report in a department of external affairs file.³⁸ The report details that Dr Kostal, the chargé d'affaires of Czechoslovakia to Ireland, had called to the Department of External Affairs to inform that he had received an invitation from the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society to speak on the subject of cultural relations between Czechoslovakia and Russia. Dr Kostal was concerned that while it would be awkward for him not to accept the invitation because of the close ties between his country and the Soviet Union, he did not wish to accept definitely without consulting the Irish authorities. The approach was reported to the taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, who in turn consulted the minister for justice, Gerry Boland. Gerry Boland was a brother of Harry Boland who, as discussed in chapter one, had been in contact with Soviet officials in New York in 1920 and brought the czarist jewels to Ireland. Gerry Boland, too, had engaged with the Soviet Union: in 1926, before Fianna Fáil entered the dáil, de Valera had sent him to the Soviet Union, as a 'political chaperone' to an I.R.A. delegation, which was seeking Soviet weapons. They met there with J.V. Stalin, but returned home empty-handed.³⁹ Now, with de Valera and Boland in government, Dr Kostal was instructed, as follows:

... while the department would not make any objection to his accepting the invitation, he should bear in mind that his usefulness as representative of Czechoslovakia would be impaired if he came to be regarded by the Irish people as a communist or fellow-traveller; also that the group inviting him to address them might be inclined to exploit him in order to enhance the prestige of their organisation.⁴⁰

Dr Kostal responded with thanks and assurances that he would endeavour to discourage publicity for the meeting. This diplomatic exchange serves to show the de Valera government's negative attitudes not just towards the friendship society but also towards

³⁶ As detailed in an appeal from the 'Harry Ryan and Sean Dempsey Fund', 6 Jun. 1947, signed by solicitor Helena M. Early (and president of the society), 63-4 Upper O'Connell St., Dublin. A copy of the appeal is in the private possession of Mairéad Breslin Kelly, Dublin.

³⁷ See 'British-Soviet constitution', 30 Mar. 1946 (D.C.L.A., C.P.I., 15/019).

³⁸ Report by L.M.C., 20 Feb. 1947, in Irish-U.S.S.R. Society [sic] 1947-9 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 338/143).

³⁹ O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 112.

⁴⁰ 'Report by L.M.C.', 20 Feb. 1947, in Irish-U.S.S.R. Society [sic] 1947-9 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 338/143).

the emerging new communist states of central Europe, at the earliest stages of the Cold War. Furthermore, it may suggest that the Czech diplomat was less than eager to be centre stage at the pro-Soviet meeting – perhaps reflecting the non-communist position of the then minister for foreign affairs, Jan Masaryk, in the coalition government established in Czechoslovakia immediately after the end of the Second World War.⁴¹

Thereafter, the activities of the friendship society were mainly confined to meetings and lectures on a small basis, and to showings of Soviet films, including in the 1950s Maxim Gorky's *Childhood* and *The mother* 'in small rooms...while outside the building the political police took careful note of everyone who attended such films.'⁴² Frank Edwards, who, as noted above had previously been involved in the Belfast teachers' visit to the Soviet Union, organised these film shows and utilised a Soviet supplied projector and films, often in the premises of the Irish Workers' Party at 37 Pembroke Lane, Dublin.⁴³ The society published a booklet, *Approach pattern: an Irish traveller's impressions of the Soviet Union* (1951), recounting Hilda Allberry's experiences of her visit in the autumn of 1950. She went as part of a delegation of sixteen women, the rest being academics, workers and housewives from Scotland and England, who were invited by the Soviet Women's Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow. They were invited to 'enable a group of ordinary women from the West to see for themselves what life was like...and to report truthfully of their findings on returning home.'⁴⁴ The booklet's cover was designed by artist Harry Kernoff,⁴⁵ and a no-holds-barred preface by Sean O'Casey gave a succinct account of the playwright's view of the Soviet Union, his reaction to impressions of Allberry's visit, and his angst for the new elite in 1950s Ireland:

⁴¹ Peter Neville, *Eduard Benes and Tomas Masaryk: Czechoslovakia* (London, 2010), pp 151-3.

⁴² O'Riordan, *Frank Edwards: portrait*. Manus O'Riordan, then a child, was accompanied to these films by his communist father, Michael.

⁴³ Interview with Sean Edwards of Lucan, son of Frank Edwards (22 Sept. 2010).

⁴⁴ Hilda E. Allberry, *Approach pattern: an Irish traveller's impressions of the Soviet Union, autumn 1950* (Dublin, 1951), p. 7. The author is grateful to Lynda Walker, Belfast who provided him with a copy of this pamphlet. The original is in the library of the University of Warwick, Coventry, as cited in communications from Professor Maria Luddy, Department of History, University of Warwick, to Lynda Walker, 4 July 2007.

⁴⁵ Kernoff (1900-1974) lived and worked in Russia for approximately a year and was influenced by the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia. His papers are lodged at the National Library of Ireland, MS 24,942. A recent biography, Kevin O'Connor, *Harry Kernoff: the little genius* (Dublin, 2012) fails to mention Kernoff's support for Soviet friendship in 1950, as evidenced by his cover for the booklet. Also, Kernoff's younger sister, Lina, attended on a regular basis cultural meetings of the society - interview with Angela McQuillan of Bray (20 July 2013).

Look at the Soviet Union and you will see the mightiest achievement made by man since social life began to grope its way into life tens of thousands of years ago...don't believe what is said about the U.S.S.R. by the timid clergy and by those who have a nice bit in the bank. See and hear for yourself, and this pamphlet will give you a first glimpse of a great land where poverty and uncertainty for the future have been abolished.⁴⁶

The booklet also advertised the society's postal address as 37 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, and its annual subscription, to include a monthly newsletter, of 3s.

In the early 1960s, a particular highlight for the society was a number of visits by Lev Sedin, a popular Russian journalist, with the Soviet international magazine, *Novoe Vremya* (New Times). He was fondly remembered by members and friends of the society for the manner in which he impressed his Dublin audiences at meetings as he presented accounts of Soviet life, earning for himself the description 'a worthy if unofficial ambassador'.⁴⁷ This affection was recalled by Art O'Beoláin, a former assistant secretary in the Irish department of social welfare, and a Russian scholar:

I liked Lev from the first day I met him. Anytime he came to Ireland in the 1960s, and he came quite a few times, he came to dinner with us and our mutual friends, among whom were Nora [Harkin], Bobby [Edwards] and Frank [Edwards], and without doubt we went with them to meet Lev and to the occasions the society organised in his honour. I would always give a book to Lev, and he also gave me books. When he published, along with Viktor Matveyev, a small book about this country [entitled, *The many shades of green*], he gave me a copy, and wrote a greeting inside for me.⁴⁸

Sedin's death in 1980 was also marked by an obituary by Sean Nolan in the *Irish Socialist*, the monthly newspaper of the C.P.I. Nolan recalled that Sedin had toured Donegal with the veteran republican socialist and writer, Peadar O'Donnell, and that Sedin had been on the boards of two academic journals in his homeland, *On Philosophy* and *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, in the 1960s.⁴⁹ However, despite these and other occasional information meetings on Soviet life, the work of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society only operated on a spasmodic basis from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s.

⁴⁶ Sean O'Casey in Allberry, *Approach pattern*, p. 6.

⁴⁷ 'Editorial' in Kavanagh (ed.), *Ireland-U.S.S.R., 21st anniversary*, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Art O'Beoláin (an appreciation of) 'Lev Sedin' in Kavanagh (ed.), *Ireland-U.S.S.R.*, p. 14, translated from Irish by this writer. The title of Sedin and Matveyev's book, *The many shades of green*, was included in Martin D. Bates's review of Tass journalist, Yuri Ustimenko's book on Ireland, *Be acquainted – this is Ireland*, in *Irish Times*, 28 Mar. 1981.

⁴⁹ *Irish Socialist*, Sept. 1980.

Brief account of the life of Margaret ‘Daisy’ McMackin

To close off on these accounts of the forerunner societies and to give a deeper insight into the life of an activist in Irish-Soviet affairs, this section of the study concludes with a consideration of a woman who participated in the activities of both the 1928 and 1946 societies in Dublin, and to a lesser extent with the society formed in 1966: Margaret ‘Daisy’ McMackin/Maighréad Nic Mhaicín.⁵⁰ This account is aided by an interview with McMackin’s daughter, Mairéad Breslin Kelly.⁵¹ John McMackin was a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary in Dungloe, County Donegal, when Daisy, his third daughter of a family of nine children, was born in 1899. McMackin moved his family to Belfast, where Daisy excelled academically at the Dominican Sisters’ secondary school on the Falls Road. With the aid of scholarships she graduated from Queen’s University, Belfast with first class honours in French and Celtic in 1919, and in 1928 achieved a M.A. in Celtic. She also spent a year at the Sorbonne, Paris. She shared a house in Dublin at 21, Dawson Street in the mid-1920s with a group of intellectual republican women. Todd Andrews, then a leading I.R.A. figure and visitor to 21 Dawson Street, recalled of McMackin: ‘a woman of exceptional intelligence...petite, with striking red hair and a beautiful speaking voice’.⁵² She went to the Soviet Union with the I.F.S.R. in 1932 and later returned there in 1935 to work as a translator with the Co-operative Publishers for Foreign Workers in Moscow. While there she met and married Patrick Breslin from Dublin, but returned home, alone, in 1937 after she became pregnant and before he fell foul of the N.K.V.D., the Soviet state police.⁵³

⁵⁰ See Diarmuid Breathnach and Máire Ní Mhurchú, *Maighréad Nic Mhaicín (1899-1983)*, available at Ainm.ie, the Irish-language biography project (<http://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=450>) (1 July 2013). The author is grateful to Tadhg Ó Dúshláine, Department of Nua Ghaeilge (Modern Irish), N.U.I.M, for bringing this article to his attention.

⁵¹ Interview with Mairéad Breslin Kelly of Phibsboro, Dublin, McMackin’s daughter (30 Mar. 2011).

⁵² C.S. (Todd) Andrews, *Man of no property* (Dublin, 2001), p. 28. As head of Bórd na Móna, Andrews led official delegations to the Soviet Union in 1936 and 1956 to view turf producing operations, and he included recorded favourable impressions of Soviet Union’s leaders, its system and progress, in this publication.

⁵³ Breslin was sent by Jim Larkin to the International Lenin School Moscow in 1928 but was expelled because the directors considered that he had failed to show the necessary ability to become a ‘good communist’. Because Breslin had married a Russian girl, he was allowed by the authorities to stay and work as a translator. He became a Soviet citizen in 1936 before he remarried Daisy McMackin. Following a number of requests to revoke his Soviet citizenship and personal difficulties with alcohol and mental health issues, he was arrested in 1940 by the N.K.V.D. (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* – People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs) and sentenced to eight years in a Gulag camp ‘for counterrevolutionary agitation’. In 1942 in the city of Kazan, in an emaciated state, he died of ‘heart failure caused by T.B.’. See Barry McLoughlin, *Left to the wolves: Irish victims of Stalinist terror* (Dublin, 2007), pp 19, 50, 53, 105, 113.

McMackin gave birth to a daughter, Mairéad, in Belfast, but then returned to Dublin where she had many republican and communist friends and acquaintances. McMackin had previously secured an apartment on the third-floor of 59 Grafton Street. This apartment continued as her home and a place of welcome for a succession of political and academic visitors from many parts of Ireland and abroad. As a single parent, she set about utilising her language skills to earn a living and the following advert was a regular feature in the classified columns of the *Irish Times*: ‘Margaret McMackin, M.A., 59 Grafton Street - university, intermediate, and civil service grinds - Irish, Latin, French, English, mathematics’.⁵⁴ She also organised and delivered courses in Russian at Trinity College, Dublin (T.C.D.) from 1942 to 1969, initially on a bi-weekly, extramural basis. This initiative attracted media attention, as per the following account:

Her thirty pupils comprise men and women, old and young...doing extremely well...the chief difficulty is in learning the alphabet...letters resemble English but mean something quite different... it is easier for Irish people to learn Russian for it bears a closer resemblance to Irish than most European languages.⁵⁵

Her courses progressed to the main body of Russian classical literature and works of Soviet writers, and several students achieved the Advanced Certificate of the Institute of Linguistics, London, for interpreters. She became a full-time lecturer at T.C.D. and was a co-founder of the Russian Department in 1962.⁵⁶ She also translated works from Russian to Irish, including: *An Silín-Ghort* [*The Cherry orchard*] 1935, (Anton Chekov); and, with Fr Gearóid Ó Nualláin, *Scéalta ón Rúisis* [*Stories from Russia*] 1955, (Leo Tolstoi, Ivan Turgenev and Alexander Pushkin), which were published by An Gúm, the Irish state publisher of educational works in the Irish language.⁵⁷ Revealing of the prevailing anti-communist attitudes of the 1950s, none of her translations for An Gúm related to Russian literature of the Soviet era. Also of interest was McMackin’s

⁵⁴ *Irish Times*, classified ad. no. 20, 13 Feb. 1940. Approximately seventy similar adverts in her name are listed by the *Irish Times* from 1940 to 1953.

⁵⁵ *Irish Times*, 6 Feb. 1943, and 3 Apr. 1944.

⁵⁶ Kenneth C. Bailey, registrar, T.C.D. to McMackin, letter of appointment, 25 Nov. 1942. Also, see McMackin’s C.V., 1962, in private collection of Dr Sarah Smyth, T.C.D., and McLoughlin, *Left to the wolves*, p. 53.

⁵⁷ As cited in Breathnach and Ní Mhurchú, ‘Maighréad Nic Mhaicín’.

contention that scholars of Irish had an advantage over their monoglot, English-speaking colleagues.⁵⁸

Despite her husband's fate (she suspected, but never knew for sure how he died)⁵⁹ McMackin remained loyal to and supportive of the Soviet Union. She authored an account of the high standard and ease-of-access to cinema in Russia;⁶⁰ she was an active correspondent on behalf of the Soviet friendship society,⁶¹ and she lectured on the theme of the Soviet educational system to the Irish Women's Social and Progressive League⁶² - a feminist organisation established by Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington in 1937.⁶³ McMackin kept pictures of both Lenin and Stalin in her apartment. She approved of the Soviet intervention into Hungary in 1956 and when an anti-Soviet episode would blow up in the media around a human rights issue, McMackin would simply say: 'they have blotted their copy book again - I wish they wouldn't do that.'⁶⁴ She made her apartment available in the 1950s for early meetings of the embryonic Irish Workers' League until it secured premises at Pembroke Road, as was confirmed by the then League activist, Sam Nolan, who attended such meetings in McMackin's apartment.⁶⁵ In 1960 she visited the Soviet Union as part of a four-person delegation from Irish universities that included Martín Ó Cadhain, the prominent republican, author and academic who was then a member of staff at the Department of Modern Irish at T.C.D.⁶⁶

At the same time, and beyond her relationship with her fellow members in the society and the communist movement, she became a magnet for various Russian people, mostly White Russians, who ended up in Dublin. These included a group of Russian

⁵⁸ In support of McMackin's contention, this author offers the example of 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' which transliterates into Russian as *Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik*. The Irish translation is: Aontas na bPoblachtaí Sóivéadacha Sóisialacha. In contrast to the English version, where 'Soviet' and 'Socialist' both appear as singular adjectives attached to the plural noun 'Republics', the Irish and Russian adjectives are more consistent in that they are declined into the same case (genitive) and, crucially, number (plural) as 'Republics.' For the Irish, see Niall Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Bearla* (Baile Átha Cliath, 2005), pp 54, 960; and for the Russian, see Della Thompson (ed.), *Oxford colour Russian dictionary* (Oxford, 1998), Союз Советских Социалистических Республик, p. 210.

⁵⁹ Interview with Mairéad Breslin Kelly of Phibsboro, Dublin, McMackin's daughter (30 Mar. 2011).

⁶⁰ *Irish Times*, 8 Nov. 1941.

⁶¹ See notice in the *Irish Times*, 3 Apr. 1944.

⁶² Readers' forum, *Irish Times*, 9 Nov. 1946

⁶³ For some details of the League, see Tomás O'Riordan, *Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington*, available at Multitext Project in Irish History, available at (http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Hanna_Sheehy-Skeffington) (21 June 2013).

⁶⁴ Interview with Mairéad Breslin Kelly of Phibsboro, Dublin, McMackin's daughter (30 Mar. 2011).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, and interview with Sam Nolan and Helena Sheehan of Ballymun (9 July 2012).

⁶⁶ Mairéad Breslin Kelly supplied a copy of a photo of her mother with Ó Cadhain and two unidentified Irish university colleagues in Red Square, Moscow to this writer.

refugees, many of whom had first lived in exile in the eastern Chinese city of Harbin from the 1920s until after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1947, and arrived as Red Cross refugees in Ireland in the 1950s and 60s. They took up residency at the Irish Red Cross's refuge homes, Naomh Aindreas, opposite the Royal Dublin Society (R.D.S.), Dublin and later at The Haven, Clonliffe Avenue, Dublin. McMackin acted as an interpreter at a formal meeting between the chairman of the Irish Red Cross and the Russians regarding their living conditions at Naomh Aindreas.⁶⁷ When the refugees moved to The Haven, McMackin brought her daughter there to attend Russian Orthodox masses and to speak Russian. Her other émigré acquaintances included 'Aunt' Judith Izakovich from Grozny, Chechen Republic, who came to Ireland as a governess to Raymond McGrath and his family,⁶⁸ and two elderly Russian ladies of independent means, Madam Elizabeth Sluchevskya, who lived in a flat on Eccles Street, and Maria (surname not available).⁶⁹ She brought many of these Russian émigrés and Russianists from T.C.D. together in her apartment every year to celebrate Pushkin's birthday (6 June) with copious poetry renditions and toasts.

Accordingly, it can be seen that this brief account of McMackin's life serves to introduce to this study the complexities of Irish-Soviet-Russianist groups and personalities that coexisted and mixed in Dublin city, of which organised Irish-Soviet friendship was a part.

The Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, established 1966

It took until the more favourable social and political atmosphere of the mid-1960s for a viable and openly active organisation to be launched in Dublin. In adopting the title of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society / Aontas na bPoblacht Soibheadhach Soisialach, it maintained a similar but shorter title to that of its predecessor – 'Friendship' was only removed to indicate that the organisation had started anew. In its founding constitution of fourteen articles, the society simply declared its object was to be 'the promotion of understanding and friendship between Ireland and the U.S.S.R.', and set its annual subscription for members at 'ten shillings minimum'.⁷⁰ The society's foundation year

⁶⁷ Chairman of the Irish Red Cross (unnamed) to Mrs F. Hackett, 13 Feb. 1963, in private possession of Mairéad Breslin Kelly.

⁶⁸ McGrath was Principal Architect at the Office of Public Works until the late 1960s.

⁶⁹ McMackin sent her daughter Mairéad to these ladies for Russian classes in the early 1950s.

⁷⁰ As per copy entitled 'Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, original constitution' in possession of John P. Swift of Dublin, son of John Swift, chairman and later president of the society. John P. Swift authored a biography of his father, *John Swift: an Irish dissident* (Dublin, 1991), which helps inform much of this section.

coincided with a number of favourable factors: the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, which highlighted the socialist role and politics of James Connolly; the U.S. civil rights movement and its attendant folk music culture; the success and romance of the Cuban revolution; and growing opposition to the Vietnam war – dynamics seen by many as inspirational for radical change in Ireland. Other complementary developments at play were the impact of Seán Lemass’s economic policies, which had the effect of increased employment levels. Also, there was a noticeable reduction in the stridency of Catholic teaching and practice in the state, which arose from the modernising influence of the papacy of John XXIII and the second Vatican council of 1962 to 1965. While the council’s most ‘important achievements’ were confined to ecumenical policies of redefining the church as the ‘whole people of God’ and ‘reaching out’ to other faiths,⁷¹ secularists and radicals also benefited from the increasingly tolerant atmosphere. Cardinal William Conway, archbishop of Armagh from 1963, spoke of ‘a certain sense of spring in the air through the church and, if I mistake not, in Ireland also’.⁷² And Sean Lemass’s economic dictum of the 1960s that the rising tide would lift all boats was also about to apply to the promoters of Irish-Soviet friendship.

This domestic milieu dovetailed with a lessening of Cold War tensions in east-west relations as the promotion of international peace, increasing trade and *détente* augured well for a more relaxed atmosphere in international relations. Within the Soviet Union, this more favourable climate enabled the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendly and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries to renew its mission. This organisation had originally been established after the 1917 revolution, and had headquarters at Friendship House on Kalinin Prospect, Moscow, close to the Kremlin. Friendship House, built in 1894 in the lavish style of a Spanish castle for then prominent Russian industrialist Arseny Morozov, had been chosen by the new Soviet state to symbolise its intentions to foster friendship associations internationally.⁷³ An indication of its status in 1972 was that its president, Madame Nina Popova, was then a member of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union.⁷⁴ Her organisation was charged

⁷¹ Voice of the Faithful-Ireland, ‘Vatican II - Foundation of a revived Irish Catholic church’ (http://www.votfi.com/vatican2_foundation.htm) (2 July 2013).

⁷² Fergal Tobin, *The best of decades: Ireland in the 1960s* (Dublin, 1984) as quoted in Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-century Ireland: nation and state* (Dublin, 1994), p. 435.

⁷³ Seamus Martin, Moscow correspondent, *Irish Times*, 13 June 1992.

⁷⁴ Report by John Swift, *Irish Times*, 8 Nov. 1972.

with the task of stimulating among Soviet citizens an interest in other countries and establishing organised relations between them and their counterparts abroad. In this way the contacts were to be less political, more diplomatic, based upon forming connections between societal organisations on a mutually respectful basis. The following extract from an entry in the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* gives an indication of the reach and scope of the Union:

In 1975 the union maintained contact with 7,500 organisations and with public figures, scientists, and cultural workers in 134 countries. In all, 108 societies, associations, and institutes of friendship with the U.S.S.R. were functioning on all continents of the world.⁷⁵

Included in those 108 societies was the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society – whose relationship with Ireland will be discussed later in the chapter.

The founding members of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society were: John Swift, chairman; Frank Edwards, secretary; Nora Harkin, Bobbie Edwards, Brendan Scott, and George Lawlor.⁷⁶ Swift and Edwards were two tried and trusted communists who had served long apprenticeships through the bitter anti-communism of the earlier decades. While Swift, a self-described ‘Marxian socialist’ and member of the Labour Party from 1927, never joined any communist party in Ireland he was ‘on friendly terms with leading C.P.I. members, such as Michael O’Riordan and Johnny Nolan in Dublin, and Andy Barr and Betty Sinclair in Belfast.’⁷⁷ At the inauguration of the society, John Swift, then seventy years-of-age, was the father figure of the Labour movement. He had served as secretary of the Irish Bakers’, Confectioners’ and Allied Workers’ Amalgamated Union, and as office holder both with the Irish Trade Union Congress (1946) and the International Federation of Food and Allied Workers’ Associations. His standing as a senior figure in the Labour movement was evidenced in 1973 when he was inaugurated as the founding president of the Irish Labour History Society.⁷⁸ A multi-linguist, in 1938 he had undertaken a six weeks’ mission to cities in Europe and the

⁷⁵ R.A. Saakov, ‘Union of Soviet Friendship Societies and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries’ in *G.S.E.*, available at (<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Union+of+Soviet+Friendship+Societies+and+Cultural+Relations+with>) (15 Dec. 2010).

⁷⁶ John P. Swift, *John Swift: An Irish dissident* (Dublin, 1991), p. 188.

⁷⁷ This profile is informed by John P. Swift, *John Swift*, pp 80-1.

⁷⁸ See Irish Labour History Society, ‘Society history’ (http://www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com/index.php?page=soc_hist&title=Society%20History), 27 Aug. 2012.

Soviet Union to examine bakery products and production techniques, and also to conduct a study of Soviet trade unions. Thereafter he was convinced that:

Soviet trade unions penetrate every aspect of social life from the production stages in the enterprise committees...only a mass organisation can do that and a very developed form of democracy brings large numbers into making decisions and carrying them out.⁷⁹

Throughout his twenty years as both chairman and later as honorary president of the society he placed particular emphasis on the promotion of mutual awareness and contacts between Irish and Soviet trade unions. Even before the society was launched Swift had led a visit in 1963 by a delegation from his Bakers' Union to a Moscow bakery plant, at the invitation of the Russian Food Workers' Union. This was the first visit by an Irish trade union delegation to the Soviet Union since the 1929 visit of the Dublin Trades Council to Moscow.⁸⁰ Swift's 1963 visit was also in contrast to the pilgrimage organised by the Bakers' Union to Rome to mark the Holy Year of 1950, which Swift regarded as 'extraordinarily insensitive to non-Catholic members.'⁸¹ Accordingly, a return visit by Muscovite bakers to the Irish Bakers' Union headquarters in 1967 heralded a new era of acceptance for labour delegations from the Soviet Union. The Muscovites proceeded upon a tour to Cork and Limerick, where they were warmly received by fellow bakers and municipal dignitaries.⁸²

Frank Edwards was a member of the Irish Workers' Party (the forerunner of the Communist Party of Ireland), although in his position of secretary to the society he deliberately played down his party membership. Because of his experience with the 'Friendship' society founded in 1946, he was determined to keep the activities of the new society separate from the party.⁸³ Born in 1907, Edwards was brought up in Waterford city where he helped found in the 1930s a local group of the Irish Republican Congress, the new amalgam of disaffected I.R.A. left republicans and labour movement activists.⁸⁴ It was at this time he had his first encounter with Irish-Soviet friendship when Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington gave an inspiring account of her visit to the Soviet Union at a meeting in Waterford.⁸⁵ Edwards began his teaching career in the local

⁷⁹ Swift, *An Irish dissident*, p. 80.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁸² *Evening Herald*, 25 Apr. 1967.

⁸³ Interview with Angela McQuillan of Bray (23 Mar. 2010).

⁸⁴ Patrick Byrne, *The Irish Republican Congress revisited* (London, 1994), p. 5.

⁸⁵ Interview with Seán Edwards of Lucan, society member, and son of Frank Edwards (22 Sept. 2010).

Christian Brothers School, Mount Sion, but was dismissed by church authorities when he refused to sign an undertaking to terminate his membership of the Republican Congress.⁸⁶ He fought for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War and was wounded in action. On his return home and still precluded from Catholic controlled schools, he eventually found employment at the Jewish Zion National School, South Circular Road, Dublin and taught there until his retirement thirty years later.⁸⁷ Edwards's appointment to the school was assisted by the influence of its principal, fellow Waterford man Joseph Barron, who was elected a Clann na Poblachta T.D. in 1961 for Dublin South Central.⁸⁸ A Russian scholar, with a good command of the language and possessed of an ability to involve leading academics, politicians, and personalities with his ongoing initiatives, Edwards persisted with his life's mission, and remained the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society's principal activist and secretary until his death in 1983. Shortly before his death his son Seán acted as secretary until 1985, and continued thereafter as an active and influential member of the society's committee.

Nora Harkin, nee McGinley, came from the republican movement. She was born in 1910 into a radical republican family in Donegal, which took the anti-treaty side. Following a move to Dublin to take up a post with the Irish Hospitals' Sweepstake, she became active in support of Republican Spain on an aid committee. She recalled that this helped lead her away from a militarist position in Ireland as: 'it was a time when you either stuck with the gun or you read and read and developed the political argument'.⁸⁹ In 1939 she married Charlie Harkin from County Tyrone, a former I.R.A. man who had helped establish the Republican Congress. They had three children, one of whom died very young. Her surviving sons recalled that they grew up beneath the gaze of portraits of Marx, Lenin and 'Uncle Joe' Stalin. She became a working actress, appearing in the Peacock Theatre and singing on Radió Éireann. She was also an activist with the Irish Family Planning Association and the Irish anti-apartheid movement. But of all the causes that she espoused, the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society grew to be the one with which she was most associated. After John Swift became the society's honorary president in the 1980s, Harkin became the chairman and travelled regularly to

⁸⁶ David Smith, 'Frank Edwards, the man that fought the bishop: the story of his life in Waterford' in *Waterford History*, 2006 at (http://waterfordireland.tripod.com/frank_edwards.htm) (5 July 2011)

⁸⁷ Manus O'Riordan, *Frank Edwards: portrait of an Irish anti-Fascist*, available at Ireland and the Spanish Civil War (<http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-Edwards.htm>) (10 Apr. 2010).

⁸⁸ Interview with Seán Edwards (21 Sept. 2010).

⁸⁹ 'An Irishwoman's diary', *Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1992.

the Soviet Union.⁹⁰ She made her home, The Lodge, Monkstown, County Dublin, available for annual fundraising garden parties and as a place of welcome for the constant stream of Soviet visitors.⁹¹ She died on 7 June 2012, aged 101 years.

Bobbie Edwards (nee Walsh), born in Waterford in 1910, had been treasurer of the Spanish Republican Aid Committee. Like her close friend Nora Harkin, she worked in the Irish Hospitals' Sweepstake, where she was canteen manager of the sweepstake's associated company, the Ballsbridge Luncheon Club. Alongside her husband Frank, the society's secretary, she attended to a great deal of the practical work of the society, including the hosting of a succession of Soviet visitors to Ireland at the Edwards's family home.

What was it that made these responsible and prominent people so determined to promote closer relations with the Soviet Union - a proposition which was still an anathema to many people in 1960s Irish society? Crucially, their formative years were the nineteen-thirties. Because of their activism as left-republicans and labour movement militants, they had lost faith with the militarism of the I.R.A. while at the same time rejecting the politics of de Valera's Fianna Fáil and the reformist Labour party. Further, their involvement in the Irish contribution to international brigades fighting in Spain was decisive. They considered that of the major powers in Europe, it was the Soviet Union alone, which actively supported the Spanish republic in its attempts to stave off the assault of General Francisco Franco and his German and Italian fascist allies. In this Edwards, Harkin and co. had been part of a European-wide anti-fascist movement that drew support from liberal intellectuals and working class militants – a phenomenon which Hobsbawm describes:

When the reality of the U.S.S.R. might have been expected to repel them at the time of the Stalinist terror... but it was the time of earthquakes for the bourgeois-liberal societies of the West, of the triple trauma of slump, fascist triumph and approaching world war. The 'U.S.S.R. in Construction' could appear as a

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Nora Harkin and her husband Charlie Harkin were politically close to Peadar O'Donnell, the prominent left-republican, agrarian activist and writer (1893-1986). After Charlie Harkin's death, O'Donnell came to live with Nora Harkin in her home for the last six years of his life, where she cared for him until his death. This biographical portrait is informed by Harkin's interview with Siggins, *Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1992; by this author's interview with Angela McQuillan (15 Apr. 2010); and by 'Nora Harkin: obituary', *Irish Times*, 23 June 2012.

society built in the image of reason, science and progress, the lineal descendants of the great French Revolution.⁹²

Furthermore, the recording of Swift's own views is testament to the founders' ongoing motivational drive:

Since the Bolshevik Revolution...the U.S.S.R. was virtually under siege. Civil war, and the associated military interventions by the main capitalist powers; the Nazi invasion during the Second World War, resulting in the destruction of much of the Soviet economy...the deaths of twenty million citizens; in the Cold War the U.S.S.R. was a target for vilification by the West. Notwithstanding... the Union had advanced from little more than a feudal state in 1917 to a socialist superpower in the 1960s.⁹³

One of the remaining founders was George Lawlor, a Bakers' Union colleague of Swift. He worked in Gateaux Ltd. of Finglas, Dublin, then one of Ireland's leading cake manufacturers, in a middle management position for approximately thirty years. He was a Labour party member and a peace commissioner. A stalwart member of the society, Lawlor was a stickler for proper committee procedures, and remained an active member until the society's dissolution.⁹⁴

Finally, Brendan Scott can be seen as representative of the radicalised 1960s generation. A secondary school teacher at the multi-denominational Sutton Park School, Dublin, he was the vice-chair of the society. At just thirty-three years of age in 1966 he brought not only youth, but as an active member of the Labour party and founder member of the Irish anti-apartheid movement, a broader appeal to the society.⁹⁵ While a prominent activist for friendship with the Soviet Union, he was not uncritical of Soviet policy, and joined with some members of the Irish Workers' Party, the forerunner organisation of the C.P.I., in a public protest in Dublin against the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. This was in contrast to John Swift, who called to the Irish Workers' Party bookshop to privately criticise Michael O'Riordan and his comrades for not supporting the Warsaw Pact action.⁹⁶ Revealing on the matter of personal relations in the committee, 'he sometimes acted as peacemaker between Frank Edwards and Swift...in their turbulent personal relationship'.⁹⁷ Scott's death at the age

⁹² Eric Hobsbawm, *How to change the world: tales of Marx and Marxism* (London, 2011), p. 299.

⁹³ Swift, *An Irish dissident*, p. 80.

⁹⁴ This paragraph is informed by an interview with John P. Swift (15 Sept. 2010), and an email from Lawlor's grandson, Myles Lawlor, 28 Apr. 2011, to this author.

⁹⁵ *Liberty*, newspaper of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (I.T.G.W.U.), Oct. 1973.

⁹⁶ Interview with John P. Swift (15 Sept. 2010).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

of forty in September 1973 (just as diplomatic relations between Ireland and the Soviet Union were finally established) was regarded as ‘a severe loss for the left.’⁹⁸

Scott’s place on the committee was taken up for many years by Mártain Ó Siadhail (Martin Sheil), a manager with Gael Linn of Irish language courses for young people and Slógadh music festivals. A founding secretary of the Gael Linn section of the I.T.G.W.U., he was also prominent in classical and traditional music circles.⁹⁹ Like Scott before him, Ó Siadhail’s contribution to the society’s committee also involved the smoothing of personal relations between Edwards and Swift.¹⁰⁰

Angela McQuillan, from County Roscommon, was among the early students at T.C.D.’s new Russian department (founded in 1963) from 1964 to 1968. She had previously taken some Russian classes at University College, Dublin (U.C.D.), where Martin Bates, an intelligence officer in the Irish Defence forces, taught Russian on a part-time basis.¹⁰¹ While studying French at T.C.D. under Professor Owen (Skeff) Sheehy-Skeffington (son of Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington), she was advised by him to resume her studies in the Russian language.¹⁰² Her attendance at T.C.D. was noteworthy, not just that she immersed herself in the Russian language, but as a young, newly-married woman from a Catholic background, she was among the first students to break taboos relating to gender and marital status still in place in early 1960s Ireland.¹⁰³ Further, at that time in many dioceses Catholics still required special dispensation to enrol at T.C.D. Joe Joyce, in his ‘From the archives’ column in the *Irish Times*, reproduced this instruction in a list of regulations read at masses in the diocese of Dr Charles McQuaid, archbishop of Dublin, in February 1950:

No Catholic may enter the Protestant University of Trinity College, without having previously submitted his [sic] case to the ordinary of the diocese, whose right it is to decide whether attendance may be tolerated. Any Catholic who

⁹⁸ Swift, *An Irish dissident*, p. 195.

⁹⁹ See obituary for Ó Siadhail (1953-2007) in *Sound Post*, newsletter of the Musicians’ Union of Ireland (Dublin, spring, 2008), p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with John P. Swift (15 Sept. 2010).

¹⁰¹ Interview with Angela McQuillan (7 Oct. 2010).

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ It was then the norm that married women did not work outside the home. Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of sin: sex and society in modern Ireland* (London, 2009), p. 524, states ‘forty per cent of married women were in the workforce by the end of the century, compared to only five per cent in 1966.’

deliberately disobeys this law is guilty of mortal sin and is unworthy to receive the sacraments.¹⁰⁴

McQuillan had been a supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (C.N.D.) when she lived in England earlier in the 1960s, but she was attracted to the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society initially because of the Russian language. She became one of the first new members when she responded to a ‘notice in a newspaper which Frank Edwards managed to get published.’¹⁰⁵ She was to put her linguistic skills to good use as the society set about organising Russian language classes. The classes were offered from 1974 and were held under the auspices of the society in the premises of the Language Centre of Ireland at Wilton Place, Dublin, with McQuillan as the sole tutor.¹⁰⁶ One of her first pupils was the seventy-eight years old John Swift, anxious to keep his Russian up to date. She became a central member and secretary of the society from 1985.

The novelty of the society’s early Soviet visitors to Ireland attracted considerable publicity and lent an air of ‘respectability’ to its cause. A 1970 reception in Dublin for visitors, one of whom was a Russian Catholic priest, was attended by a unique gathering of Irish V.I.P.s, including the then chief justice and later president of Ireland, Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh;¹⁰⁷ Roddy Connolly, son of James and founder member of the first C.P.I. in 1922; and poet and author, Austin Clarke.¹⁰⁸ Clarke (1896-1974), an active supporter of the society until his death,¹⁰⁹ was appreciated in Soviet literary circles – as shown by the following extract from the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*: ‘Many of the poems in the collection *Flight to Africa* (1963) and *Old-fashioned pilgrimage* (1967) by A. Clarke satirically depict life in Ireland.’¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ *Irish Times*, 20 Feb. 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Angela McQuillan (15 Apr. 2010).

¹⁰⁶ McQuillan taught English as a foreign language at the language centre after graduating from T.C.D. The proprietor of the centre, Mary Towers, was a consistent member of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. society. Angela McQuillan interview (7 Oct. 2010).

¹⁰⁷ O’Dálaigh and Frank Edwards had known one another as young students of Irish. They met on Great Blasket island, Co. Kerry, in the company of Peig Sayers. Mártain Ó Siadhail used to remark at Ireland-U.S.S.R. meetings that the two had the ‘Blasket blas’ (Irish accent). Interview with Seán Edwards (21 Sept. 2010).

¹⁰⁸ Report and photograph, *Sunday Press*, 19 July 1970.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Angela McQuillan, 7 Oct. 2010.

¹¹⁰ A.P. Sarukhanian, ‘Ireland – Literature’, in *G.S.E.* (3rd ed., Moscow, 1979), x, p. 424.

The U.S.S.R. - Ireland Friendship Society

When the foundation of the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society took place in Moscow in 1966,¹¹¹ the same year as its counterpart organisation in Dublin, the Soviet Union can be described as then being at a political and economic crossroads. Having gone through a period of de-Stalinisation under Khrushchev, a new collective leadership of Aleksei Nikolayevich Kosygin, Nikolai Viktorovich Podgorny and Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev had been in place for two years. A critical feature of this leadership's programme was an attempt to come to terms with a challenging economic reality: the traditional heavy industries and *kolkhozes* (state farms) were failing to meet the needs of an increasingly well-educated and sophisticated populace. The centrally planned Soviet economy had overcome the devastation of World War II, and provided full employment, education and health services and access to culture and sports opportunities for its citizens. Nevertheless, by the early 1960s it was clear to planners that if they wished to keep in touch with the advanced capitalist countries of the West, the union needed to reduce bureaucracy and expand participation and control at enterprise levels. To this end the Kosygin-Liberman reforms of 1965 were brought forward to empower enterprises to better match production to consumer needs, and boost quality standards.¹¹² As part of this modernisation it was decided to access western technology by means of selective imports to upgrade and augment economic production. To further complement and facilitate this process, international friendship societies were established under the auspices of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendly and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (as discussed above). In line with Friendship House policy, its aim was to secure:

mass membership, and this is achieved by corporate affiliations...the choice of affiliation to a particular society is made by the committee of the factory or other work-place or institute following a vote of those engaged in it.¹¹³

The prestige of the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society can be gauged from the prominent position of its president in 1972, Professor Nickolai Kuzin, rector of the First Medical Institute

¹¹¹ Secretary's annual report for 1986-7, 19 June 1987, in possession of John P. Swift. It confirms attendance of McQuillan and Harkin at the twentieth anniversary meeting in Moscow.

¹¹² It was his essays of Evsei Grigorevich Liberman (1897 – 1983), a leading Soviet economist, in *Pravda* in 1962 that led to the adaption of these reforms. See 'Liberman, Evsei Grigorevich' in *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* at

(<http://www.soviethistory.org/popup.php?bioID=BD1471&action=biography&letter=E>) (8 July 2011).

¹¹³ John Swift, in *Irish Times*, 8 Nov. 1972.

and chief surgeon of the Soviet Union's health ministry.¹¹⁴ Members of the Moscow branch of the society included an Irish speaker from a Celtic languages institute, and Alexandra Zereva, a representative from a high school of 600 students whose interest in Ireland arose from the 1967 tercentenary celebrations of the birth of Dean Swift. Significant for a comment upon the then-stalled negotiation on the establishment of diplomatic relations with Ireland, another member of the Moscow committee was Boris Kudryavtsev, first secretary in the ministry of foreign affairs. In 1972 he advised John Swift in Friendship House that 'it is not the fault of his ministry' that relations had not yet been established.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, it can be seen that a degree of coordination was taking place between the two societies, with a particular stress on the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Towards establishment of formal diplomatic relations

Meantime back in Dublin in early 1973, the Irish society's activities were in full spate, as is clear from detailed reports for the year's first seven months.¹¹⁶ Before the formal announcement of 5 July by the minister for foreign affairs, Garret FitzGerald, that he had agreed with Andrei Gromyko to exchange diplomatic missions, the society had successfully hosted or been associated with a series of high profile events and receptions. These began in January with a lecture in Jury's Hotel, Dublin on the subject of 'The actor and national culture in the U.S.S.R.', which was delivered by Gerry Alexander, president of the Irish Actors' Equity Association - the trade union for Irish entertainers. Alexander and a fellow officer of the association, Dermot Doolin, had attended an international symposium held in October 1972 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on issues relating to theatre. Alexander reported on conditions in the theatrical professions in the Soviet Union and 'contrasted Soviet theatrical life with the uncertain fortunes of cultural workers and artists in Ireland and Britain, subject as these are to the vagaries of private promotion and speculation.'¹¹⁷ In February a gramophone recital was held under the society's auspices at the Language Society of Ireland where recordings of Russian folk and classical music were introduced by two respected musical artists on the Dublin

¹¹⁴ During an official visit to St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin, Professor Kuzin observed open heart surgery. Angela McQuillan interview (7 Oct. 2010).

¹¹⁵ Swift, in *Irish Times*, 8 Nov. 1972.

¹¹⁶ 'Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society activities reports nos. 1 and 2 (Jan. - Mar. and Apr. - mid-July 1973)', in possession of Angela McQuillan.

¹¹⁷ Ireland-U.S.S.R. Soc. activities report no. 1, Jan. to Mar. 1973, in possession of Angela McQuillan.

musical scene: Gerry Murphy, composer and music teacher, and Patricia Cahill, a popular singer of stage and television.¹¹⁸

The next meeting was to herald the introduction to a popular activity that was to last for nearly twenty years – the society’s holiday tours to the Soviet Union. ‘About three hundred persons’ were present in the Hibernian Hotel, Dublin to hear particulars of the tours on offer from Olga Doudina of the London office of Intourist, the Soviet tourist agency.¹¹⁹ The meeting was also addressed by a Mr Mulligan, manager of Lep Travel, with whose company the society was to develop a close business relationship.

The March meeting featured a report on Soviet architectural and town planning matters. It was presented by Uinseann Mac Eoin,¹²⁰ who had travelled in the previous year to Tashkent, Alma Ata and other cities in Soviet Central Asia with Frank Edwards and Victor Romashkin, secretary of the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society. Mac Eoin, a long-time public critic of Dublin city’s planning policy which had resulted in an outcome, he claimed, whereby ‘the poor and marginalised are cast into working class suburbs to the west and north west’.¹²¹ Included in Mac Eoin’s written account of his impressions of his Soviet visit, was:

western perception of public housing in Russia is simply that it consists of many hundreds of Ballymun towers...I can only say that their society does not appear to be so fractured...so obviously ghettoised as ours...one must remember that following 1945 they had to hastily throw up millions of house units...we found a normally furnished flat opening off a rather drab elevator/stair...were it in Dublin, it might be covered in litter and graffiti. Not so here. To the assistant planner of Tashkent, I shot the question: ‘who lives in the apartment next to you?’ ‘A butcher’. ‘Who lives over you?’ ‘A vehicle mechanic’, and so on. A notable feature of Soviet civic planning has been the creation of great wide boulevards...accompanied by a superb system of underground metro trains, assisted by surface public transport.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Gerry Murphy, from Limerick, graduated with a B. Mus. from U.C.D. He was head of music at Gonzaga College, Dublin until 2007. Cahill was best known for her roles in light operas at the Gaiety and Olympia theatres, and was popular in Poland and Romania. See Contemporary Music Centre, ‘Gerry Murphy (b. 1947)’ (<http://www.cmc.ie/composers/composer.cfm?composerID=89> and ‘Patricia Cahill’ (<http://www.patriciacahill.com/>) (21 June 2011).

¹¹⁹ Ireland-U.S.S.R. Soc. activities report no. 1, Jan. to Mar. 1973.

¹²⁰ Uinseann Mac Eoin (1920-2007), architect, town planner, conservationist and author of *Survivors* (Dublin, 1980) and *The I.R.A. in the twilight years, 1923-48* (Dublin, 1997).

¹²¹ Uinseann Mac Eoin, ‘The planning environment in the Soviet Union’, in *Ireland-U.S.S.R., 21st anniversary* (Dublin, 1987), p. 20.

¹²² *Ibid.*

In this fashion Mac Eoin recorded his professional and candid opinion of the status of Soviet housing and planning in the 1970s.¹²³

The format for the April 1973 meeting was another gramophone recital, with Patricia Cahill again introducing the music. On this occasion the programme was more challenging, both artistically and politically. Held at Carroll's Theatre, Dublin, the principal musical piece was Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony no. 13*. Associated with the recital was a reading of some poetry from the prominent Soviet poet, Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko, by Gerry Alexander of Actors' Equity.¹²⁴ As the composer had visited Ireland in July of the previous year (as discussed in chapter two), the selection of Shostakovich's music was topical. More importantly, the symphony - subtitled 'Babi Yar' - raised a number of issues of political interest and debate. Based upon Yevtushenko's poems, the symphony is divided into five movements. In the first instance, it commemorates the infamous massacre by the Nazis during their occupation of the Soviet Union from 1941, at Babi Yar, a ravine outside of Kiev. There over 100,000 victims, including 'over 33,000 Jews...[and] similar numbers of Ukrainians and Russians were shot and buried in mass graves.'¹²⁵ The relevant poem's emphasis is on the killing of the Jews. It bemoans the absence of a monument at Babi Yar, and raises the continued existence of anti-Semitism in Soviet society. This is starkly put in the poem:

...O my Russian people!
I know you
are international to the core.
But those with unclean hands
have often made a jingle of your purest name.
I know the goodness of my land.
How vile these anti-Semites-
Without a qualm
They pompously called themselves
"The Union of the Russian People"!¹²⁶

Although published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the official organ of the Union of Soviet Writers, the poem came in for strong criticism. The poet was 'accused of trying to drive

¹²³ For an appreciation of Mac Eoin, see Ruadhán Mac Eoin, *Uinseann Mac Eoin (1920-2007)*, available at Archiseek (<http://archiseek.com/2007/uinseann-mac-eoin-1920-2007/>) (29 June 2011).

¹²⁴ Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society's report no. 2, Apr. to mid-July 1973.

¹²⁵ Jeremy Smith, 'Non-Russians in the Soviet Union', in Ronald Grigor Suny (ed) *The Cambridge history of Russia*, iii: *The twentieth century* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 503.

¹²⁶ Yevgeny Yevtushenko, 'Babi Yar', translated by George Reavey, in Albert C. Todd and Max Hayward (eds) *Twentieth-century Russian poetry* (London, 1993), pp 805-7.

a wedge between nationalities, of inciting ethnic hatred by elevating the wartime suffering of Jews above that of Russians'.¹²⁷ But Shostakovich had been so impressed with its sentiments and content that he phoned a startled Yevtushenko and requested permission to set the poem to music. The symphony, which was first performed in 1962 during the Khrushchev period, featured other negative aspects of Soviet life, such as: the endurance of women as they were regularly required to queue for hours for food, and the ongoing impact of stifling bureaucracy. At the same time, the symphony paid tribute to the creativity of the Soviet peoples. It is noteworthy that while Yevtushenko and Shostakovich were critical of aspects of Soviet society, they were also both supportive of, and prominent in, the Soviet system. Yevtushenko had risen to prominence in 1958 as a new voice in Russian literature with his love poetry, but most notably with his poem *Stantsiia Zima* (Zima Junction). This gave an expression for many Soviet people of their sense of reassessment in the wake of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress, with 'its reaffirmation of faith in the essential goodness of the nation, in spite of the terrible revelations'.¹²⁸ No mention is made in the society's record of the event regarding interpretations of the symphony or of the Yevtushenko poem offered by the artists. As the report does confirm that John Swift chaired the event, it is to be expected that he would have ensured that a portrayal of a positive image of the Soviet Union prevailed. Nevertheless, the content of the programme does indicate that the society was not averse to hosting an event that revealed that the Soviet Union was not a socialist paradise, but rather a society wherein artists and others were engaged in exposing and articulating failures and injustices with a view to improving the system. Evidence of this sentiment is contained in the closing lines of *Babi Yar*:

...The *Internationale*, let it thunder
When the last anti-semitic on earth
Is buried forever.
In my blood there is no Jewish blood.
In their callous rage, all anti-semites
Must hate me now as a Jew.
For that reason
I am a true Russian!¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: a life* (Oxford, 2000), p. 228.

¹²⁸ Albert C. Todd, 'Yevgeny Yevtushenko, b. 1933' in Todd and Hayward (eds) *Twentieth-century Russian poetry*, p. 802.

¹²⁹ Yevtushenko, 'Babi Yar', in Todd and Hayward (eds) *Twentieth-century Russian poetry*, p. 807.

May of 1973 brought a two-week visit of the Georgian State Dance Company, a group of over seventy dancers and musicians, to Dublin. They were enthusiastically received by the city's audiences at sixteen separate performances and were received at the parliamentary chambers of the dáil and senate by the tánaiste, Brendan Corish. The society also hosted a reception in the dancers' honour in the Mansion House, the official residence of the lord mayor of Dublin. A previous lord mayor had been Frank Cluskey, who was now an up-and-coming junior government minister, and the society was careful to record his involvement in the welcomes for the Georgian visitors.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, of all the guests present in the Mansion House, it was Foreign Minister Garret FitzGerald whose presence was most significant – within a month he would successfully submit a memorandum to cabinet for the opening of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

Reaction of the society to the establishment of diplomatic relations

In the afterglow of the announcement by Garret FitzGerald that he had agreed with Andrei Gromyko for the exchange of diplomatic missions, a special meeting of the society's committee was convened on 15 July 1973 to consider an appropriate reaction. Unsurprisingly, members declared their 'enthusiastic welcome [for the] realisation of one of the society's principal aims',¹³¹ but they also decided to enter into their records – not a self-congratulatory résumé – but rather two principal declarations. First, in the light of the recent changes that had taken place in public opinion in Ireland to the point where formal relations could be enacted, it was recorded that the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society had made a telling contribution in recent years by sending to Ireland a succession of leading representatives who had 'shown themselves as not only worthy citizens of a great world power rich in cultural heritage, but emissaries of peace and friendship'.¹³² In this regard, it was agreed to dispatch a letter of appreciation to the general secretary of the Soviet society in Moscow. Second, the Irish officers pledged to

¹³⁰ John Swift, Society's activities, report no. 2 (Apr. to mid-July 1973), 18 July 1973, in private possession of Angela McQuillan. For a biography of Cluskey, see Pauric J. Dempsey and Lawrence William White, 'Frank Cluskey (1930-89)', in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. (Cambridge, 2009) available at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a1768&searchClicked=clicked&quickadvsearch=yes>) (21 Sept. 2013). While critical of the Soviets' involvement in Afghanistan, Cluskey condemned the Fianna Fáil government's decision to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics, saying it was a 'diminution of (Irish) neutrality', *Irish Times*, 20 May 1980.

¹³¹ 'Society's activities, report no. 2 (Apr. to mid-July 1973)', 18 July 1973, in private possession of Angela McQuillan.

¹³² Ibid.

re-dedicate themselves to their work by availing of the new opportunities arising from diplomatic recognition. To do so it was agreed to undertake whatever was deemed necessary to expand the society's membership and strengthen its administration. No attempt was made in the report, however, to go beyond the joint efforts of the Irish and Soviet societies, that is, to address the impact of trade and E.E.C. considerations upon the Irish government's decision. The officers were content to inform their colleagues in Moscow that their joint labours from 1966 had helped to deliver formal diplomatic relations between their two states, and to prepare themselves for new opportunities that surely lay ahead.

After the opening of the Soviet embassy in Dublin, the society focused upon its next major objective: an Irish-Soviet cultural agreement. As a first step, an agreement between the Irish and Soviet societies was enacted. It was formally signed in March 1976 at Liberty Hall, Dublin, by the two societies' presidents, John Swift and Professor Kuzin, with the Soviet ambassador, Anatoli Kaplin in attendance.¹³³ The agreement sought to develop ties in the areas of culture, economy, science, language appreciation and tourism, and to promote link ups between individual trade unions and towns from each country. While this was an important public occasion for the two societies and the Soviet embassy, it was not a cultural agreement between the two countries, or one that was acknowledged by the Irish state. This was indicated by the absence of any mention of Irish diplomats or government ministers in the records of the event.

Soon after the signing, however, the Irish society attempted to convince the Irish government of the value of a state-to-state cultural agreement. It chose to do so in a public way, in an effort to both inform and seek public support for such a formal agreement. The *Irish Times* carried the society's open letter to the government, which began by pointing to obligations in the Helsinki Agreement on European Security (C.S.C.E.), signed by Ireland in 1975, to 'increase substantially their cultural exchanges ...both at the bilateral and multilateral level in all fields'.¹³⁴ The letter continued by listing the cultural opportunities for exchanges of theatre, ballet, etc. In further compliance with the Helsinki Agreement in the area of the promotion of foreign language studies and the sharing of scientific knowledge, it articulated the need for a supply of teachers, interpreters and translators of Soviet literature and Russian classical

¹³³ *Irish Times*, 24 Mar. 1976.

¹³⁴ *Irish Times*, 5 July 1976.

works. The letter concluded by saying that as the Soviet system operated on a planned basis, a formal agreement would ‘impose the obligation on both sides to fulfil expressed intentions, and facilitate satisfactory arrangements’.¹³⁵ Society officers sought to add extra clout to the letter with the inclusion of the signatures of prominent cultural and academic personalities, including John Behan, sculptor;¹³⁶ Aloys Fleischmann, director of the Cork International Choral and Folk Dance Festival; Fintan Kennedy, president of I.T.G.W.U.; Tomás MacAnna, resident director of the Abbey Theatre; Uinseann Mac Eoin, architect and author; and Roger McHugh, professor of Anglo-Irish literature at U.C.D.

Evidence of the government’s position on this matter in 1976 is contained in an internal Department of Foreign Affairs record of a meeting between Ambassador Kaplin and Irish diplomat, Noel Dorr, to organise details of Dr FitzGerald’s visit to the Soviet Union. Dorr’s minute of the meeting states:

If we agree... on the desirability of concluding a cultural agreement at some time in the very remote future – I had made the point that while, in principle, we are ready to develop cultural relations it may not be immediately practicable for us for financial and other reasons to move too fast in the development of a framework of agreements for this purpose.¹³⁷

By 1980 an agreement had still not been enacted, and it seems according to an internal D.F.A. review of Irish-Soviet relations that the government felt under no particular pressure to revisit the issue. The relevant reference in the report read: ‘The absence of such an agreement does not hinder cultural exchanges between Ireland and the Soviet Union.’¹³⁸ For the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society there was a tangible outcome to the refusal. It meant that the ‘soft power’ arising from organised Irish-Soviet cultural exchanges was left in the hands of the society.

Irish campaign groups for emigration rights for Soviet Jewry

The above Liberty Hall meeting to witness the signing of the societies’ cultural agreement also serves to introduce to this study two other groups of Irish people who

¹³⁵ *Irish Times*, 5 July 1976.

¹³⁶ John Behan (b. 1938), an associate member of the Royal Irish Academy (R.I.A.) from 1973, is now a member of the R.I.A. and of Aosdána. His major public works of sculpture include *Famine ship* (base of Croagh Patrick), and *Tree of liberty* at Carlow, which commemorates the 1798 United Irishmen.

¹³⁷ See ‘Minister’s visit to the Soviet Union – 14/20 Dec. 1976’, 24 Nov. 1976, in Proposed visit of the minister for foreign affairs to the U.S.S.R., Dec. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2012/59/2074).

¹³⁸ See ‘Ireland-U.S.S.R. relations’, n.d., [but 1980] in Olympic Games in Moscow (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/152).

had an active, but decidedly unfriendly, interest in the Soviet Union: the Dublin 35s Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry; and the Irish Soviet Jewry Committee. Between the two groups, about twenty-five people participated in a picket outside the Liberty Hall meeting. The *Irish Times*' report of the event stated that the Soviet ambassador was singled out for particular attention by the picketers with placards and shouted injunctions that read 'let Soviet Jews go'.¹³⁹ However, while the article gave details of the picketing groups' titles and aims, it failed to give any background on the issue from the Soviet Union's position.

The Dublin 35s group was part of a campaign, principally based in Britain, Canada, and the United States, which agitated for increased emigration rights for Jews living in the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁰ The campaign, which began in London in 1971, was prompted by the trial of a thirty-five year old librarian, Raiza Palatnik, on the charge of spreading 'malicious slander against the Soviet government and social order' in the city of Odessa, Ukraine, and her subsequent sentencing to two years imprisonment.¹⁴¹ This campaign claimed that Palatnik was an activist among Soviet Jews, some of whom, emboldened by Israel's victory in the Six Day War of 1967, wanted to 'leave the land of their persecution and to find new roots in Israel, the land of their forefathers'.¹⁴² The campaign's first activity was initiated by Ijo Rager, councillor in charge of Soviet-Jewish affairs at the Israeli embassy in London, when he called a number of Jewish women to his office and suggested to them that they organise a group of thirty-five females from their north west London Jewish community to mount a picket on the Soviet embassy in London. This they duly did, on first of May 1971, when, dressed in black, the women focused their protest on Madame Lyudmila Smirnovskaya, wife of the ambassador. Their action attracted considerable media attention, and the sobriquet 'the 35s' was attached to their movement.

With the aid not only of the Israeli embassy but with funding from British businessman Cyril Stein,¹⁴³ the 35s' campaign attracted considerable support in Jewish

¹³⁹ *Irish Times*, 5 July 1976.

¹⁴⁰ N.C.J.S.: advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, Baltic states and Eurasia, 'Soviet Jewry movement marks anniversaries' (<http://www.sovietjewry.org/history.php>) (11 July 2011).

¹⁴¹ As cited by Daphne Gerlis, *Those wonderful women in black: the story of the women's campaign for Soviet Jewry* (London, 1996), p. 28.

¹⁴² Gerlis, *Those wonderful women in black*, p. 15.

¹⁴³ Gerlis, *Those wonderful women in black*, p. 20, fn. 9. Stein (1927-2011) was then chairman of the Ladbrokes betting company and became a leading philanthropist to many Israeli and Zionist causes, including funding for the construction of Israeli settlements on the West bank, Palestine in 2007. See

communities throughout Britain. Many branches in the British provinces were subsequently established, including the Dublin group, as it ‘was always included in the provincial section of the 35s.’¹⁴⁴ These branches championed the causes of individual Soviet ‘refusniks’ (from the Russian *otkaznik*, ‘one who is refused’), and a hallmark of the 35s’ activities was their ability to mount inventive protests at Soviet embassies, meetings of the British-U.S.S.R. and Ireland-U.S.S.R. societies, and cultural events featuring high-profile Soviet visitors, as was confirmed by the following samples from the résumé of the work of the Dublin 35s:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1977 | demonstration outside the Soviet embassy, dressed in prison garb. |
| 1979 | picketed the international stand at the travel fair. 35s’ banners were ripped up by Russians. |
| 1980 | a Moscow Olympics protest at the Royal Dublin Society government-sponsored sports exhibition. |
| 1983 | demonstration during the visit of the Soviet State Symphony Orchestra. |
| | Demonstration outside a Soviet trade show at the Royal Dublin Society. Sold Chanukkah cards (these cards celebrate the Jewish festival of lights, which is related to the reclaiming by the Jews of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem from the control of the Seleucid Empire, c. 100 B.C.). |
| 1985 | at the National Concert Hall, bouquets were thrown on the stage during a performance by the Georgian State Dancers. ¹⁴⁵ |

A joint meeting with Amnesty International in 1977, and a prayer vigil with a Christian and other Jewish organisations in 1978 outside the Soviet embassy in Dublin, are also listed.

According to Ray Rivlin in *Jewish Ireland* (2011), Jewish men were more to the fore in the second campaign group, the Irish Soviet Jewry Committee. It grew out of

‘Ladbroke founder dies’ (<http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/45297/ladbrokes-founder-cyril-stein-dies>) (retrieved 29 July 2011)

¹⁴⁴ Gerlis, *Those wonderful women in black*, p. 246. Gerlis further comments (tongue-in-cheek): ‘it is to be hoped that an international incident will not be provoked by continuing them as such.’

¹⁴⁵ Gerlis, *Those wonderful women in black*, p. 246-8. Gerlis credits this information to Lynn Jackson, who chaired the Dublin group for eighteen years.

Ruach, a Jewish community newssheet, published from 1969 to 1973 by a group of young activists, among whom Alan Shatter was the most prominent.¹⁴⁶ In 1984, Shatter, having become a Fíne Gael T.D., secured backing for an all-party motion in the dáil demanding emigration rights for Soviet Jews, and this was followed by a similar motion, sponsored by senators David Norris and Mary Robinson, in the seanad. Shatter's group also engaged in developing telephone contacts with Jews in Moscow and Leningrad to gather and disseminate information concerning refusniks.¹⁴⁷

The anti-Soviet stance of the above Irish-Jewish groups was in contrast to a pro-Soviet tradition that had existed among some members of the Jewish community in Ireland, and to a mutual respect between Irish communists and Irish Jews. Among these had been the notable painter-artist Harry Kernoff, who had gone to Soviet Russia with Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington in 1930, and who had collaborated with the publication of Hilda Allberry's booklet relating her visit to Russia in 1950, *Approach pattern* (as discussed above). And there was Irish Jewish involvement in the Spanish Civil War against Franco's forces, with the participation of Morris 'Morry' Levitas, of Warren Street, Dublin. Levitas was a communist, and like Michael O'Riordan of the C.P.I., he too was a member of the Connolly Column. Levitas fought on the Aragon front before being captured in 1938, after which he endured imprisonment for a year in the Francoist concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardea.¹⁴⁸ Michael O'Riordan had a particular commitment to the Jewish community, as indicated in Lawrence White's recent biographical essay on O'Riordan (2011). White recounts that the C.P.I. leader had defended the solicitor and future lord mayor of Cork, [Gerald Yael Goldberg](#), from anti-semitic attacks in the 1940s, and that:

Forthright opposition to anti-semitism was a constant throughout O'Riordan's career; after taking up residence in Dublin's Portobello district, he was actively involved in cultural activities of the sizeable Jewish population of the area.¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, as mentioned above, Frank Edwards of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society had been employed by the Jewish Zion National School in Dublin in the 1940s – when he

¹⁴⁶ Ray Rivlin, *Jewish Ireland: a social history* (Dublin, 2011), p. 198. Shatter is currently the Irish minister for justice.

¹⁴⁷ Rivlin, *Jewish Ireland*, p. 197.

¹⁴⁸ See Pdraig Yeates, 'Maurice Levitas dies in London', in *Ireland and the Spanish Civil War*, available at (<http://irelandscw.com/obit-MLevitas.htm>) (16 Sept. 2013)

¹⁴⁹ See Lawrence William White, 'Michael ('Micheál; Mick') O'Riordan, 1917-2006', in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2011), available at (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a9433>) (14 Sept. 2013).

was barred for his radical views from teaching in Catholic schools – and taught at the Zion school until his retirement.

A contemporary and official Soviet booklet, *Soviet Jews: our motherland is the U.S.S.R.* (1976) gives the Soviet side to the Soviet Jewry question. Published by Novosti Press (the Soviet public information service for international affairs) the booklet was an account of a press conference held in Moscow in that year, at the Central Journalists' Club.¹⁵⁰ The conference was hosted jointly by Novosti Press and the Soviet ministry of foreign affairs to present the Soviet state's case on the topic to a corps of domestic and international press correspondents. The presentation took the form of a mixture of statistical information on Jewish emigration, details of an organised Israeli campaign directed at Soviet citizens of Jewish nationality, and verbal statements from a number of disenchanted emigrants who had returned to the Soviet Union from Israel.

The total immigration to Israel from the Soviet Union in the period 1945-75 was given as 120,000 (five per cent of Soviet Jews) - the 1970 census total for Soviet citizens of Jewish nationality then being 2,150,000. It was claimed that the rules applied to emigration applications were in line with the rules of the United Nations, which allowed for refusals to be applied to applicants working in security-related jobs, and that only 1.6 per cent of applicants were so refused.

The conference was informed that Soviet Jews were targeted by propaganda from the radio station, Voice of Israel, and that individuals were receiving official letters of invitation to come to Israel.

Many returnees from Israel gave personal accounts of their experiences. The following two selections represent the principal reasons for returning home: Valeri Nusimovich Kuvent from the Kabardino-Balkar Republic, had emigrated with his wife, mother and three young children. He complained that Russians Jews were only wanted as 'unskilled manpower', and that he refused to become 'cannon fodder' for the Israeli military. He asked:

what would you feel if you live on the lands from which hundreds of thousands of people had been driven away and forced to live in refugee camps and slums being bombed by Israeli planes.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Novosti Press, *Soviet Jews: our motherland is the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow, 1976).

¹⁵¹ Novosti Press, *Soviet Jews*, p. 5.

Boris Iosifovich Bravstein, a civil engineer with higher education from Kiev, had gone to Israel with his two children, wife and mother. He was disillusioned to discover antagonisms between immigrants from Europe and others from Africa, Asia and the Soviet Union, whom he felt were regarded as ‘second-rate’ and subjected to ‘Zionist and religious dogmatism’.¹⁵² The conference concluded with an assertion by the organisers that there was no social basis for emigration (i.e. unemployment, lack of social services, etc.); that Jews occupied important posts in all spheres of politics, the economy, education and the arts; that with less than one per cent of the population, they were very favourably represented in the professions (e.g. fourteen per cent of all doctors of science, and six per cent in literature); that for 1971-2, 106,000 Jews were at Soviet higher education establishments, a considerably higher percentage than among other Soviet nationalities, and a greater number than in Israel where only 50,400 students attended higher education in the same academic year.¹⁵³ And in an attempt to counter the strongest attractions of the Israelis – a sense of faith and family unity – the organisers insisted that for Soviet Jews, their familial ties remained strongest with their socialist homelands in the Soviet Union.

To the above official Soviet source this writer can add the personal testimony of former (non-Jewish) Soviet citizen, Oksana Pattison, née Oksana Borisovna Onishcheko, a native of Kiev, the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.¹⁵⁴ She applied to emigrate to Ireland after she had married Irishman, Joe Pattison, in Kiev in 1981. Despite initial disapproval of her family and plenty of bureaucratic obstruction, she was cleared to travel to Ireland in 1982. Following her marriage and application to leave, Pattison was expelled from the local branch of Komsomol (the Young Communist League) at a formal assembly of members. There were approximately 150 members present in the hall. She recalls that she ‘did not feel crucified’ with the proceedings and felt that ‘it was harsher’ for those members of the Jewish community in Kiev who were then leaving in some numbers for Israel.¹⁵⁵ ‘I was leaving to be with my husband, they were leaving the Soviet Union to live in another country with a different social and religious outlook’, she said.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁵³ Ibid., *Soviet Jews*, p. 36.

¹⁵⁴ Interviews with Oksana Pattison, Clane, Co. Kildare (26 Jan. 2011 and 16 Feb. 2011)

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

To conclude this account, it can be stated at this stage that the Dublin 35s Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry, and the Irish Soviet Jewry Committee were active in presenting a contrary view of Soviet life than that promoted by the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society. However, written and oral sources indicate that the society did not seek to confront the views of those groups, but rather it concentrated upon its own agenda to develop Irish-Soviet friendship relations.

Growth of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society

As discussed above concerning the Irish government's refusal to enter into a state-to-state cultural agreement with the Soviet Union, one of the benefits for the society was that it could continue to perform the role as the official body – as far as the Soviet state was concerned – for organised cultural contacts between the two countries. This hands-on responsibility was highlighted in September 1977 by the arrival of the first ever Soviet cruise ship to visit Dublin port, the *Estonia*. An onboard photograph of Edwards and Swift with Ambassador Kaplin and the ship's captain alongside a half-column report records that Ireland had been added by Intourist to its list of international destinations ranging from the Baltic and the Mediterranean to Vietnam.¹⁵⁷ The *Estonia's* itinerary of twenty-four days included ports of call in England, France, Denmark and Finland. Its 299 passengers, described by cruise director Gundogdiev as 'workers and collective farmers, doctors and teachers, engineers and representatives of Soviet intellectuals' had each paid approximately £600 for this cruise – one of many organised to mark the 'sixtieth jubilee of the Great October Socialist Revolution.'¹⁵⁸ Two sightseeing tours of Dublin were organised by members of the society for the passengers.

In this period the Soviet Union formally marked its appreciation for the work of the founders of the Irish society by awarding the Order of Peace and Friendship – a prestigious award from the Supreme Soviet - to both John Swift, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday,¹⁵⁹ and Frank Edwards on his seventieth.¹⁶⁰ The discovery of a D.F.A. file on this topic promised to give a meaningful official Irish state reaction. However, it turned out to consist of a single page – a photocopy of an *Irish Press* article of 27

¹⁵⁷ *Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1977.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Irish Times*, 5 Oct. 1976

¹⁶⁰ *Irish Times*, 8 June 1983. Swift's award had been made in 1977.

August 1976 on Swift's award - with the following caustic remark penned by an official: 'as far as I know, the Soviets did not seek our advance approval of the award'.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, Swift and Edwards had been very gratified to have their contribution to Irish-Soviet relations 'graciously acknowledged' by the Irish foreign affairs minister, Garret FitzGerald, on a formal occasion marking the establishment of diplomatic relations back in September 1973.¹⁶²

An annual pattern of activities for the society developed with groups of Soviet visitors being hosted in Dublin and around the country, and Irish visitors travelling to Moscow and diverse locations throughout the republics of the Soviet Union. The activities of the 1979-1980 period, fifteen years after the societies' foundations, reflects an increasing level of sophistication and diversity in the two-way traffic. Ireland's national day, 17 March, was marked in Moscow with a delegation of leading Irish cultural personalities, including artist-painter Thomas Ryan, president of the Royal Hibernian Academy for Arts for 1982-1992; Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, poet, and president of Conradh na Gaeilge; Tomás MacAnna, Abbey Theatre director; and Vincent McLoughlin, professor of veterinary science at T.C.D. The Soviet delegations to Ireland were particularly high-powered: in May 1979 the deputy-chairman of the U.S.S.R. supreme court, Yevgeni A. Smolentsev, arrived in Cork and met the lord mayor, Jim Corr, and Dr Tadgh Carey, president of University College Cork (U.C.C.); and in the Soviet ambassador's residence on Ailesbury Road, the Irish chief justice and members of the supreme court.¹⁶³ Attendance at these diplomatic occasions, and the associated public meetings, tended to be dominated by guests drawn principally from broad left-academic and artistic backgrounds, together with members of the dáil and seanad – indicating that the society had achieved its objective of spreading its appeal beyond political activists. At the same time, however, the Soviet Union privately expressed its appreciation to society activists following a difficult time for Soviet diplomacy in the wake of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan and the subsequent U.S.-led reaction from western countries. One such gesture came in November 1980

¹⁶¹ As cited in Conferring of decorations of honour on Irish citizens by U.S.S.R. (N.A.I., D.F.A., 5/301/7/74/33).

¹⁶² Editorial, *Ireland-U.S.S.R., 21st anniversary*, p. 4, and interview with Seán Edwards of Lucan, son of Frank Edwards (22 Sept. 2010).

¹⁶³ As outlined in 'Secretary's report for general meeting', 25 Feb. 1981, Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society in private possession of Angela McQuillan.

with the hosting at the Soviet embassy on Orwell Road, Dublin, of a reception and film show of that year's summer Moscow Olympic games.

The society's 1983-4 report commenced with a paragraph recording the death during the year of its founding secretary, Frank Edwards, noting that 'our work is built on the foundation he laid'.¹⁶⁴ Evidence for the society's ability to build on Edwards' policies was the inclusion in the report of the involvement of respected Irish political figures in welcoming Soviet visitors to Dublin. In May 1983 a Soviet group was welcomed to Dáil Éireann by T.D.s Niall Andrews (Fianna Fáil),¹⁶⁵ and Michael D. Higgins (Labour). Niall Andrews (1937-2006) was a son of C.S. (Todd) Andrews, a prominent figure in Irish-Soviet trade connections as head of Bord na Móna in the 1930-50s.¹⁶⁶ Deputy Andrews was very supportive in his dealings with the Ireland-U.S.S.R. society, and was on good personal terms with the society's officers, Angela McQuillan and John Swift.¹⁶⁷ Andrews and Higgins had visited the Soviet Union in 1982 as part of the first inter-party group of Irish parliamentarians to travel to meet their counterparts in the Soviet capital, along with Jim Corr, then Fine Gael T.D. for the Cork South Central constituency. Corr had been a trade unionist and secondary school teacher, and was described by journalist Olivia O'Leary as being on the 'social democratic' wing of his party.¹⁶⁸

Deputy Higgins,¹⁶⁹ a member for the Galway West constituency, was in the 1980s a prominent member on the left of his party, with a strong profile as a campaigner on social justice in central and south America – often in opposition to U.S. foreign policy. And it was Deputy Higgins who was to articulate his impressions of the three T.D.s' visit to Moscow and his views on the value of developing friendship with the Soviet Union in his article in the society's twenty-first anniversary publication.¹⁷⁰ (All quotations to the end of this paragraph are taken directly from that article.) Therein he recalled that the highlights for him of the T.D.s' visit were not so much the 'grandeur of Leningrad with its galleries and restored palaces' but the 'language' about the Second World War and the defeat of fascism which invoked in him 'a sense of anger at the

¹⁶⁴ Secretary's report for A.G.M., 6 July 1984, in private possession of Angela McQuillan.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ C. S Andrews, *Man of no property* (Dublin, 2001), p. 145.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Angela McQuillan (7 Oct. 2010).

¹⁶⁸ *Irish Times*, 25 Oct. 1982.

¹⁶⁹ Michael D. Higgins was inaugurated as the ninth president of Ireland in 2011.

¹⁷⁰ Michael D. Higgins, T.D., 'Towards a common humanity' in Kavanagh (ed.), *Ireland-U.S.S.R., 21st anniversary*, p. 25.

exclusion from my early education in history of the contribution of the twenty million Soviet citizens who died while defeating Hitler in the snow'. The article asserted that the visitors asked 'hard questions' (the visit pre-dated the period of *glasnost*) that were replied to with 'candour'; and while 'we did not always agree with the answers...the questions were welcomed, be they about dissent, foreign policy and the economy.' Higgins acknowledged that the basic societal needs of 'all its [Soviet Union's] people in housing, health and education' had been met but wondered whether that equality had been attained 'at a price', and continued: 'If only we could, in a civilised world, try to reconcile the genuine meaning of *critical* freedom and true equality.' However, Deputy Higgins was more forthright about his opposition to the policies then being promoted by the U.S. president, Ronald Reagan (characterising the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire') and predicted that the achievements of the Soviets:

...cannot be defeated by the crude abuse about freedom being curtailed when such freedom in much of capitalist society is the freedom to starve, to be homeless, to be deprived of education.¹⁷¹

Michael D. Higgins had also been forthright about his support some years before when he linked his University College Galway (U.C.G.) colleagues with a group of visiting Soviet academics, artists, farmers, and miners. He had arranged for the then acting college president and archaeologist, Professor Michael Duignan, to host them in the university's staffroom, and stated that such visits continued to 'be treasured' at U.C.G. His account of these visits ties in with the society's annual report for 1982 that recorded the visit to Galway by a Soviet group, led by Yuri Ustimenko – the former Tass journalist who had been accredited to Ireland in the 1960s (see chapter two) – where they met 'Michael and Sabina Higgins'.¹⁷² Furthermore, Higgins' article in the society's anniversary publication paid tribute by revealing his sympathy for all those in the early days of the 'Soviet Friendship Society', who were dismissed from their jobs and endured harassment from the 1930s through to the 1960s. He conceded – in an apparent salute to communists and other left wing activists during that period – 'Theirs was the harder task.' Deputy Higgins's article concluded by stressing the value of ongoing exchanges of parliamentary and technical visits with the Soviet Union and congratulated the society:

¹⁷¹ Higgins, 'Towards a common humanity', p. 25.

¹⁷² 'The Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society secretary's report', 2 May 1982, in possession of Angela McQuillan.

On its twenty-one years of contributing to that universal understanding and common humanity which could release us from being a planet threatened with destruction to being a world community of mutual interdependence, respect and joy...now we are, I hope, opening our minds to what should be our common well-spring of hope for peace and the deflection of spending from armaments to development and famine relief.¹⁷³

The society's 1983-4 report also states that the group of Soviets who had been received in the dail by Deputies Andrews and Higgins proceeded to Cork city where, 'as is now traditional', they were greeted by the lord mayor, John Dennehy.¹⁷⁴ There is further evidence that Cork was especially amenable to Soviet friendship. Councillor John Kelleher of the Labour party wrote to the society to say that it was:

a possibility that City Council here will consider establishing a sister-city relationship with a city in the U.S.S.R. I would be grateful if you could send me more brochures...on Tallinn, in the Republic of Estonia. It is a city with which Cork has certain similarities; being a seaport, about the same size....I need as much information as possible to push the proposal in City Hall.¹⁷⁵

To this pattern of Cork-Soviet friendship can be added the ongoing participation (from 1971) of Russian dance teams in the annual Cork International Choral and Folk Dance Festival. This was confirmed by the secretary of the festival, Vivienne Ryan, in 1980, when the festival organisers defied the U.S.-led international boycott in the wake of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, and confirmed that Russian dancers would again be invited. She said they would certainly be welcome and added 'in the past our organisers had been very grateful for the fact that they had sent dance teams'.¹⁷⁶ However, Cork was not without its objectors to Soviet generosity: a couple of weeks before the Choral and Folk Dance Festival decided to go ahead with their invitation, the president of U.C.C., Dr Tadgh Carey (who had received the deputy-chairman of the U.S.S.R. supreme court, Yevgeni A. Smolentsev back in 1979) and the college's governing body decided not to accept a presentation of eighty books from the chargé d'affaires of the Soviet embassy, Vladimir Khorev.¹⁷⁷ The collection included English language publications on geography, history, sociology and works by Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Despite the decision of his superiors, Senator John A. Murphy, professor of Irish history

¹⁷³ Higgins, 'Towards a common humanity', p. 25.

¹⁷⁴ Secretary's report for A.G.M., 6 July 1984.

¹⁷⁵ John Kelleher to Angela McQuillan, 27 Aug. 1985. Kelleher (b. 1949) has been a city councillor since 1982 and lord mayor of Cork, 2002-3. See Irish Labour Party, 'John Kelleher, Cllr – biography' (<http://www.labour.ie/johnkelleher/biography.html>) (8 Aug. 2011).

¹⁷⁶ *Irish Times*, 25 Feb. 1980.

¹⁷⁷ *Irish Times*, 7 Feb. 1980.

at the college, lamented the refusal as ‘political’ and he personally accepted the collection from the chargé d’affaires. He did so on the basis that the governing body’s decision was a ‘postponement’, and he hoped the college would eventually accept the books from him.¹⁷⁸

In December 1983 a delegation arrived from the Lithuanian Society of Friendship and its members too were received by Deputies Andrews and Higgins, and on this occasion they were joined by Monica Barnes, T.D. (Fíne Gael).¹⁷⁹ Professor Kuzin, the president of the U.S.S.R.-Ireland Society was conferred with an honorary doctorate by the College of Surgeons, and a Soviet Peace Committee visited the Irish C.N.D. A highlight of the cultural exchanges was the attendance by prominent Irish poets, Anthony Cronin,¹⁸⁰ and Paul Durcan, at a congress of the Soviet Writers’ Union.

Paul Durcan was especially taken with his Soviet experience. He published a positive account of the visit, stressing his admiration for the high status and social security afforded to Soviet writers.¹⁸¹ He continued to develop his keen interest in Soviet affairs, and published the following poem:

The kindergarten archipelago

And as wet dusk filters into a remote Russian town
I am aware of being watched as I scurry
Down Marx Prospekt towards my room – watched
By a schoolgirl with a hamster in her hand.
Suddenly as I sway there standing
With an umbrella spilling black ink above my head
I see that what is strange about the Soviet Union
Is that it cherishes all the children of the union equally.
Surely a fellow needs help who does not see that nothing
Is of consequence except the children of the Union.
And so, while Alexander Solzhenitsyn tramps the marches
Of his walled-off home-in-exile in Vermont, U.S.A.,
Under the flying black skies of Ryazan
I am sailing the streets of the Kindergarten Archipelago.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Secretary’s report, 6 July 1984. Barnes (b. 1936) was associated throughout her oireachtas career with women’s rights, justice and equality issues.

¹⁸⁰ Cronin (b. 1928) was no stranger to the Soviet Union. He visited with some other intellectuals at the height of the Cold War period, and upon his return he published a detailed and frank account of the group’s experiences in a series of five articles entitled ‘Behind the curtain’, *Irish Times*, 9-14 Feb. 1955.

¹⁸¹ Paul Durcan, ‘In the heart of the heart of the Soviet Union’, *In Dublin*, 6 May 1983.

¹⁸² Paul Durcan, ‘The kindergarten archipelago’, in *Ireland-U.S.S.R. society 21st anniversary*, p. 30.

It is revealing that Durcan chose to closely echo in line eight of the poem the Irish republican ideal contained in the Proclamation of the 1916 Rising, ‘cherishing all the children of the nation equally’, to comment on his perception of equality in the Soviet Union, in contrast to the status of Irish children. It is also interesting to read that the poem contrasts the lot of Soviet children with the dreary prospects for Soviet dissidents, as exemplified by Solzhenitsyn’s isolation in America.

Finally, the secretary’s report deserves a final focus as it was accompanied by a statement signed by the treasurer Nora Harkin, which reflected the sound financial position of the society:

Financial statement, 1 May 1983 to 30 June 1984.¹⁸³

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENSES</u>	
	£		£
Opening balance	3,804.23	Receptions	374.16
Membership subscriptions		Rooms for meetings	265.00
and		Books: presentation to	
Subscriptions from:		Soviet guests	116.53
Film shows)		Printing and stationery	430.24
Lectures)		Advertising	1,002.74
Donations)	665.77	Postage	468.84
Socials)		Telephone and cables	200.00
		Travelling	20.00
		bank charges	8.75
Lep Travel commission		Sundries	8.50
on tours to Soviet Union		Cash on hand (includes interest	
booked through	1,478.70	of £274 on deposit account	
society and for		up to 1 Nov. 1983)	3,053.94
organising assistance			
in 1983			
	5,948.70		5,948.70

Signed:

Nora Harkin
Treasurer

¹⁸³ ‘Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society financial statement, 1983-4’, in possession of Angela McQuillan.

Not displayed in the statement, however, is the extent to which the business of the society was aided by the Soviet Union. As discussed above, there were two general types of visitors to both countries: firstly, official representatives and/or accredited guests of the Irish and Soviet societies; and secondly, holiday groups organised by the two societies. Expenses for official Irish delegations to the Soviet Union and for Soviet delegations visiting Ireland were borne by Friendship House, Moscow. However, their generosity was not unlimited: members of Irish holiday groups to the Soviet Union paid an amount in line with the going rate for holiday packages (often to the company, LEP Travel, whose accountant, Adrian Tinkler, was a member of the society); and Soviet visitors indicated to Irish society members that they made a significant payment to Soviet travel authorities.¹⁸⁴

The 1986-7 report reflected an important change of the leadership of the society. John Swift became honorary president. Nora Harkin and Angela McQuillan were established as chair and secretary, and Mártain Ó Siadhail, a manager with Gael Linn's Irish language courses, was also prominent – none of whom was a member of the C.P.I. Seán Edwards remained influential, but Harkin and McQuillan became the principal officers. McQuillan's proficiency in Russian meant that she was an invaluable asset for communications with the embassy (she helped successive ambassadors 'polish' their speeches for public occasions), with Friendship House, and the stream of Soviet visitors. The Soviet authorities showed their support for these changes, in a practical way, with the opening of the society's Dublin office in Dame House, 24-6, Dame Street in 1987:

¹⁸⁴ 'Secretary's report for general meeting', 19 June 1987.

they paid for the full costs of the rent and administration.¹⁸⁵ However, other activities in these offices were self-financing, especially Russian language classes. As demand for these grew, McQuillan shared the burden with a native Russian speaker, Lidia Clancy, nee Samsonova, a Soviet citizen from the village of Kelteyi, near the city of Sverdlovsk in the autonomous republic of Bashkiria. Clancy had settled in Ireland after she met her Irish husband-to-be, Eamon Clancy from County Donegal, in Cuba in 1979.¹⁸⁶ The courses were funded from fees paid by attendees. McQuillan also participated in a number of courses in Moscow State University in the teaching of Russian.

More fundamentally, the international political climate – following the instalment of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985 – was undergoing rapid change. The initial period of the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, with its promise of re-energising the Soviet economy and opening up its society, had the effect of attracting more interest and support for the society in Ireland. A sense of the hopes and fears for these developments in the Soviet Union was encapsulated in this extract by the prominent British Labour M.P., Tony Benn in his introduction to Andrei Gromyko's memoir (1989):

But it may well be that *perestroika*, far from being an epitaph on the gravestone of Marxism, will turn out to be the beginning of a process of renewal which will refresh socialism with democracy, and hence offer a far stronger challenge to all the older social systems.¹⁸⁷

In this context the secretary's report could record that membership levels were 'continuing to improve' and new branches at Limerick and Cork had been established.¹⁸⁸ The makeup of visiting Soviet delegations was now expanded to include members of church groups. This development was added to by a meeting, at the request of the Soviet embassy, between a deputation from the Soviet Peace Committee that included Archbishop Makari from the Ukraine, with friends of the society from 'the political and ecclesiastical fields'.¹⁸⁹ Fr Tom Stack, then of the Catholic Press and Information Office in Dublin and regarded as a 'progressive' priest by society members,

¹⁸⁵ Angela McQuillan interview, 7 Oct. 2010.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Lidia Clancy of Lucan (23 Feb. 2011).

¹⁸⁷ Tony Benn in introduction of Andrei Gromyko, *Memories: from Stalin to Gorbachev* (London, 1989), p. xv.

¹⁸⁸ Secretary's report, annual general meeting, 19 June 1987.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*

attended such occasions.¹⁹⁰ Whether progressive or not, Fr Stack's presence in the Soviet embassy was a telling indication of the extent that official Catholic attitudes had softened in the city from 1945 – when Archbishop McQuaid's influence could elicit written reports from his clergy, and garda assistance to curtail Irish-Soviet friendship meetings.

A symposium on Soviet education was hosted by the society in association with Trinity Education Society in January, 1987. The occasion attracted an attendance of over 100 people and extensive coverage from R.T.É's *Education forum* programme. Speakers included Dr Dan Murphy and Sanya Polonianskaya of T.C.D., and Gary Bannister of the People's College (he had graduated from T.C.D.'s Russian department in 1975 and spent six years in Moscow, where he taught Irish at Moscow State University),¹⁹¹ and Tatyana Yeleseva of the Soviet embassy. However, it was the participation in the symposium of Dr Dennis P. Hainsworth – who had been awarded a Masters in Education for research on philosophical approaches to curriculum development by St. Patrick's College, Maynooth in 1982 – that has served to provide this study with evidence of academic research on Soviet education being conducted in Ireland in the 1980s.

Originally from Chicago, Dr Hainsworth received his doctorate from the Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies in Rome, his dissertation being on the principles of spiritual guidance of the Russian monk and *staretz* (learned church elder), Paisy Velichkovsky (1722-94).¹⁹² Hainsworth lived in the Russian college in Rome, where he was influenced by Gustav Wetter, Jesuit priest and professor of Russian and Marxist philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University. After Dr Hainsworth met and married an Irish woman, a school principal, they moved to Ireland in 1977. Dr Hainsworth completed a Higher Diploma and Master of Education at St. Patrick's College, and taught English, religious studies and French at Coolmine Community School until his retirement. He took part in the school's adult education programme, teaching Russian, German, Latin, Italian and philosophy. He also participated in

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Angela McQuillan, 7 Oct. 2010. Fr. Stack became Monsignor and parish priest of Milltown, Dublin and marked the golden jubilee of his ordination in 2010. See Society of Jesus Online Gateway, 'Msgr. Tom Stack marks golden jubilee' (<http://www.amdg.ie/2008/06/17/msgr-tom-stack-marks-golden-jubilee/>) (12 Oct. 2010).

¹⁹¹ See Síabhra Durcan, 'Account of an interview with Winifred Greenwood (nee MacBride), Russian Department, T.C.D. (1962-88)', 29 Nov. 1994, available in the departmental files of Dr Sarah Smyth, T.C.D.

¹⁹² Interview with Dr Dennis P. Hainsworth, Kilcloon, Co. Meath (1 Feb. 2012).

Maynooth College's outreach adult education programme in Naas, where he lectured on western philosophy.

Dr Hainsworth made three visits to the Soviet Union, two in the Brezhnev period and the third in the Gorbachev era when he and his wife conducted a party of second-level schoolgirls from the Marymount International School of Rome to Moscow and Leningrad. While Dr Hainsworth's interest in Soviet affairs in general commenced during his time in Rome, it was in Ireland that he began to cultivate a particular interest in Soviet education viewed from a philosophical perspective. He sourced Soviet pedagogical publications at the Soviet-Italian bookstore in Rome and was on the mailing list of the monthly educational review *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*. He joined the Irish Slavists' Association, where he made the acquaintance of Drs Ronald Hill and Patrick O'Meara of T.C.D., and recalls delivering a paper at the association's conference in Slane, County Meath. Prior to the symposium on Soviet education, his article, 'Educating Soviet man', had already been published in a leading educational journal, and he went on to author three further articles on theoretical and methodological aspects of Soviet education in Irish academic journals over the next three years.¹⁹³ He participated in two RTÉ radio programmes on the topic of Soviet education, one being a panel discussion. For the other, he was interviewed in his home. He felt that in Ireland at that time little was generally known about Soviet education, but that people, when informed, seemed to respond with interest. Dr Hainsworth still holds the view that:

The greatest achievements of the Soviet Union, lay in the field of education: to mention but a few, the speedy elimination of widespread illiteracy and semi-literacy even before the commencement of the Second World War; the mushrooming of educational institutions and the implementation of ambitious plans for curriculum development at the primary, secondary and university levels (temporarily crippled by the Nazi invasion); the provision for on-going educational opportunities within the workplace; the creation of a pervasive readership culture and the outstanding productivity of the Soviet press; and the translation into written form of the many merely oral languages and literatures spread throughout the vast expanse of the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ See Dennis P. Hainsworth, 'Educating Soviet man' in *Irish Educational Studies*, vi, no. 2 (1986-7), pp 161-75; 'Soviet pedagogical theory and methodology: 1917-1980' in *Irish Educational Studies*, vii, no. 2 (1988), pp 66-84; 'Historical perspectives on aesthetic educational theory in the U.S.S.R.' in *Irish Slavonic Studies*, no. 10, 1989 (Dublin, 1991), pp 73-88; and 'Theory of aesthetic education in the U.S.S.R.' in *Educational Studies*, xiii, [no. not stated] (1989), pp 129-45.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Dr Dennis P. Hainsworth, Kilcloon, Co. Meath (1 Feb. 2012).

To return to the work of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, a symbolic and topical event was recorded for April 1987, entitled 'The Soviet Union today is an open-air debating society' delivered by Dr. Declan Kiberd,¹⁹⁵ following his visit there. The event took place in Buswell's Hotel, Dublin and was attended by an audience anxious to receive a first-hand account of the unfolding events. On foot of all this interest, the society was in a position to advertise 'memorable holidays in the Soviet Union' with a choice of tours in June, July and August.¹⁹⁶

The society rounded off 1987, its twenty-first anniversary, by publishing a commemorative booklet, *Ireland-U.S.S.R. society 21st anniversary*. In addition to items already cited, the booklet included short but reflective pieces by Reverend S.G. Poyntz, Church of Ireland bishop of Connor, on an organised visit of representatives of Irish churches in 1987; poet Theo Dorgan on his nine days in Moscow; Lewis Rhatigan, managing director of Bord na Móna, on his close ties with the Russian peat industry; Noel Browne, former minister for health, and his wife Phyllis, on their participation in a 'Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War' conference in Moscow. Further, there were contributions by Lord Killanin, former president of the International Olympic Committee, on the 1980 Moscow Games; Garret FitzGerald, on his role in establishing diplomatic relations as minister for foreign affairs in 1973; Seán MacBride, Nobel and Lenin peace laureate, who praised Gorbachev for his decisive action on the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986; Robert Ballagh, painter, who wrote of his award-winning exhibition in Moscow at an international peace poster event; and the Irish and Soviet ambassadors, Tadhg O'Sullivan and Gennadi Uranov who, in turn, contributed diplomatic accounts of political and economic progress in the Soviet Union and made predictions for growing warmth and respect between the two countries.¹⁹⁷

The last annual report of the society, covering the period July 1990 to August 1991,¹⁹⁸ coincided with a critical phase in the lead up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The period included the secession of many republics from the Union, the brief coup leading to the house arrest of President Gorbachev, the subsequent rise to

¹⁹⁵ Declan Kiberd, was professor of Anglo-Irish literature at U.C.D., until his appointment as the Donald and Marilyn Keough professor of Irish Studies and professor of English at the University of Notre Dame in Sept. 2011.

¹⁹⁶ Display Ad 96, *Irish Times*, 8 May 1987.

¹⁹⁷ Tadhg O'Sullivan and Gennadi Uranov, 'A future of friendship and peace' and 'Impressive change in the Soviet Union', in *Ireland-U.S.S.R. society 21st anniversary*, pp 29, 27.

¹⁹⁸ Secretary's report, July 1990-August 1991, for general meeting Sept. 1991, in private possession of Angela McQuillan. This section is informed by this report.

prominence of Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, and an increase in economic hardship for many Soviet citizens. Yet, the Irish society's report began in a business-as-usual fashion. The August 1990 garden party was attended by more than 130 members and friends, plus Ambassador Uranov with his family and many of the embassy staff. In October a group of Soviet professionals arrived to meet their Irish counterparts, and a Red Army ensemble gave a performance to over 100 people in the Arts Club in Dublin. Afterwards the ensemble was entertained by members of the garda band in the Harrington Street Garda Recreation Club, Dublin – surely a sign that fraternisation with Soviet authorities, even with the Red Army, was now entirely respectable.¹⁹⁹ In November, the U.S.S.R.-Ireland society hosted an Irish parliamentary delegation in Moscow and Kiev, and in December a young baritone from the Tartar Soviet Republic, Eduard Treskin, gave a cameo concert in the National Concert Hall, Dublin.

But society proceedings in early 1991 took on a new feature: benefit concerts for the society's medical aid for children's hospitals in Moscow and Kiev fund were held in the Spa Hotel, Lucan and the Harcourt Hotel, Dublin. These events were in response to an approach made to the society by a doctor in County Cork, who had become aware of the collapse in the availability of drugs and other essential items within the Russian hospital system.²⁰⁰ The society agreed to support his initiative by raising finance and providing advice and contacts. Angela McQuillan also travelled with the doctor to Moscow and Kiev to help him negotiate a myriad of bureaucratic procedures to deliver the aid.

On Saint Patrick's Day 1991 Moscow television showed a documentary film about the Aran Islands, which had been made by Kira Annenkova with the help of society members. The documentary caught the *glasnost* spirit, for following the documentary the society received many letters from viewers across the Soviet Union seeking more information about Ireland.

In June the society presented Ambassador Uranov with a copy of the *Book of Kells* to mark the end of his four-year tenure in Ireland and at the August 1991 garden party it welcomed the new, and final, Soviet ambassador to Ireland, Guermann

¹⁹⁹ Angela McQuillan interview, 7 Oct. 2010. McQuillan recalled the garda band leaders were also motivated by the prospects of receiving a reciprocal invitation to visit the Soviet Union.

²⁰⁰ Angela McQuillan interview (7 Oct. 2010).

Gventzadze. The secretary's report contains the following remark, perhaps conscious that the days of the Soviet Union were now numbered:

We were delighted to meet the new ambassador and his wife, Tanya, who attended and charmed everybody. If his term in Ireland is to be of short duration, at least he will have a pleasant memory of a lovely afternoon with friends on an August Saturday.²⁰¹

The latest course of events in the Soviet Union had a demoralising effect on the Irish membership. The secretary found it necessary to include in a circular letter to members concerning the society's 'coming events', a note to advise members who had not paid their £10 subscription for the last two years that they would no longer receive any notices.²⁰² Attendances at meetings began to drop off, notably by the more 'political' members.²⁰³

As the final acts were played out in the Soviet Union, the Irish society – urged on by Nora Harkin and Angela McQuillan – carried on with its activities. In October 1991 it was involved with the 'Kremlin Gold Exhibition' at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham and committee member Dr Patrick O'Meara, head of the Russian Department at T.C.D., gave a talk to members on the exhibits. The twice-weekly Russian classes for beginners and elementary students were again advertised, and delegates to a women's conference in Dagestan were urged to bring toys, clothing and medicines with them for local distribution.²⁰⁴

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 led to a similar fate for the society in the summer of 1992 at a meeting described by the chairman, Nora Harkin, as potentially 'difficult and painful'. Yet she said it proved to have been 'one of the most adult gatherings ever'.²⁰⁵ Two general positions were debated by members. On the one hand, communists and others were reluctant to carry on with promoting relations or friendship with Yeltsin's post-communist Russia or with similar governments in the other independent states of the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, with Seán Edwards giving the lead, those members were anxious for the society to look to develop solidarity links with Cuba, whose leadership under Fidel Castro had been highly critical of the direction of Gorbachev's policies for some years. On the other side, Harkin,

²⁰¹ 'Report for annual general meeting', Sept. 1991.

²⁰² McQuillan circular to members, 23 Sept. 1991.

²⁰³ Angela McQuillan interview (7 Oct. 2010).

²⁰⁴ Angela McQuillan circular to members, 23 Sept. 1991.

²⁰⁵ Lorna Siggins, 'An Irishwoman's diary', *Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1992.

McQuillan and others expressed a determination not to give up on a ‘heritage of understanding’ and the numerous contacts made throughout the states of the former Soviet Union during the society’s twenty-six years of existence. Describing herself as being beyond anger and disappointment, Harkin articulated the case for carrying on the work and adapting to the new situation:

A lot of dross will be wiped away and out of a bad winter will come a better spring...I have great faith in the future of people who survived Stalin, survived the Tsars. Seventy years of education, of culture...that just cannot turn to dust.²⁰⁶

After a sharp debate a compromise was reached. It was agreed to reform the society as the Irish International Friendship Society, with members committing themselves to carry on for another year.²⁰⁷

Despite the willingness to compromise, in practice this arrangement failed to materialise. Seán Edwards and his comrades devoted their efforts to developing a Cuba solidarity movement and Harkin and McQuillan continued in their efforts to maintain contacts in the former Soviet Union by forming the Ireland-Russia Society. However, Harkin and McQuillan soon discovered that they were operating in a radically altered environment. Funding for the Dublin office from Moscow ceased, and the Russian embassy distanced itself from the society. It soon became clear that the ambassador and his staff associated the society with the old regime and no more invitations to functions or requests to host Russian visitors were received. Furthermore, when members of the Ireland-Russia Society travelled to Russia and other republics they encountered new attitudes and even hostility. McQuillan recalled from her trip to Moscow in 1993 to renew acquaintances that at her hotel she was greeted by a queue of old contacts – each of whom had come as prospective agents with proposals to develop business opportunities for musical promotions in Ireland. Hostility took the form of rebuffs from contacts in the Baltic countries, some of whom now refused to speak Russian, imbued with a sense of nationalism by the process of withdrawal from the Soviet Union. While the new society’s members no longer enjoyed the sense of excitement and exploration on offer in the Soviet years, they did soldier on for a time. In June 1994 they organised an illustrated lecture, *Pictures from an exhibition – the Soviet experience*, which was

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ This chapter has been informed by An Irishwoman’s Diary, *Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1992, and Angela McQuillan interview (7 Oct. 2010).

presented by Tom Ryan, R.H.A. in the United Arts Club, Dublin.²⁰⁸ But in 1995 Angela McQuillan's husband, Jack, became seriously ill. She, too, became ill at this time with tuberculosis (which she suspects she picked up on her travels in Russia), and while her condition was successfully treated in Bray, she could no longer devote time to the society. It then ceased to function.

As for the U.S.S.R. - Ireland society, in line with all the other societies operating under the aegis of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendly and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, it was disbanded following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, it was quickly replaced by the 'Irish Society in Moscow', launched in June 1992 at an inaugural meeting in what had been Friendship House, now reverting to its pre-1917 name – Morozov House. In line with the Russian proverb, 'new times, new songs', the society set out to 'foster cultural, intellectual and business relations with Ireland'.²⁰⁹ Present at the meeting were the last two former Soviet ambassadors to Dublin, Gennadi Uranov, and Guermann Gventzadze. Professor Kuzin, the long-time president of the U.S.S.R.-Ireland society was there too, and he was elected president of the new society. But reflective of the changed times and indications for the future was the presence of leading Muscovite businessmen, including Professor Svyatoslav Nikolaevich Fyodorov, a famous eye micro surgeon who had led the Soviet Union's internationally- acclaimed programme of laser surgery. Fyodorov had now become an hotelier, and one of Russia's first post-communism multi-millionaires.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ *Irish Times*, 2 June 1994.

²⁰⁹ *Irish Times*, 13 June 1992.

²¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 13 June 1992.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ambassador Brennan's island of Ireland political reports from Moscow, to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 1974-80

Introduction

This chapter returns to the mainstream of official Irish-Soviet diplomatic relations. The main focus here is on a series of files from the Department of Foreign Affairs (D.F.A.), which in accordance with the provisions of the National Archives Act, 1986, were recently made available under the thirty-year rule. Nearly all of Ambassador Brennan's reports (519 out of 556) for his seven-year tenure in Moscow are contained in these files, and this study is among the first to draw on these documents. Known as 'P.R.s' in the parlance of Irish diplomacy, it immediately became evident that their content represents a key resource in this historical enquiry into Irish-Soviet relations. The reports ranged over the full scope of Soviet domestic matters and international political issues that concerned the U.S.S.R., which the ambassador judged would be of interest to the Department of Foreign Affairs at Iveagh House, Dublin to inform the Irish government in the formulation of its policies on the Soviet Union. To facilitate an overview of the P.R.s, each file and P.R. has been examined by this author, and seven year-by-year spreadsheets have been assembled. The spreadsheets comprise key details of each report, principally their subject titles. Also, a summary analysis, under selected geographical/political/ideological headings has been included. These compilations and analyses are appended to the thesis as Appendix 1, 'Ambassador Brennan's political reports (P.R.s) from Moscow to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 1974-80'.

It is beyond the remit of this present study to discuss the greater number of Dr Brennan's 519 available P.R.s. Rather the chapter will concentrate on those P.R.s that lie closest to the heart of Irish-Soviet relations – to what will be termed the 'island of Ireland' P.R.s. They have been chosen to form platforms or hooks upon which key political elements and issues of Irish-Soviet relations of the 1970s can be examined in some depth. However, before it proceeds to do so, some more general information of the purpose, content and distribution of Ambassador Brennan's P.R.s must be set out.

As noted in chapter two, Barry Brennan recalled from his childhood in the Irish embassy in Moscow that his father, Ambassador Edward Brennan, spent a great deal of time reading Soviet newspapers and periodicals. Far from being a leisure pursuit, this exercise was in fact a central part of his ambassadorial duties. Its principal purpose was to research, analyse, compile and dispatch on a regular basis to the D.F.A. political reports on a wide range of domestic and international matters of topical concern to Soviet society and its institutions of state and party. Ambassador Brennan described the essence of this task: ‘its role was mainly monitoring Soviet domestic and foreign politics. This was done mostly through the typical Kremlinological method (as I had good Russian) by my reading the Soviet press.’¹

For a broader understanding of the role of P.R.s in diplomacy, a recent paper by Ambassador Victor Camilleri of Malta (2011) on diplomatic reporting offers insights for this chapter. Camilleri’s paper asserts that a diplomat’s report is to ‘deal with facts and events, to be objective in recounting these facts and events, and to analyse and interpret their cause and effect.’² Drawing links between the functions of journalists and academics, and diplomats, Camilleri continues:

In this sense the reports that diplomats produce have a lot in common with reports produced by journalists and by academics. The challenge for the diplomat is to preserve a space where the diplomatic report can be seen as adding special depth and foresight to the journalistic narrative, while bringing relevance and immediacy to the academic analysis.³

Also, the following observation from Noel Dorr, who had been a senior official in the department during Ambassador Brennan’s time in Moscow, is instructive in its suggestion that political reports were an informational and therefore a positive element in Irish-Soviet affairs. Speaking about meetings that took place between him and Ambassador Kaplin in Dublin, Dorr informed: ‘[it is to be] expected that Kaplin would have sent home a report of the meeting, such reports would have oiled the wheels of diplomacy’.⁴

¹ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

² Victor Camilleri, *Diplomatic reporting in the internet era* (2011), available at E-Diplomacy Library (<http://www.diplomacy.edu/resources/general/diplomatic-reporting-internet-era>) (3 Sept. 2013). Camilleri was the permanent representative of Malta to the U.N. in Geneva in 2011.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013).

Chief among Ambassador Brennan's sources in Moscow were: *Pravda* (Truth), the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.) that was published in the morning, and *Izvestia* (News), the official voice of the Soviet government that was published in the evening - together they commanded a combined daily readership of twenty million;⁵ TASS and Novosti Press agencies, which coordinated and published national and international newspapers of the Soviet Union; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, newspaper of the *Komsomol*, the youth wing of the C.P.S.U.; *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*), the Soviet military newspaper; and *Sovetskaya Kultura*, the biweekly newspaper of the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R., aimed at members of the intelligentsia.

Periodicals also formed part of the ambassador's reading diet, including: *Za Rubezhom* (*Life Abroad*), a review of the foreign press; *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the literary newspaper founded by Alexander Pushkin in 1830 and continued as the influential organ of the Union of Soviet Writers; *Ogonyok* (*Little Flame*), a colourful and illustrated magazine; *Krokodil*, a weekly satirical magazine that lampooned Soviet society's inefficiencies and bureaucracy, and mocked topical aspects of life in capitalist countries (including Northern Ireland);⁶ *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, the Prague-based theoretical and ideological journal of the world communist movement (published in English as the *World Marxist Review*), which was published in thirty languages and circulated in 145 countries;⁷ *Vosprosy Istorii* (*Issues of History*), an academic history journal from the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.; *Kommunist*, the theoretical and political journal of the central committee (C.C.) of the C.P.S.U.; *Trud* (*Labour*), the paper of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions; and *New Times*, another influential international affairs journal. To these sources can be added discussions with a cross-section of Soviet officials that he visited by appointment for discussions and interviews (in particular, with Dr G. Arbatov, of ISKRAN, the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies),⁸ diplomatic and ambassadorial colleagues (ranging from E.E.C. and western diplomats to an unnamed 'East European

⁵ Political report from Moscow, [hereinafter P.R.] 67/75, 'Publicising the final act of Helsinki', 20 Nov. 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).

⁶ P.R. 58/75, 'The blood and tears of Ulster in *Krokodil*', 23 Oct. 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).

⁷ P.R. 28/76, 'I.R.A. condemned for West Ham explosion', 22 Mar. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238).

⁸ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

ambassador'),⁹ and media operatives (including a B.B.C. correspondent who was expelled because of his contacts with Soviet dissidents),¹⁰ – all of whom were in a position to contribute insights to Ambassador Brennan's store of intelligence on the Soviet system. Little wonder, then, that Noel Dorr could inform this writer that Dr Brennan had been esteemed by his peers in headquarters as 'the theologian of the Soviet system'.¹¹

It took some time for the format of transmission of the P.R.s from Moscow to Dublin, and their subsequent distribution within the department, to be finalised. The P.R.s for 1974, the first year of Dr Brennan's ambassadorship, were not typed in the Moscow embassy, but rather committed to cassette tapes. It appears that this method was found necessary due to the unsuitability of the secretarial services provided by the U.P.D.K, both for lack of appropriate secretarial services and security of confidentiality. The P.R.s were dispatched to Dublin by Dr Brennan 'regularly by mail delivered personally by a member of the diplomatic staff to the purser of a western airline at the airport'.¹² In the department they were typed on A4 sheets and a file copy was returned to Moscow. However, in subsequent years, typed reports on official 'Embassy of Ireland, Moscow' headed stationery were sent to Dublin, complete with Ambassador Brennan's signature (or, in his absence, with that of the first secretary). The numbering system employed for the P.R.s was a simple sequential one – his first and second reports for 1974 were numbered P.R.s 1/74 and 2/74, and so forth for each report and each year thereafter.

The value of the reports to the foreign affairs hierarchy was quickly recognised. Dr Brennan was informed: 'the P.R.s from your area are, as you will appreciate, of very great interest' and he was instructed to mark all tapes 'confidential to the secretary'.¹³ Even so, according to notes affixed to the department's file containing the first year's batch, it was decided (following consultations between senior officials), that the P.R.s would be distributed in 'the usual way'.¹⁴ This involved circulation by the parliamentary private secretary (P.P.S.) to the minister for foreign affairs to his/her minister; the

⁹ P.R. 57/76, 'Conference of European C.P.s: unresolved problems', 7 June 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238).

¹⁰ P.R. 26/80, 'B.B.C. Moscow correspondent edged out', 20 May 1980 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2011/39/1072).

¹¹ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013).

¹² Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

¹³ Dáithí Ó Ceallaigh, D.F.A., to J. Sharkey, Moscow, 28 Oct. 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

¹⁴ Handwritten notes by Ted S., 27 Sept. 1974, on inside cover of file 'Political reports from Moscow, 1974' (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

secretary and assistant secretary of the department; the political division; and to all Irish diplomatic missions worldwide. This ensured that all ambassadors and senior staff were kept abreast of Dr Brennan's observations from Moscow. No doubt his reports commanded particular relevance for the Irish ambassador to Japan, whose brief extended to keeping a watchful eye on Chinese affairs, and who was also sending home similarly-themed reports to Dr Brennan on Sino-Soviet relations.¹⁵ At the same time, it appears that Ambassador Brennan retained the right to restrict the circulation of certain reports. For example, he marked P.R. 112/77 on the subject matter of the recently-established West German-owned ORTAG missile firing range in Zaire, 'not for general circulation.'¹⁶ He reported that the Soviets were suspicious that this was a surreptitious attempt by West Germany to develop space exploration and military capabilities, and he deemed that this issue required extra security considerations.

A standout feature of the summary report attached to Appendix 1 is the relative paucity of P.R.s that directly related to the island of Ireland – only twenty-four out of the 519 available. Of these only eight related to the state that he represented, the Republic, with the significantly larger number of sixteen for Northern Ireland reflecting the impact of the Troubles on Irish-Soviet relations. Indeed, such is the cross-border nature of the subject matters of the Irish P.R.s that it is difficult to categorise many of them to only one jurisdiction. Three factors must be borne in mind here in accounting for the low Irish number. First, this was not unique to the Moscow embassy: an examination of a batch of 135 P.R.s from Tokyo for the years 1975-7 revealed that not one P.R. related to Irish-Japanese affairs, while – much in tune with Dr. Brennan's brief – thirteen had Soviet-related themes.¹⁷ Second, a separate correspondence was conducted between Ambassador Brennan and Dublin regarding the day-to-day Irish-Soviet ambassadorial business. Finally, as a country with a small population located on the edge of western Europe, Ireland commanded but sporadic interest in Soviet media and diplomatic circles. Despite their lack of quantity, such is the significance and revelatory nature of the themes and content of the Irish P.R.s that they provide a succession of readymade stepping stones to follow Soviet interest and interaction with the island of Ireland, and by turn, diplomatic Ireland's interest in the Soviet Union. The

¹⁵ See political reports from Tokyo, P.R. 51/76, 'Chinese-Soviet relations', 9 Dec. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/220).

¹⁶ P.R. 112/77, 'ORTAG missile range: German briefing', 26 Oct. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/120/1030).

¹⁷ 'P.R.s from Tokyo, Oct. 1975-Mar. 1977' (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/220).

twenty-four Irish P.R.s fall into two main fields: Northern Ireland and Eurocommunism. The issue of Northern Ireland is the more expansive of the two, and is underpinned by twenty-two P.R.s, comprising: two P.R.s that related to implications for Northern Ireland at the talks at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (C.S.C.E.) in Helsinki; sixteen P.R.s relating to Soviet press coverage of the conflict in the North; and four P.R.s relating to Soviet press coverage of the Ireland versus the United Kingdom case on the ill-treatment of prisoners in Northern Ireland that was pursued during the years 1977-8 at the European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg. The issue of Eurocommunism is underpinned by two P.R.s that related to Michael O’Riordan, the general secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.). Those reports were sent by Ambassador Brennan to inform Dublin of the content of O’Riordan’s address to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s (C.P.S.U.) twenty-fifth congress in 1976, and of the ‘lauding’ of O’Riordan in the pages of *Pravda* in 1977. The issue of Eurocommunism has been selected for consideration, not just because it highlighted the role of the C.P.I. in Irish-Soviet political affairs, but also because it raised Irish interest in significant European and international political matters of the 1970s, including the strength of the communist parties in western Europe, and the rift between the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union.

To support the discussion of these two issues, relevant academic works have been consulted. These include: Patrick Keatinge, on the C.S.C.E.;¹⁸ Paul Arthur for an introductory paragraph on the political situation in Northern Ireland in the 1970s;¹⁹ Dr Garret FitzGerald on his concerns for Soviet press coverage of the Provisional I.R.A.;²⁰ Hanley and Millar, on the Official I.R.A.’s involvement with the Soviet Union;²¹ Professor Stephen White on Soviet historians’ interest and work on Irish history;²² and Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s poems inspired by his experiences in July 1972 while visiting Belfast.²³ The Eurocommunism issue includes a brief biographical sketch of Michael

¹⁸ Keatinge, *A place among the nations*).

¹⁹ Paul Arthur, ‘Northern Ireland, 1972-84’, in J.R. Hill (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vii: *Ireland, 1921-84* (Oxford, 2003), pp 396-425.

²⁰ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, and FitzGerald in *Irish Times*, 24 Aug. 1970.

²¹ Hanley and Millar, *The lost revolution*.

²² Stephen White, ‘Soviet writings on Irish history, 1917-80: a bibliography’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii, no. 90 (Nov. 1982), pp 176-86.

²³ Yevgeny Yevtushenko, ‘Pushkin in Belfast’ and ‘Safari in Ulster’ in Frank Ormsby (ed.) *A rage for order: poetry of the Northern Ireland troubles* (Belfast, 1992).

O’Riordan, drawn from a recent publication by this present writer,²⁴ and the work of U.S. Professor Joan Barth Urban, a specialist on the Italian Communist Party – the largest non-ruling communist party in Europe in the 1970s, with nearly two million members and over thirty per cent of votes to the Italian national parliament – is utilised for insights into Eurocommunism, and the Sino-Soviet rift.²⁵

The issue of Northern Ireland

It was against the troubled background in Northern Ireland that Ambassador Brennan represented the interests of the Republic of Ireland in Moscow. His tenure in the Soviet capital, from 1974 to 1980, coincided for the greater part (March 1974 to May 1979) with the governorship in Belfast of two successive British Labour party secretaries of state for Northern Ireland, Merlyn Rees and Roy Mason.²⁶ When Rees took up office he was soon faced with the challenge of the Ulster Workers’ Council (U.W.C.) to the newly-formed Northern Ireland power-sharing executive and council of Ireland, established under the Sunningdale agreement. Faced by widespread U.W.C. intimidation and a shutdown of power supplies, together with a wholly inadequate response from the security authorities, Rees and Prime Minister Wilson failed to stand four-square behind the power-sharing structures. In the aftermath of the collapse of the executive and the growth in the self-esteem of the various loyalist organisations, Rees’s plans were increasingly centred upon security measures, despite his success in facilitating an uneasy Provisional I.R.A. ceasefire for much of 1975. The Provisional I.R.A. had come into existence in 1969 as a result of a split within the republican movement, owing to political divisions in the movement’s ranks and the rise of violence in the North. Historian Joost Augusteyn sums up this development:

At the [I.R.A.’s] army convention of 1969 the militarists broke away over the issue of abstention,²⁷ and formed the Provisional I.R.A., which became the

²⁴ Michael Quinn, *The making of an Irish communist leader: the life and times of Michael O’Riordan, 1938-47* (Dublin, 2011).

²⁵ Joan Barth Urban, *Moscow and the Italian communist party: from Togliatti to Berlinguer* (London, 1986).

²⁶ This paragraph has been informed by Arthur, ‘Northern Ireland, 1972-84’, pp 396-425.

²⁷ Abstentionism was the traditional policy whereby successful republican candidates had refused to take up seats at Dublin, Stormont and Westminster parliaments – a policy which left-leaning members wished to abandon for the future.

dominant grouping, while the remainder became known as the Officials. The Official I.R.A. suspended military operations in 1972.²⁸

Rees's security plans included the cancellation of special-category status for political prisoners, which led to the 'blanket' protests in the Maze prison and the commencement of the hunger strikes in 1980. When Rees was succeeded in office in September 1976 by Roy Mason, even more emphasis was placed upon security initiatives. Apart from a perfunctory and fruitless round of talks with local politicians, Mason's intentions were well signalled when he publically boasted his intent to squeeze the Provisional I.R.A. 'like a tube of toothpaste'.²⁹ Undercover operations were intensified, and the Special Air Services (S.A.S.) unit was deployed. In response the Provisional I.R.A. reformed its porous neighbourhood structures into a network of self-contained active service units. One ray of hope was provided by the emergence of the 'Peace people' in late 1976, which sprang from cross-community revulsion of the killing of three Belfast children caught up in an engagement between the British army and the Provisional I.R.A. Led by Mairead Corrigan, Betty Williams and Kieran McKeown, the movement condemned violence from all quarters, attracted support right across the North, and commanded the attention of the international media. While deaths as a result of the conflict did decrease from a high in 1976 of 295 to a low in 1978 of 82,³⁰ this was a result of more careful management by the protagonists, rather than any serious political attempt to resolve the underlying causes.

Mason did attempt to boost the local economy, but despite securing extra funds from the British treasury and attracting significant inward American investments, when he departed from office he left behind a province with higher unemployment rates than before his arrival. Further, because the Labour government was dependent upon unionist support in the House of Commons, the prime minister, James Callaghan, decided to increase the number of Northern Ireland M.P.s by five – a concession viewed by many as an act of appeasement to the unionists, and much resented by the S.D.L.P. and the Irish government. In short, the period was characterised by a dearth of worthwhile political initiatives and a corresponding increase in repressive security

²⁸ Joost Augusteijn, 'Irish Republican Army' in S.J. Connolly (ed.) *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2004), pp 282-4.

²⁹ Mark Urban, *Big boys' rule: the secret struggle against the I.R.A.* (London, 1992) p. 11, as cited in Arthur, 'Northern Ireland, 1972-84', p. 413.

³⁰ See *The Guardian*, 'Deaths from the conflict in Ireland by year and status' available at (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2010/jun/10/deaths-in-northern-ireland-conflict-data>) (23 Sept. 2012).

measures; divisions within, and a growth of the personalisation of political unionism (chiefly, Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party – the D.U.P.); marginalisation of moderate unionist, nationalist and democratic forces, including the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA); consolidation in the offensive capabilities of loyalist and republican paramilitaries; deep alienation between Protestant and Catholic communities; and growing levels of unemployment and emigration, especially in loyalist and republican strongholds.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (C.S.C.E.) has already been briefly discussed in chapter two, in the context of Dr FitzGerald's early realisation in 1973 of the pressing need to establish diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. Accordingly, it is not surprising to discover that two of Ambassador Brennan's opening reports to Dublin, shortly after his arrival into Moscow in the summer of 1974, related to this subject. His first report was a Europe-wide assessment of Soviet sentiment regarding progress on the talks at Helsinki, and it concluded:

[They feel] they are well on their way to achieving their main aim which is a pan-European recognition of the frontiers of eastern Europe, and trade and technology from the first, while at the same time making only nominal concessions as regards the free movement of people and ideas.³¹

However, it was Dr Brennan's second report that had more significance for Irish-Soviet relations.³² It was an account of an exchange that Dr Brennan had with an unnamed Soviet vice minister for foreign affairs (his name is left blank throughout the report – he may have been Vice Minister Kozyrev, visited by Brennan on the same date and with whom matters relating to Cyprus and West Berlin were discussed),³³ in connection with an issue with possible constitutional implications for Ireland. Dr Brennan wrote that the vice minister raised, on his own initiative, the 'peaceful changes' proposal for future alterations to existing national borders in Europe. The vice minister made clear the Soviet desire that current borders, which emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, be agreed as 'inviolable', and that any changes would be minor modifications. Brennan quizzed him on this:

³¹ P.R. 6/74, 'Soviet assessment of present state of Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe', 31 July 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

³² P.R. 9/74, 'Peaceful change – C.S.C.E.', 31 July 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

³³ See P.R.s 7/74, 'Cyprus', and 8/74, 'F.R.G. environment office in West Berlin', 31 July 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

I asked how this would square with our long-term aspirations in regard to Northern Ireland. As he knew it was part of long-term policy to seek reunification with the North of Ireland. It was not an aspect which we were at present pressing for right now or indeed wish to talk about in the view of the very tense situation in the North, as it has always been our point that unity could come about only by consent. However unity remained our long-term aim and if at any time in the future, however far away, the question became topical, we for our part would not wish to be limited by such an interpretation as seems to be emerging here right now.³⁴

And he summed up the Soviet minister's response:

[His] reply was interesting. The case of Northern Ireland was an "*osobyi vopros*" (special problem). It derived from the situation of 'colonialism' [Brennan's inflection] and did not venture into the range of other territorial changes which the Soviet Union would have in mind. Anytime the British decided to give up Northern Ireland to us, that would be acceptable to the Soviet Union.³⁵

This exchange was to find a resonance in the outcome to the C.S.C.E. negotiations – the Helsinki Final Act of July 1975. Patrick Keatinge's *A place among the nations* (1978), when considering Ireland's role at Helsinki, concluded: 'the major Irish contribution to this exercise in détente was to insist, along with the Federal Republic of Germany (F.R.G. – West Germany) and Spain (regarding its claim to Gibraltar), that frontiers should be described as "inviolable" (adapted from Latin, *violare* 'treat violently'),³⁶ but not as "immutable".³⁷

It is notable that the Soviet Union agreed to the softer of the two options that emerged at Helsinki (i.e. supportive of the Irish position). This was despite a major issue at the heart of Europe for the Soviet Union – the claim of the F.R.G. in relation to the territory of the socialist state of the German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.). It is unlikely that the Soviet Union adopted this position solely to suit Ireland's then *de jure* constitutional claim that the state comprised 'the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas'.³⁸ Nevertheless, the exchange between the two diplomats made clear that the Soviets had a principled appreciation of Irish aspirations for national unity. The essential point for the Soviet negotiators was that agreement should be secured for

³⁴ P.R. 9/74, 'Peaceful change – C.S.C.E.', 31 July 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ As cited in *The concise Oxford dictionary of current English* (9th ed., Oxford, 1995), p. 1564. The author acknowledges the advice of the root of 'inviolable' from Noel Dorr.

³⁷ Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 167.

³⁸ As set out in articles two and three, *Bunreacht na hÉireann/ Constitution of Ireland* (Dublin, 1990). These articles were fundamentally changed in 1999 by the adoption of the nineteenth amendment to the constitution.

borders arising from the Second World War. As that did not apply to Ireland, they would be supportive of a united Ireland, albeit one that would need to be agreed with the British government in the future. In that regard it can be concluded that Ambassador Brennan had received indications from a representative of a major player at Helsinki an understanding that the C.S.C.E. would not interfere with Ireland's constitutional claim to national unity.

However, neither the tone nor the tenor of the Irishman's report supported any sense of achievement. As he indicated above, it was the Soviet official who had raised the matter in the first place. Perhaps Brennan tactically sat back to let the vice minister reveal his hand? What is clear, however, is that the report concluded with Dr Brennan stating that his government was not encouraging British disengagement or advocating national unity at this time:

I pointed out that while the British had a special responsibility – and it was known from our public statements – that a mere act of applying (sic) responsibility would not ensure reunification; it could indeed lead to very dark consequences. The only basis of reunification would be unity by consent and this involves a relationship between all the people in Northern Ireland and ourselves.³⁹

In this way it can be seen that Ambassador Brennan was further indicating that the new Irish mission to Moscow was not seeking Soviet support for Irish unity, and – by extension – that Soviet officials should be wary with their support for forces in Northern Ireland pressing for unity. In so far as his own mission to Moscow was concerned, Dr Brennan's early message was taken on board by his Soviet hosts. He informed this present writer: 'events in Northern Ireland were not an issue for the embassy. The Soviets never raised them with us.'⁴⁰

The monitoring of Soviet media coverage of the conflict in Northern Ireland was to constitute an important element of Ambassador Brennan's duties. The terms of this exercise were indicated in September 1973 by Minister for Foreign Affairs Garret FitzGerald, when he met his Soviet counterpart, Andrei Gromyko, to organise diplomatic relations between their two states. According to his autobiography, FitzGerald did not request any support or understanding from Gromyko on Irish efforts with the British to resolve the problems in the North, other than to say that he was:

³⁹ P.R. 9/74, 'Peaceful change – C.S.C.E.', 31 July 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

⁴⁰ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

disturbed at times to see that opinion in the Soviet Union – a polite reference to their press – appeared to view the Provisional I.R.A. as a left-wing socialist group with which the Soviet people might sympathise, whereas in our view they were a dangerous right-wing group, who had in fact broken away from the official Sinn Féin and the [Official] I.R.A. on the grounds that the latter were unduly socialist and too friendly with communists.⁴¹

That Dr FitzGerald, a senior figure in the conservative Fíne Gael party, should base his complaint about the Provisional I.R.A. to the foreign minister of the Soviet Union upon its anti-communist attitudes may appear to have been somewhat paradoxical. However, FitzGerald had taken a keen interest in ideological tensions in the Irish republican movement for some time, and contributed an article on such tensions to the *Irish Times* in 1970. Having acknowledged a left-wing tradition in the republican movement, Dr FitzGerald's article continued:

Whatever may have been the ideological stance of republican leaders on the left wing of the movement, the rank and file have throughout the last half-century been inspired by nationalism, by traditional xenophobia rather than by any aspiration to see workers of the world uniting.⁴²

Clearly, then, Dr FitzGerald was equating the Provisional I.R.A. of 1973 with that nationalist tendency, and his desire to undermine support for them in any quarter was very real. This determination was further heightened by the Provisional I.R.A.'s opposition to the power-sharing Sunningdale process of which FitzGerald was a chief architect. According to Paul Arthur, FitzGerald (along with John Hume) was one of the most effective negotiators in putting together the Sunningdale agreement – an initiative that 'the provisional republican movement rejected...as early as March 1973.'⁴³ Gromyko responded to FitzGerald by saying that the Soviet press simply reported the facts, and that the Soviet people sympathised with Ireland over the Northern Ireland problem. Dr FitzGerald replied that such sympathy was misdirected towards the Provisional I.R.A., rather than being placed behind the Irish people and government. It appears that the foreign ministers let the matter rest at that, but the exchange indicated that Dr FitzGerald intended to have subsequent Soviet coverage monitored by officials at the Irish embassy in Moscow. Accordingly, it is no surprise to discover that as Ambassador Brennan conducted his Kremlinological exercise on the Soviet media, he kept a keen eye open for items relating to Northern Ireland.

⁴¹ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 126.

⁴² FitzGerald in *Irish Times*, 24 Aug. 1970.

⁴³ Arthur, 'Northern Ireland, 1972-84', p. 406.

The first such report related to the appearance of widespread coverage of protests in Northern Ireland to mark the third anniversary of the introduction of internment.⁴⁴ The ambassador began with a story from one of *Pravda's* London correspondents, O. Vasilyev, which had featured prominently in the newspaper's issue of 13 August. It stated that while internment was primarily directed against Catholic areas, it also extended to Protestants. Vasilyev decried London's failure to honour its declarations to 'gradually liquidate' internment and termed the hundreds of internees as 'fighters for civil rights...behind barbed wire of a concentration camp'. The *Pravda* report finished with a call for the implementation of a set of demands from 'progressive forces in Great Britain'. Those demands included the:

Release of political prisoners in Ulster, abolition of internment without trial, withdrawal of British troops to barracks, implementation of progressive economic reforms, and the granting of democratic rights to the workers of Northern Ireland.⁴⁵

Dr Brennan did not identify the forces that called for these measures, but they were most likely British or Northern Irish communists, as is discussed below.

The same report also included *Izvestia's* marking of the fifth anniversary of the deployment of British troops with an article by the same journalist. Vasilyev highlighted the exponential rise in the numbers of soldiers, from an initial contingent of 300 to the current total of 15,000, and that deaths had now exceeded the 1,000 mark. Written just two months after the reintroduction of direct rule in the wake of the Ulster Workers' Council's strike, the article was dismissive of Merlyn Rees's plan for a constitutional convention. Paul Arthur states that the constitutional convention was part of Rees's effort to prevent loyalist paramilitaries moving into the vacuum created by the collapse of the executive,⁴⁶ but Vasilyev claimed that Rees was 'taking half measures and in fact playing into the hands of Protestant ultras' that would result in 'new collisions of the hostile camps and new waves of violence'. The *Izvestia* piece concluded by repeating the need for a programme of democratisation of life in Ulster, and for the termination of both emergency legislation and internment. In this regard it is interesting to note that no direct reference to the Provisional I.R.A. was made in the Soviet press articles, rather the emphasis was on chiding the British Labour government

⁴⁴ P.R. 20/74, 'Northern Ireland', 14 Aug. 1974 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/4/75).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Arthur, 'Northern Ireland, 1972-84', p. 408.

for its unwillingness to stand up to the loyalists. While the Provisional I.R.A had been active – most notably with the M62 coach bombing in West Yorkshire in February 1974, and the bombing of the houses of parliament in London in June – the immediate political and security scene had been dominated by loyalist actions that led to the collapse of the Sunningdale agreement, and the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in May.

Ambassador Brennan's second report was prompted by a feature article by Edgar Cheporov, a London-based correspondent of the Novosti Press Agency, which appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in July 1975.⁴⁷ It was entitled 'Ulster: days of terror.' (Ulster was the name preferred in the Soviet press to 'Northern Ireland', with the use of 'the six counties' not featuring at all). Cheporov's article represented for the ambassador a 'more mature' presentation than the traditional press reports that he considered to have been characterised by a 'monolithic Protestant side exercising unrestrained violence against the Catholics, with the connivance of British troops, and legitimate measures of self-defence exercised by the I.R.A. Provos.' While Cheporov reported that British troops carried out uninterrupted raids in Catholic areas, in contrast to 'neutrality' in relation to Protestant extremists, a new development in the violence was noted: 'the growing role of paramilitary extremist groups in both camps – Protestant and Catholic.' Focusing first on the Protestant paramilitaries, Cheporov highlighted their organisational volatility and internecine tendencies with a reference to the killing of Tommy Herron, an Ulster Defence Association leader as a result of an internal feud in 1973.⁴⁸ The correspondent revealed that he had known Herron personally, and that he had also interviewed Hugh Smyth of the Ulster Volunteer Forces.⁴⁹ Displaying his engagement with people and events in Belfast, Cheporov reported that Smyth had told him that there were enemies of Ulster everywhere, including '[Bill] Craig,⁵⁰ and [Ian] Paisley'.

The report's second focus – on the Provisional I.R.A. – was more extensive. Ambassador Brennan noted that Cheporov, while 'carrying out a fine balancing act for

⁴⁷ P.R. 40/75, '*Literaturnaya Gazeta* on violence in Northern Ireland', 7 July 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).

⁴⁸ *Irish Times*, 17 Sept. 1973.

⁴⁹ Smyth, now of the Progressive Unionist Party, was first elected to Belfast City Council for the Shankill ward in 1972. See Belfast City Council, 'Alderman Hugh Smyth C.V.', (<http://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s62757/SmythHughCV.doc.pdf>) (28 Sept. 2012)

⁵⁰ William 'Bill' Craig, formed the Ulster Vanguard movement in 1972.

the most part' was as opposed to the Provisional I.R.A. as much as to the loyalists, and that Cheporov's article featured the results of some anecdotal research that he had conducted among Catholics in Northern Ireland. His soundings indicated, on one hand, that many Catholics felt that Provisional I.R.A. terrorism served as a prompter for the Protestant ultras and British army operations; while on the other hand, supporters felt that 'only the most desperate actions can bring nearer the day of liberation for the minority'. When Cheporov posed to his interviewees the claim of the Provisional I.R.A. that they were the defenders of the Catholics, he described reactions as follows:

Whenever I put this question there ensued each time a long pause. Seldom did anybody decide to answer with an unambiguous 'yes' or 'no'. These desperate people do not spare their own lives, it was explained to me, but neither do they spare ours.⁵¹

Despite such expressions of disquiet, Cheporov rounded off on his soundings on the Provisional I.R.A. by observing that it could not have continued to exist without hiding places for volunteers and weapons, and a political and propaganda support system. Finally, Cheporov informed his *Literaturnaya Gazeta* audience of the existence of the Official I.R.A and Official Sinn Féin, stating that they were concentrating on political methods to improve the lot of both Catholic and Protestant workers and for a greater measure of independence for Northern Ireland. This information and favourable mention is in accord with the findings of Hanley and Millar:

By 1976 Soviet bloc communism was the dominant ideological influence within the Officials. Party delegations frequently travelled beyond the iron curtain, and party representatives were in regular contact with eastern bloc diplomats, attending receptions at the Bulgarian and Soviet embassies in London.⁵²

Hanley and Millar further note that the Officials extended their 'bitter competition' with the Provisionals to their relationship with their Soviet contacts, and this influence could well have played a part in the appearance of more nuanced articles from Cheporov and later commentary. To conclude, Ambassador Brennan's report gives evidence of a measure of hands-on commitment by correspondent Cheporov. His engagement with loyalist leaders Herron and Smyth is stated, but he failed to present any account of the loyalists' viewpoint. And the fruits of his research among Catholics, however limited,

⁵¹ P.R. 40/75, '*Literaturnaya Gazeta* on violence in Northern Ireland', 7 July 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).

⁵² Hanley and Millar, *The lost revolution*, p. 334.

were reflected in a piece of work that can only have given his Soviet readers improved insights into the lives of people on both sides of the divide.

By September 1975 the Provisional I.R.A.'s ceasefire was under serious threat owing to outbreaks of hostilities that had led to many deaths among civilians, soldiers and police at the hands of the Provisional I.R.A., the British army, and the loyalist paramilitaries.⁵³ Ambassador Brennan reported that there had been a recent step up in Soviet media coverage, the most authoritative having been in *Izvestia*.⁵⁴ Its London correspondent, O. Vasilyev, had reported that 'many observers consider that Ulster stands on the brink of civil war', blaming the Protestant ultras, whom he claimed wished to bring the truce to an end by inciting a resumption of violence. A notable aspect of this report is that it identified the source of *Izvestia's* proposed solutions to the crisis, James Stewart, the Belfast-based deputy general secretary of the C.P.I. Stewart had issued a call for the British government to bring an end to repressive security acts, and for the isolation of murderers by means of 'positive political measures' such as the immediate adoption of a bill of rights for the entire population of Northern Ireland.

Dr Brennan also picked up on a Tass story from Budapest by summarising an interview with the general secretary of the C.P.I., Michael O'Riordan, in *Népszabadság*, the official organ of the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. O'Riordan was reported to have said that the situation in Northern Ireland was very complicated, and that the course of events there were akin to a civil war. In a clear reference to the Provisional I.R.A., O'Riordan declared that Irish communists were opposed to assassinations and acts of terrorism. However, this was as far as Ambassador Brennan was prepared to go in relaying O'Riordan's interview without qualification. He told the department: 'But while condemning such forms of violence they [Irish communists] could not let pass in silence the fact that the cause of the crisis is the policy of British imperialism and the presence of British armed forces...moreover, Irish communists desire a united Ireland.'

⁵³ Despite the ceasefire, 260 deaths from conflict-related incidents were recorded in 1975, as cited in *The Guardian*, 'Deaths from the conflict in Ireland by year and status' (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2010/jun/10/deaths-in-northern-ireland-conflict-data>) (24 Sept. 2012).

⁵⁴ P.R. 49/75, 'Soviet press on Northern Ireland (reaction to the deepening crisis)', 15 Sept. 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).

To complete his report Dr Brennan focused on a newspaper that was to become something of a *bête noir* for him among Soviet publications – *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the Soviet armed forces’ newspaper. He deprecated an analysis in the newspaper’s 14 September 1975 edition with this comment: ‘the level of sophistication is even lower than that of *Izvestia*’, and related its view that British reliance on military measures would not bring forth a solution. *Krasnaya Zvezda* had heaped scorn on (Mervin) Rees for simply sending more troops, describing them as ‘peace-makers with machine guns’. Dr Brennan closed his criticism by noting the paper’s unrealistic call for the withdrawal of British troops. To conclude on this report it can be seen for the first time that criticism of the Provisional I.R.A, so desired by Dr FitzGerald, was making its way into Soviet journalism, with the notable exception of *Krasnaya Zvezda*. However, as the source for this development was C.P.I. promptings, the ambassador flagged this as both incomplete and subject to questionable communist analyses.

Dr Brennan added a splash of colour to his next report, which was based upon articles and an accompanying cartoon which featured in the October 1975 edition of the illustrated magazine *Ogonyok*, and the satirical magazine *Krokodil*.⁵⁵ The *Ogonyok* article was, again, written by *Pravda*’s London correspondent, O. Vasilyev. It was carried beneath a headline ‘The blood and tears of Ulster’ and focused on the provocations of the Unionist ultras which Vasilyev claimed were designed to sever the thread by which the Provisional I.R.A. truce then hung. He wrote:

They do not desire peace, for then there will be opened possibilities for the uniting of forces of the working class of Ulster, divided today along religious grounds. And this would not meet the interests of the owners of the Northern Ireland economy and the landed aristocracy. That is why the Protestant ultra acts have intensified terror against the fighters for civil rights.

The *Krokodil* piece was accompanied by the eye-catching and challenging cartoon below. It was headed with the words ‘yet another contingent of British forces sent to Ulster’.

⁵⁵ P.R. 58/75, ‘The blood and tears of Ulster in *Krokodil*’, 23 Oct. 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).



And the lower line read: ‘Key to the solution of the problem of Ulster’, with the drawing credited to M. Abramova. The ambassador provided the following pithy explanation for the article and cartoon:

Whereas for Adam Smith the capitalist economy operated under the influence of an invisible hand, *Krokodil* is still at the old simplistic Leninist notion that it is the very visible hand of the monopolists which is at the root of the situation.

A fuller exposition for the Soviet view that economic causes lay behind Northern Ireland’s woes was then available in the Soviet Union. Two historians in particular, A.D. Kolpakov and L.I. Gol’man, had been publishing on Irish affairs and historiography since the 1960s.⁵⁶ Stephen White records that Kolpakov led a group of historians at Moscow University to compile the first Russian-language history of Ireland. Drawing upon that history White states:

And for the Soviet history of Ireland, the sources of that conflict were unambiguously economic, not religious. There had, they explained, been increasing investment in the North from international capital. Small firms and rural industries had been marginalised. This gave rise to a growing problem of

⁵⁶ See White, ‘Soviet writings on Irish history, 1917-80’, pp 176-7.

unemployment, which in turn provided fertile ground for Protestant extremism, and...the confrontation of the two communities in the North.⁵⁷

If *Krasnaya Zvezda* was Dr Brennan's least favourite Soviet newspaper in relation to Northern Ireland, his next report stands out for identifying a publication on the opposite end of his scale of appreciation – *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.⁵⁸ Following the Camden Hill Square bomb explosion of 23 October 1975 (when an Provisional I.R.A. active service unit attempted to kill a Conservative party M.P., Hugh Frazer, but instead killed his neighbour, a professor of oncology, Gordon Hamilton Fairley),⁵⁹ *Komsomolskaya Pravda* carried the first survey in the Soviet press of the Provisional I.R.A.'s recent bombing campaign in England. Filed by its London correspondent, Mikhalyev (full name not supplied), the paper listed all the major explosions and the losses of life, including the Birmingham explosion where twenty people died – an outrage that the Irish ambassador claimed was marked 'virtually in silence here at the time'. Mikhalyev quoted Scotland Yard sources for details of the Camden Hill bombing, and the *Morning Star* (the newspaper associated with the Communist Party of Great Britain) for a statement that the bombings 'only play into the hands of reactionary forces.' But the most revealing aspect of the report was contained in the commentary by Ambassador Brennan:

This is the second time that a blanket condemnation of the terrorist tactics of the Provos has appeared in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Two aspects, however, should be kept in mind. *K.P.* is the only centrally published newspaper here... that could be described as having 'a liberal' tinge. western correspondents here find it less dull and sometimes more revealing than other centrally published newspapers. Secondly, an expression of opinion in this newspaper obviously still carries less weight than if it had been published in either of the two leading papers, namely, *Pravda* or *Izvestia*. Only when this latter event takes place can one regard the Soviet leadership as having come out definitely against the Provos.⁶⁰

Six months later the ambassador sent a report that is notable for its details of a visit to Northern Ireland by the prominent Soviet poet, Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko (whose work and profile were discussed earlier in chapter three with

⁵⁷ Stephen White, 'Ireland, Russia, communism, post-communism', in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, vii (1997), p. 158. The history appears to have been published after Kolpakov's untimely death (just as the transcript was handed to the publishers) as, L.I. Gol'man (ed.) *Istoriya Irlandii* [The history of Ireland] (Moscow, 1980).

⁵⁸ P.R. 61/75, 'Condemnation of I.R.A. bombings in England', 31 Oct. 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).

⁵⁹ *Irish Times*, 24 Oct. 1975.

⁶⁰ P.R. 61/75, 'Condemnation of I.R.A. bombings in England', 31 Oct. 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2005/145/1798).

Shostakovich's symphony, *Babi Yar*), and extracts from two poems inspired by his visit.⁶¹ In something of a departure from its usual political format, *Pravda*, in its edition for 13 March, featured Yevtushenko's poem, *Guns in Belfast*. The report provided a brief interpretation of the poem – its basic theme being the 'all-pervading feeling of terror in the city' – along with selected extracts translated by Ambassador Brennan. Taking a sanguine attitude to a young British soldier who had sworn and waved his sub-machine-gun at him, Yevtushenko wrote:

Poor lad...it is not his fault
Amidst ancient Christian strife
He was awaiting, in his speckled jacket
With a trembling diversionist back,
A bullet from a window...
Why should I take offence in Belfast at anything
Amidst terror in its purest form?
It should be a sin to take an offence
As long as one is alive.⁶²

The poem continued by recalling the poet's visit to Queen's University, where he had overheard a lecturer speaking to his students about the nineteenth-century Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, and the affair between Pushkin's wife, Natalia Nikolaevna, and her French lover, Georges D'Anthès.

All round, terror was habitual
Like everyday life
The girl students were twittering –
Who will condemn
Ignorance of the fact that Pushkin
On the morrow will be killed?

In this way Yevtushenko linked Pushkin's violent death (he was killed in 1837 by D'Anthès in a duel) with terror on the streets of Northern Ireland.

Yevtushenko's second poem, *Safari in Ulster*, was given pride of place for St. Patrick's day in the Writers' Union publication, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. In what appears to be a reference to a visit to the Causeway Safari Park, located between Coleraine and Bushmills, which operated between 1970 and 1996,⁶³ Yevtushenko was inspired to

⁶¹ P.R. 27/76, 'Soviet press coverage of Northern Ireland features poetry by Yevtushenko', 22 Mar. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238).

⁶² The same poem, under the title 'Pushkin in Belfast' (translated by Professor Marcus Wheeler of Queen's University Belfast), was included with Yevtushenko's permission in the anthology, Frank Ormsby (ed.) *A rage for order: poetry of the Northern Ireland troubles* (Belfast, 1992), p. 221.

⁶³ See 'A causeway safari', in *Coleraine Times*, 7 Sept. 2006, at (<http://www.colerainetimes.co.uk/news/local/a-causeway-safari-1-1963111>) (9 Oct. 2012).

compose a lengthy poem on the twin themes of violence being organised along religious lines, suggesting that the conflict had reduced men's behaviour below that of wild beasts. First, however, the ambassador selected an extract that recounted the poet's encounter with another British soldier, as he approached Derry. The soldier was taken aback to discover that Yevtushenko was a Russian poet, but then mellowed to offer him some advice on the local Chinese restaurant:

Are you mad?
This is a place for grave-diggers
Not for poets...
But the food, o God
Some kind of toads
Worms or snakes.⁶⁴

On the religious theme, the poem related a tale told to the poet by an elderly man in Derry concerning a Protestant dog that had run away from its master to join a Catholic dog, which was howling by the body of its master who had been gunned down:

Atheist dogs are purer than we
God is many-faced,
And if this is so,
then God is not a person
but a dog.

This introduced the poem's theme that the conflict had reduced men below the savagery of beasts, telling a lioness that she is better off and better behaved in the lion-park than men:

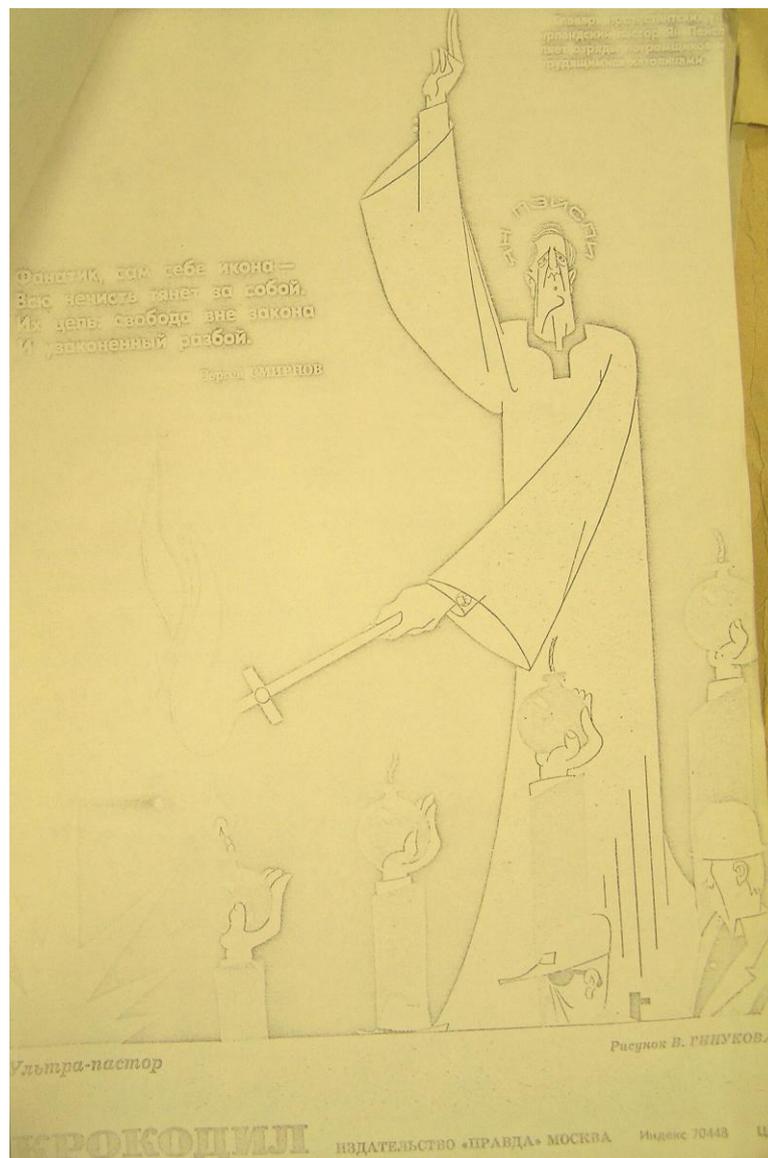
When a man becomes a beast
The beast appears to be a man.
And politely closing their jaws,
If they are thrown pieces of meat
From foul-smelling humanity –
The lions turn away their noses.

And Belfast did not ignore Yevtushenko's two poems; nearly twenty years later they were included in Frank Ormsby's anthology of 250 poems on the Northern troubles, *A rage for order* (1992), which was published at a time when tentative moves toward ceasefires and peace talks were under way. Ormsby organised his anthology into six sections, placing the Yevtushenko pair in the section reserved for those poems wherein:

⁶⁴ This poem is also included in full, under the title 'Ulster Safari', in Ormsby (ed.) *A rage for order*, p. 230.

‘the predominant subjects are art and politics, the ways in which men of “action” and, more especially, men of “words”, make...“things happen”’.⁶⁵

Dr Brennan’s second report of the same date is also unique for its inclusion of a brief summary of an article on Northern Ireland carried in *Krokodil*.⁶⁶ Its outstanding feature is a cartoon of Dr Ian Paisley. While it is a poor quality photocopy of the cartoon that survives in the archives, its depiction of Paisley lighting bombs with his fiery cross is clear enough. The caption reads: ‘The head of the Protestant ultras, pastor Ian Paisley, blesses detachments of pogrom-makers for violence against Catholic workers’; and the halo reads ‘Ian Paisley’:



⁶⁵ Ormsby (ed.) *A rage for order*, p. xix.

⁶⁶ P.R. 27/76, ‘Soviet press coverage of Northern Ireland features poetry by Yevtushenko’, 22 Mar. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238).

The lower line translates as ‘ultra-pastor’, and the drawing was credited to V. Ginukova. The cartoon appeared on the back page of the magazine – a space normally reserved for ridiculing major western imperialists.

In his next report Dr Brennan could register that *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had again condemned the Provisional I.R.A. for its ‘blind terror’, this time for an explosion on a London underground train on 15 March 1976.⁶⁷ *Komsomolskaya Pravda* speculated that the explosion was in retaliation for the death of Frank Stagg, a Provisional I.R.A. volunteer from Hollywood, County Mayo, who had died on hunger strike in Wakefield Prison, West Yorkshire in February. Stagg had embarked upon his hunger strike to demand status treatment as a political prisoner. The P.R. reported that the Soviet paper put Stagg’s death as ‘suicide’, indicating no sympathy for this tactic of protest, or knowledge of its place in Irish republican tradition.

It was the article in the October 1976 issue of the theoretical journal *World Marxist Review* by two senior Irish communists, entitled ‘Irish communists and terrorism’, that provided the source material for another step towards condemnation of the Provisional I.R.A. in the Soviet press. Jointly authored by Michael O’Riordan and a Belfast member of the C.P.I.’s national executive committee, Betty Sinclair, the significance of the article was described by the ambassador as being:

The first systematic and ideological condemnation of the Provos in a mass circulation publication in the U.S.S.R...it can be taken as a major shift in the Soviet attitude to Provos...up to now only isolated press condemnation and fudge laying blame exclusively at doors of British and Unionist ultras [have been published].⁶⁸

Dr Brennan noted that O’Riordan and Sinclair began with an historical analysis of the role of terror in the Irish struggle for independence. Their analysis instanced the exploding of bombs by the Fenian Brotherhood in Britain in the 1860s, cited Marx and Engels’ opposition to such terrorism, and referred to Lenin’s book *What is to be done* for the necessity to forge a link between revolutionary struggle and the working-class movement to achieve meaningful change. The ambassador rather caustically noted:

⁶⁷ P.R. 28/76, ‘I.R.A. condemned for West Ham explosion’, 22 Mar. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2006/131/238).

⁶⁸ P.R. 99/76, ‘Soviets condemn Provisional I.R.A.’, 12 Oct. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2006/131/238). Attached to the file is an English language copy of the article, comprising approximately 3,500 words.

Thus having got the generalised liturgical obeisance to Lenin out of the way they [O’Riordan and Sinclair] get down to brass tacks as regards what is really on their minds, namely, the rise of the Provisionals.⁶⁹

They denounced the Provisional I.R.A. as ‘petty bourgeois’, fixated with the power of the gun, and lacking any clear political programme. Their terrorist tactics were described as causing widespread job losses, thereby adding to the sectarian gulf. The effect had been to extend the S.D.L.P.’s influence among workers, and even to boost sympathy for the security forces. The authors instanced the recent killing of the British ambassador to Dublin, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, whereby sympathy among the public in the South for the struggles of the people in the North was transferred to the victims of terror and, in the final analysis, to the side of the British administration. Finally, the report indicated that the article stated (again citing Lenin’s *What is to be done*) that Marxists ‘do not deny in principle violence and terror in relation to the class enemy without which no revolution comes about’, but, it emphasised, that only applied ‘in immediate connection with the mass movement’.

The emergence of the Northern Ireland peace movement in August 1976, and the movement’s subsequent rally held in Trafalgar Square, London, was given prominence in the pages of *Pravda*.⁷⁰ The newspaper’s London correspondent, Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, declared that the rally was akin to a ‘human sea’ of supporters from all parts of Great Britain and both parts of Ireland, which represented ‘a grandiose manifestation’ for an appeal to the end of bloodshed in Northern Ireland that had been ‘born in the hearts of the mothers of Belfast’. The report gave details of the fatal events that had ‘shaken’ even those most de-sensitised by the ongoing violence, wherein a ‘terrorist’, mortally wounded in a speeding car by British troops, had crashed into and killed three children on a west Belfast street. It told how the movements of cross-community leadership ‘stretched out hands to one another in order to act jointly against bloodshed in Ulster....they are against every kind of violence – be it from the British Army, the Ulster Police, the terrorists from the Provisional I.R.A. or militarised unionist detachments.’ However, Ambassador Brennan’s focus on the newspaper’s article was its implications for official Soviet attitudes towards the Provisional I.R.A., and he closed his report with the following:

⁶⁹ P.R. 99/76, ‘Soviets condemn Provisional I.R.A.’, 12 Oct. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2006/131/238).

⁷⁰ P.R. 116/76, ‘*Pravda* endorses Northern Ireland peace movement’, 30 Nov. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2006/131/238).

The condemnation of terrorists from the [Provisional] I.R.A. may be indirect and the culprits only half identified. But it is a major change when one considers that up to now *Pravda* has either portrayed the [Provisional] I.R.A. as heroic freedom fighters or, as was happening more recently, fudged the issue of their guilt in causing the escalation of violence. It now remains to be seen whether *Pravda* can soon take the final step of naming them openly.⁷¹

In this regard it is revealing to note that the Irish government was sufficiently pleased with the direction of the evolution of Soviet press coverage on the Provisional I.R.A. that Dr FitzGerald acknowledged it to his Soviet counterpart during his official visit to Moscow in December 1976. The acknowledgement was included in a F.C.O. report of a meeting between Dr FitzGerald and a British counsellor, John Hickman, as follows:

Dr FitzGerald mentioned to Gromyko that there had been signs recently of some improvement in Soviet press coverage. Gromyko replied that he was glad to hear this – the British had been complaining about it too.⁷²

Nevertheless, at the start of 1977 Dr Brennan reported a setback in the Soviet media's trend towards a less ambiguous condemnation of the Provisional I.R.A.⁷³ This report, based upon recent *Izvestia* and *Pravda* coverage of the fifth anniversary commemorations of Bloody Sunday in Derry, noted that commentary stressed the repressive role of the security forces, and collusion between them and the Protestant ultras. The ambassador accounted for this reversion to earlier practices by pointing to a change in the international political atmosphere. This arose from the stated policy of the recently-elected president of the U.S., Jimmy Carter, which placed more weight on the issue of human rights in East-West relations. In particular, the Soviet authorities were keen to forestall expectations that western representatives intended to raise charges of human rights violations in Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union itself at the upcoming review of the Helsinki agreement to be held in Belgrade. The Soviet tactic, reported Dr Brennan, (he characterised it as a relapse 'into opportunism') was to counter with the British government's inability to bring to an end the tragedy of Ulster. Accordingly, *Izvestia* and *Pravda* condemned Britain for its adherence to a military solution to a problem that was essentially one of 'social-political contradictions, namely discrimination against Catholics and the denial of civil rights.'

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² This paragraph is informed by R.M. Harris, British embassy, Dublin to R.J.M. Lyne, London, 13 Jan. 1977 (T.N.A., F.C.O., 87/605, WLE 020/303/1).

⁷³ P.R. 19/77, 'Bloody Sunday commemoration', 2 Feb. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2007/111/221).

Two more articles by *Pravda's* Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, one of which had appeared in the prestigious journal of the central committee of the C.P.S.U., *Kommunist*, prompted Ambassador Brennan's first Northern Ireland P.R. of 1977.⁷⁴ The articles had for their central theme a new aspect in Soviet interpretation of developments in Northern Ireland, namely that British military and legal actions and related legislation in Ulster could be deployed in the future throughout the rest of the U.K. This prospect arose from, reported Ovchinnikov, public concerns in Britain surrounding General Frank Kitson's publication, *Low intensity operations* (1971).⁷⁵ The report provided a summary of the publication's contents:

Violence offers ideal conditions for the testing of military tactics for the quelling of civil disturbances in instances where the ordinary police are unable to cope...Kitson is of the view that a major drop in living standards in Britain could give rise to mass discontent with which the police would be unable to cope and this would become a job for the army...on how to deal with strikes, picketing, boycotts, occupation of factories...[and the deployment of] new weapons: water cannon, C.S. gas, rubber and plastic bullets, nylon nets, etc.⁷⁶

The report closed with *Pravda's* reference to Karl Marx's warning in 1870 that the British government could use agitation in Ireland as a pretext to use the army against British workers.

No coverage in the Soviet press on Northern Ireland was recorded by Ambassador Brennan for the next twenty months, until January 1979 when he forwarded a five-page report on a feature on the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) by its general secretary, Madge Davison.⁷⁷ The article, entitled 'hypocrisy and reality' had recently featured in *Pravda*, and an A4-sized photocopy of Davison's article (in Russian) was attached to the report. No personal details of Davison were provided in the report, but it is relevant to provide here some brief biographical details on this lesser known civil rights leader. Davison (1949-91), first became an activist with the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Communist Youth League, the youth section of the Communist Party of Northern Ireland. She joined the office staff of NICRA in 1970, when she was promoted to the post of organiser, and as a

⁷⁴ P. R. 37/77, 'Soviets give new twist to Northern Ireland situation', 6 Apr. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2007/111/221).

⁷⁵ Frank Kitson, *Low intensity operations: subversion, insurgency, peace-keeping* (London, 1971).

⁷⁶ P. R. 37/77, 'Soviets give new twist to Northern Ireland situation', 6 Apr. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2007/111/221).

⁷⁷ P.R. 3/79, 'Northern Ireland: renewed interest by *Pravda*', 31 Jan. 1979 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/601).

gifted public speaker she articulated the cause of the movement at local, national and international level. This included officiating at an exhibition on the Northern Ireland conflict in a Moscow museum in 1974.⁷⁸ Afterwards, she returned to education as a mature student of law at Queen's University, Belfast (Q.U.B.). She was called to the bar in 1983 and subsequently qualified as a barrister. Shortly after she had taken up a position with the Fair Employment Agency, she was diagnosed with the fatal illness that was soon to cut short her contribution to peace and social progress in Northern Ireland.⁷⁹

Davison's *Pravda* article recounted the main achievements of NICRA since 1968: 'democratic participation in local elections; abolition of the B Specials; and a central board for the allocation of housing.' She identified the major influences on the movement to have been the campaign for civil rights in the U.S., and the radicalising impact of Catholic graduates from Q.U.B. on their community. Even so, Davison maintained 'that it is no exaggeration to say that we have fewer civil rights now than in 1968.' She branded direct rule as 'direct neglect' by Westminster; and wrote at length at how the British government's policy from 1976 on the use of force instead of reform had led to torture becoming 'a customary phenomenon of life in Ulster.' In support of this contention, Davison gave an account of the Irish government's case in 1977 against the British at the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg on the use of torture in jails in Northern Ireland.⁸⁰ Her article proceeded to castigate British politicians and newspapers for their double-standards in relation to Soviet violations of human rights and the practise of torture in Northern Ireland:

When reading such statements it is necessary to bear in mind that they belong to the same newspapers, the pages of which are daily festooned with headlines like 'Violation of human rights in the Soviet Union'. There are people working for these newspapers who in ostentatious despair wring their hands over reports of court trials in the U.S.S.R. of criminals while at the same time they bless tortures in Northern Ireland.⁸¹

The report was brought to a conclusion with Davison's recognition of the reduced status of NICRA, and Dr Brennan's observation upon a *Pravda* 'sting' for the Provisional I.R.A. in the article. Back in the late 1960s, Davison said, the movement had been an

⁷⁸ See 'Photographs from Moscow', in Lynda Walker (ed.) *Madge Davison: recollections of a revolutionary firebrand* (Belfast, 2011), p. 44.

⁷⁹ These biographical notes are informed by Anne Hope, 'Memories of shared times', in Walker (ed.) *Madge Davison*, pp 13-7.

⁸⁰ This case is discussed in some detail below.

⁸¹ P.R. 3/79, 'Northern Ireland: renewed interest by *Pravda*', 31 Jan. 1979 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/601).

‘alliance of uncoordinated forces’ that enabled it to mobilise a broad range of people for an agenda confined to demands for equal rights for all the citizens of Northern Ireland and a fundamental reform of Stormont. But since then ‘unity has been lost’, because of governmental and unionist policy, and ‘lies and violence’. It was an allusion to this violence and militarisation of what had been a potent civil rights movement that enabled Ambassador Brennan to pick up on a reference to the Provisional I.R.A. in the *Pravda* article. Davison incorporated a quotation from a British newspaper, *The Guardian*, that included a reference to the Provisional I.R.A., and the editor of *Pravda* inserted a note of clarification on that organisation for his readers. To report this, the ambassador stated:

Finally, there is an interesting *Pravda* editorial interpolation in the Madge Davison article. A quotation which she cited from *The Guardian* made reference to the Provisional I.R.A. The interpolation was: ‘the “Provisional wing of the I.R.A.” in English newspapers means the extremist elements who have broken away from the [Official] I.R.A.’ This is the first time, even if only incidentally, that *Pravda* has described the Provos as ‘extremist’. But it still has to bite the bullet by naming them the terrorists they are.⁸²

It was to take but six more months for Dr Brennan to have his wish for an outright condemnation of the Provisional I.R.A. fulfilled in the pages of *Pravda*.⁸³ Under the heading ‘Troubled Ulster’, this appeared in the 5 June 1979 issue of the paper’s ‘at your request’ column. The piece, credited to V. Potapov, was prompted by requests from two *Pravda* readers, A. Bolshakov from the village of Titavo in the Kemerovo *oblast* (administrative region), and R. Belyakov from the village of Murmashi in the Murmansk *oblast* (Dr Brennan suggested that the readers’ names were ‘presumably fictitious’). Potapov presented a considered Marxist-orientated history of the origins of the Ulster conflict. This included an acknowledgement that Protestants constituted two thirds of the population of Ulster, most of whom ‘come out for an unconditional preservation of ties with Great Britain’. Then, Potapov went on to castigate the Provisional I.R.A.:

Much trouble is being caused to the English [sic] authorities in Northern Ireland by the underground organisation, the [Provisional] I.R.A... [this] extremist wing has chosen the tactic of terror, which gives the official authorities a reason for

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ P.R. 13/79, ‘Northern Ireland: *Pravda* breaks new ground’, 6 June 1979 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/601).

intensification of repression and does not bring closer a solution of the Northern Ireland problem.⁸⁴

Ambassador Brennan closed off his report by noting another change: ‘in the old days *Pravda* used to call for the withdrawal of British troops. Later it scaled this down to withdrawal to barracks. Now there is not a word about withdrawal in any shape or form.’

Now that Foreign Minister FitzGerald’s aspiration on the Provisional I.R.A. had been fulfilled in *Pravda*, Ambassador Brennan then set about articulating a new thesis in his report. He suggested that the Soviets’ conversion to denouncing the Provisional I.R.A. now undermined the Soviet Union’s own strategic political interests. He wrote:

It has been a constant grievance of ours that the Soviet media have been too indulgent towards the violence of the Provisional I.R.A.... The major flaw in this approach of course has been that the Provo violence has had the effect of alienating the Unionists and postponing the day of reunification which, as the Soviets would see it, would go a long way towards diminishing the strategic position of the U.K. In other words, short-term tactical approval of trouble for the British has been at odds with their strategic interests in seeing a united Ireland come about.⁸⁵

However, it should be noted that there is no evidence in any of the island of Ireland P.R.s that the Soviet Union made representations to the British in relation to Northern Ireland or Irish unity. As discussed above in relation to the C.S.C.E. talks at Helsinki, the Soviets were supportive of the ‘special problem’ of Irish unity, but subject to Irish-British agreement. As will be discussed below, the Soviets did raise the conflict in Northern Ireland in international human rights forums, but only to criticise the British government for its failure to solve the conflict – and only then in the context of human rights charges against the Soviet Union from western powers.

Dr Brennan was to produce only three more reports dedicated to coverage of the conflict in Northern Ireland prior to his departure from Moscow. He had little by way of extra original commentary to add, other than on two events: the first concerned an internal development within the North – the ‘blanket’ protest by republican prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison; the second concerned the external raising of the Northern Ireland conflict by the Soviets, for the first time, at the U.N. An account of the prisoners’ blanket protest appeared as a feature item in the ministry of culture’s

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

weekly newspaper *Sovyetskaya Kultura*.⁸⁶ This was the first time the ambassador reported on this organ, whose target audience he rather caustically described as ‘the numerous minor minions among the intelligentsia’. Written by Tass correspondent, A. Shal’nyev, the report detailed the conditions of filth and squalor that the prisoners endured after they had refused to wear prison dress in place of civilian clothes. The thrust of the article was sympathetic towards the protest of the prisoners in pursuit of political status. This analysis was in contrast to that provided in the above-discussed report, wherein the death of hunger striker Frank Stagg was described by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* as ‘suicide’. When the blanket protest escalated on 27 October 1980 to the first of the hunger strikes,⁸⁷ Ambassador Brennan was in the final weeks of his mission to Moscow when he forwarded only three more reports to Dublin – none of which featured Northern Ireland.

Dr Brennan’s last report on Northern Ireland was forwarded in April 1980, and was set in the context of western reactions at the U.N.’s Commission on Human Rights to the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. The report was based upon an article in *Izvestia* by the senior Soviet representative present at the commission session, Valerian Alexandrovich Zorin.⁸⁸ (Zorin, a respected veteran among Soviet diplomats, had two years earlier been the subject of a report by Dr Brennan to Dublin).⁸⁹ In Zorin’s view, the U.S. and other western representatives sought to ‘undermine the policy of détente’ and to attempt ‘psychological warfare’ by raising embarrassing issues for the Soviet Union, including its activities in support of the government of Afghanistan. By way of response at the session, and supported by some Arab and developing states, the Soviets listed western support for countries such as Israel, South Africa, and Chile – where human rights abuses were regarded as being entrenched. To add to this list Zorin wrote:

The question was raised...on the initiative of the Soviet delegation, of the mass-scale and gross human rights violations in Northern Ireland by the British government. More than 2,000 people dead and 22,000 wounded, let alone the tens of thousands of people detained — such are the consequences of the ‘operation to maintain law and order’ London has been conducting in Ulster for

⁸⁶ P.R. 24/79, ‘Northern Ireland: *Krasnaya Zvezda* preaches old line’, 3 July 1979 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/601). The other two P.R.s were: P.R. 30/79, ‘Tenth anniversary of the British troops in Northern Ireland’, 16 Aug. 1979 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2011/39/1072); and P.R. 15/80, ‘Northern Ireland at U.N. Commission on Human Rights’, 9 Apr. 1980).

⁸⁷ See Arthur, ‘Northern Ireland, 1972-84’, p. 413.

⁸⁸ P.R. 15/80, ‘Northern Ireland at U.N. Commission on Human Rights’, 9 Apr. 1980 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2011/39/1072).

⁸⁹ P.R. 39/78, ‘*New Times* interview with Zorin’, 19 Apr. 1978 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2009/120/1030).

more than ten years now. The British delegate was unable to say anything on the acute situation in such a major capitalist country as Great Britain, which styles itself as a model of western democracy.⁹⁰

In this context, Ambassador Brennan's final advice to the D.F.A. on Northern Ireland was amplified: should western powers continue to put the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries under pressure at the U.N. on human rights, the Soviets would incorporate the conflict of Ulster in their riposte. And nowhere was this amplification to be more evident than in Soviet coverage of Ireland's 'torture' court case against Britain at Strasbourg.

The case brought by Ireland against the United Kingdom at the European Court of Human Rights regarding ill-treatment of prisoners in Northern Ireland has already been briefly discussed in chapter two in the context of the British government's Parker Report of 1972. That report found that the R.U.C. had utilised against certain prisoners in Northern Ireland in 1971 the so-called 'five techniques' – wall-standing, hooding, subjection to noise, deprivation of sleep, and deprivation of food and drink. The report went on to conclude that these techniques were 'secret, illegal, and not morally justifiable',⁹¹ and subsequently the British government undertook not to repeat such procedures in the future. However, it failed to accede to the Irish government's request to outlaw such practices. Unsatisfied with the findings of the report and the lack of a suitable undertaking, the Irish government determined to hold the British authorities accountable for actions believed to amount to torture. It made an application on behalf of fourteen victims of the techniques to the European Commission of Human Rights against the British government. In response, the commission issued a report in support of the Irish contention of torture. The government then refused to agree to a 'friendly settlement' with the British, and applied to the Court of Human Rights.⁹² Ireland's legal team requested the court to:

consider the report of the commission and to confirm the opinion of the commission that breaches of the Convention [for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms] have occurred and also to consider the claims of the applicant government with regard to other alleged breaches and to

⁹⁰ P.R. 15/80, 'Northern Ireland at U.N. Commission on Human Rights', 9 Apr. 1980 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2011/39/1072).

⁹¹ Lord Parker, 'Report of the committee of privy counsellors appointed to consider authorised procedures for the interrogation of persons suspected of terrorism', published 2 Mar. 1972 (<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hms0/parker.htm>) (22 Sept. 2011)

⁹² *Irish Times*, 7 Feb 1977.

make a finding of breach of the convention where the court is satisfied that a breach has occurred.⁹³

The court had been established in 1959 under articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, and its jurisdiction was confined to member countries of western Europe until after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1977 there were nineteen such countries affiliated and each country appointed a judge to the court. Judgements were made by majority vote and were binding upon member states. Attorney-General Declan Costello argued the case for Ireland, and his counterpart, Sam Silkin, replied for the British.⁹⁴ The case commanded considerable international attention, not least that of the Soviet media. As discussed in chapter two in the context of Dr FitzGerald's visit to the Soviet Union a year earlier and his meeting there with Andrei Gromyko, FitzGerald was conscious of and uncomfortable with the political impact of the Irish case against Britain in East-West rivalries. These rivalries had since been heightened with renewed public emphasis by western powers on the issue of dissidents in socialist countries, led by the newly elected U.S. president, Jimmy Carter. It is safe to assume that Ambassador Brennan's reports on Soviet coverage of the case were eagerly awaited at the D.F.A. As the case progressed in Strasbourg, he forwarded four reports dedicated to the topic.

The first report related to the opening of the preliminary hearings of the case, and Dr Brennan set the tone that he was to maintain throughout, one of reporting on a 'massive build of hostile Soviet comment on British behaviour in N. Ireland...all of it denunciatory' and that the Soviets were making no secret of the fact that this was in retaliation for intensified East-West polemics over the issue of dissidents in eastern Europe.⁹⁵ He claimed that the Soviets were using the case as 'a stick to beat the west' because their 'hackles' had been raised by 'Carter's aggressive stand'. But most of the Soviet criticism was reserved for alleged British hypocrisy. He quoted from *Izvestia*: 'official London haughtily lectured morality to others, and now this defendant finds himself in the unenviable role of the accused'.

⁹³ European Court of Human Rights, 'Judgement on case of Ireland v. the United Kingdom' (Strasbourg, 18 Jan. 1978), par. 1, at <http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?action=html&documentId=695383&portal=hbkm&source=externalbydocnumber&table=F69A27FD8FB86142BF01C1166DEA398649> (18 June 2012)

⁹⁴ *Irish Times*, 20 Apr. 1977.

⁹⁵ P.R. 22/77, 'Northern Ireland gets caught up in East-West polemics', 9 Feb. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/221).

The next report referred to coverage of the closing session of the preliminary hearings at Strasbourg.⁹⁶ Dr Brennan identified Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, the London-based correspondent of *Pravda*, as the source (it was Ovchinnikov who had earlier condemned the Provisional I.R.A. when he reported on the emergence of the Peace People). Ovchinnikov headed this piece, ‘Much vaunted English democracy never extended itself to Ireland’, recalling examples of English injustices throughout Irish history, and stating that Ulster remained outside the framework of bourgeois democracy, when ‘in 1938 the only other parallels were the Fascist regimes of Italy and Germany’. As was his wont, Ambassador Brennan inserted into his account of Ovchinnikov’s text his own observation: ‘he does not mention Stalin’. Next to be identified was O. Vasilyev, the London-based correspondent, who had been reporting on Northern Ireland since 1974. Vasilyev had focused on Roy Mason’s statement that compensation would be paid to the victims to prove that Britain was a ‘first-class example of mature democracy’. The ambassador wrote that Vasilyev was permitted by his editor to address himself personally to Mason’s ‘haughty’ statement, with: ‘Enough Mr Minister! What democracy can there be when basic civil rights of the entire Catholic population are being suppressed, [together with] an attempt to stuff money into the mouths of victims of inhuman punishments in Ulster...’ But it was Volodin (full name not supplied), another *Izvestia* London correspondent, who was most prominent in the report, and it was his work that was to attract most of the attention of the Irish authorities. Dr Brennan credited Volodin with introducing a note of criticism of the court itself. Suspicious because the court’s makeup was restricted to capitalist states, Volodin queried its need to continue deliberations in secret:

Why so? Documents record juridically the well-founded facts... [the documents are] burning the hands not only of the judges but also of the governments of the nineteen countries...to acknowledge judicially that the authorities of one – and what a one – are illegally putting behind bars innocent people, inflicting interrogations, using torture...means to acknowledge what bourgeois freedoms really mean in practice.

Volodin went on to criticise western press coverage of the case, accusing it of being ‘silent or distorted’, and singled out the Paris-based *Le Monde* for special mention. Under a headline ‘World of capitalism – world of lawlessness’, Volodin placed the plight of the Irish prisoners on par with:

⁹⁶ P.R. 25/77, ‘Soviet press sum up Strasbourg hearing’, 16 Feb. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/221).

...discrimination against Puerto Ricans in the U.S.; the tragic position of Italian unemployed; persecution of dissidents in the F.R.G.; violation of human rights in Israel; arbitrary dismissal of workers in Sweden; subversive activity by the C.I.A. in Honduras; and the throwing of workers of a bankrupt Austrian clothing factory on to the streets.⁹⁷

As noted above, Dr FitzGerald was particularly interested in this issue. The Irish foreign minister made good use of the details contained in the P.R.s for his public contribution to acrimonious exchanges between western and Soviet spokespersons in the run-up to a review of the work of the C.S.C.E., due to be held within a few months' time in Belgrade. President Carter indicated that he wanted to use the review as a vehicle for promoting human rights, while the Soviets wished to maintain the spirit of Helsinki and focus on practical matters to develop détente and economic cooperation.⁹⁸ Dick Walsh, political correspondent of the *Irish Times*, was present when Dr FitzGerald took the opportunity of his address to the National Press Club in Washington to accuse the Soviet press of using his country's case against Britain 'to distract attention from the problem of dissidents in the socialist countries'.⁹⁹ FitzGerald made the case for international bodies with binding supranational powers to act on human rights violations, stating that the U.N. commission for human rights was ineffective. Extolling the effectiveness of the western European system, he applauded the decision of the Commission of Human Rights in Ireland's favour and expressed his optimism for the case before the court at Strasbourg. He then turned his fire on Soviet media, and deploying selected extracts from correspondent Volodin's *Izvestia* article contained in P.R. 25/77 (as quoted above) he revealed:

Pravda's London correspondent, and two of *Izvestia's* London correspondents, have written at length on this subject, adding references to such matters as the tragic position of the Italian unemployed, alleged persecution of dissidents in the F.R.G., alleged arbitrary dismissals of workers in Sweden and Austria...all this is quite evidently part of a preparatory campaign before the Belgrade review of the C.S.C.E.¹⁰⁰

It is revealing to compare this use of P.R. 25/77 by Dr FitzGerald against the relevant text as written by Ambassador Brennan. First, FitzGerald had taken care to excise allegations on the role of the C.I.A. in Honduras and the discrimination of Puerto Ricans

⁹⁷ P.R. 25/77, 'Soviet press sum up Strasbourg hearing', 16 Feb. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/221).

⁹⁸ P.R. 57/77, 'Belgrade meeting: statements by Brezhnev and the Warsaw Pact foreign ministers', 30 May 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/221).

⁹⁹ *Irish Times*, 19 Mar. 1977.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

in the U.S. – no doubt to avoid causing embarrassment to his Washington hosts. Second, both the location of Dr FitzGerald’s address and his meeting with the U.S. secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, to discuss the topic of human rights in the Soviet Union (as featured in chapter two), evidences a level of coordination between Ireland and the U.S. in advance of the Belgrade review. Accordingly, these events give a direct link between Dr Brennan’s P.R.s and the formulation and delivery of Irish government policy in the East-West ideological contest.

Before considering Ambassador Brennan’s next report, it is also worthwhile to cross-check with a report by Conor O’Clery, then the London editor of the *Irish Times*, who was also covering the Strasbourg case. Under a heading, ‘New Russian interest in torture case’, he too contended that the Russians were keen to record in detail the infringements of human rights in a western country, and penned the following word picture of the Soviet team at work inside the courtroom:

They scribbled away happily under the disapproving stares of the British delegation...there are eight of them. The Paris and London *TASS* and *Pravda* correspondents, two from Novosti news agency, and two from Moscow Radio T.V., who have been allowed to wander around the courtroom filming the black-robed judges, and the British and Irish delegations facing the judges’ semi-circular bench.¹⁰¹

O’Clery included in his piece a suggestion ‘of international intrigue’ in the courtroom – that there were other Russians present, ‘some mysterious gentlemen discreetly watching proceedings.’¹⁰² He also recorded the British delegation’s increased annoyance at the unhappy coincidence of the attendance of the world’s press in the building next door for a session of the European parliament. There, a rather diligent official had posted a large notice directing journalists to the court hearing.

Nine weeks later Dr Brennan sent his third report to Dublin regarding resumption of the court’s open hearings.¹⁰³ The ambassador cited from an *Izvestia* report that Britain’s Attorney-General Samuel Silkin had sought before the court ‘to play a trump card by claiming that today these methods of interrogation are not used and there is no need to deliver judgement’. To contradict the attorney-general’s claim, Soviet sources indicated that news coming from Northern Ireland gave evidence of

¹⁰¹ *Irish Times*, 21 April 1977.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ P.R. 41/77, ‘Soviets exploit resumed Strasbourg court hearing, I’, 20 Apr. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/221).

ongoing use of police and army torture-chambers, citing the belief that ‘every inhabitant of Ulster knows that it is so’. Indeed, British media reports were also supportive of such Soviet claims, with evidence-based allegations emanating from television and press reports. The B.B.C.’s *Tonight* programme broadcast lengthy interviews with two men who claimed they had recently been subjected to wall-standing, beatings, hoodings, and threats at an interrogation centre in east Belfast by the R.U.C. The programme led to an allegation by NICRA that ‘the government’s pledge in Strasbourg was a lie’.¹⁰⁴ Whether or not these reports had made an impact on the Strasbourg court, Dr Brennan’s report related the Soviet view that Attorney-General Silkin failed in his ploy, and the Strasbourg court ‘was obliged to continue’. A novel aspect in the ambassador’s report also came from *Izvestia*’s London correspondent, O. Vasilyev. He revealed that he had been told recently that ‘London put behind-the-scenes pressure on the Irish government’ so that the remaining part of the trial would draw a minimum of publicity. No source for this revelation was quoted.

Just one week later Ambassador Brennan began his fourth and final report on the topic, with a summary assessment of the latest batch of Soviet commentary: ‘all heavy on past offences and polemical abuse, and light on what actually transpired at the hearing.’¹⁰⁵ He did give some recognition to Vsevolod Ovchinnikov of *Pravda* for a more moderate approach: ‘his stories were very short, contained less vituperation’. But he also noted that that his least favourite Soviet correspondent on the case, *Izvestia*’s Vasilyev, had been the one ‘who led the field in abuse’. Vasilyev focused again on the twin themes of the continuation of torture by the British army, and the loss of Britain’s credibility as a champion of human rights, stating: ‘London has now ended up in the role of the Andersonian naked king deprived of the clothes of the defender of civil rights in which it liked so much to attire itself.’ The ambassador left the parting quotes to *Pravda*: ‘Official London which usually speaks out in the toga of defender of civil freedoms and human rights found itself in the dock and in the role of a defendant whose guilt had been indisputably proven.’ And –linking the Americans to British culpability in advance of the impending Belgrade summit of the C.S.C.E. – *Pravda* cited a U.S. refusal to issue visas to Soviet trade union officials, to accuse the U.S. of ‘double standards of morality in politics’ and acting contrary to the Helsinki Final Act.

¹⁰⁴ *Irish Times*, 4 Mar. 1977.

¹⁰⁵ P.R. 43/77, ‘Soviets exploit resumed Strasbourg court hearing, II’, 27 Apr. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/221).

The European Court of Human Rights duly adjourned its public hearings in April, and having deliberated in private on a number of dates throughout the rest of the year, it published its judgement on 18 January 1978. Contrary to widespread expectations, the court, by majority vote overturned the verdict of the Commission that had held that the five methods amounted to torture, and instead ruled:

Although the five techniques, as applied in combination, undoubtedly amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment, although their object was the extraction of confessions, the naming of others and/or information, and although they were used systematically, they did not occasion suffering of the particular intensity and cruelty implied by the word torture as so understood.¹⁰⁶

Unfortunately, any Soviet reaction to the verdict was not the subject of a report after the judgement date. While it is to be noted that two P.R.s, 12/78 and 13/78, dated after 25 January are missing from N.A.I. files, the subject was not again raised by Dr Brennan. Northern Secretary Roy Mason expressed satisfaction on behalf of his government that Britain had not been found guilty of torture and declared that the chapter was now closed. One of the complainants of ill-treatment, Paddy Joe McClean of NICRA, said that the verdict had given a 'green light to a continuation of torture'.¹⁰⁷ It was left to the *Irish Times* to give a brief mention from the Soviet media for Irish readers. It quoted from TASS's 'long commentary' the claim that contrary to the court's verdict, the case in Strasbourg showed that Britain had applied and continued to apply 'refined torture to hundreds of champions of civil rights in Northern Ireland...with the encouragement of the highest authorities.'¹⁰⁸

The issue of Eurocommunism

Throughout Ambassador Brennan's tenure in Moscow in the 1970s, he took a particular interest in a political phenomenon that was on the rise in western Europe, Eurocommunism, and he forwarded thirty-five reports on the subject to Dublin.¹⁰⁹ During this decade many western communists were attracted to Eurocommunism, a theory and practice that offered a path to a form of democratic socialism, which its supporters considered was better suited to advanced capitalist countries than that suggested by Soviet-style communism. Such was the impact of this development that

¹⁰⁶ European Court of Human Rights, 'Judgement on case of Ireland v. the United Kingdom', par. 167.

¹⁰⁷ *Irish Times*, 19 Jan. 1978.

¹⁰⁸ *Irish Times*, 18 Jan. 1978.

¹⁰⁹ See 'Eurocommunism' column in the summary of Appendix 1 of this thesis.

some significant communist parties adopted Eurocommunist programmes.¹¹⁰ Those parties were, predominantly, the Italian (*Partito Comunista Italiano*, P.C.I.) and Spanish (*Partido Comunista de España*, P.C.E.) parties. Also associated with adhering to Eurocommunism were elements within the Communist Party of Great Britain (C.P.G.B.), and for a period in the mid-1970s the French party, *Parti communiste français*, (P.C.F.).

The political fortunes of the Latin members of this group were on the rise: in the case of the Italians, their leadership of anti-clerical forces in the 1974 referendum on divorce had delivered a fifty-nine per cent majority yes vote; the Spaniards, while still proscribed, were confident of their return to popular favour with the expected end of Francoism; and the French, because of the electoral power of their Common Programme with the socialists, were a major force in French politics. In this regard it was the Italian party, under its leader Enrico Berlinguer that led the Eurocommunist way. For the Italians, it was to be *via italiana* – their way to socialism – not the Leninist way. Berlinguer, mindful of the coups in pre-war Spain, post-war Greece, and the 1973 overthrow of President Allende's *Unidad Popular* government in Chile, considered that a similar outcome could also occur in Italy – owing to a combination of its membership of NATO and the E.E.C., and its lingering Fascist heritage. Accordingly, the P.C.I. promoted a gradualist approach to socialism, a strategy that included the offer of *compromesso storico* (the historic compromise), whereby it would campaign for and lead a broad government to include reformist elements of the principal Italian establishment party, the Christian Democratic Party.

There was, however, considerable disquiet and debate across the communist movement on an electoral path to socialism, including in Ireland, where many members of the C.P.I. had serious concerns about Eurocommunism. An indication of concerns was articulated by an executive committee member of the C.P.I., Eddie Glackin, in his review of the book by the general secretary of the P.C.E., Santiago Carrillo, *Eurocommunism and the state* (London, 1977):

But in many passages he seems to equate political democracy with the once-in-five-years mark on a ballot paper which passes for democracy in the capitalist world, and places undue emphasis on parliamentary forms of struggle...in doing so he ignores what [Fredrick] Engels said about universal suffrage – ‘that under

¹¹⁰ This section is informed by Urban, *Moscow and the Italian communist party*, pp 268-9.

conditions of bourgeois democracy it cannot be anything more than a gauge of the level of maturity of the working class'.¹¹¹

Furthermore, as the debate continued, some commentators – including Ambassador Brennan – claimed that a division had arisen in the communist movement between the Eurocommunist parties and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.). This development was mentioned in a recent obituary article on the prominent English historian, Eric Hobsbawm, who had been an early ‘convert’ to Eurocommunism. The obituary includes:

In the 1960s and 70s, he [Hobsbawm] developed links with those in the Italian Communist Party who saw themselves as developing a strategy for socialism that was quite distinct from, and to a large extent posed against, that of the Soviet Union.¹¹²

It was against this Eurocommunist background that Ambassador Brennan wrote his two ‘Michael O’Riordan’ P.R.s. In his first report he identified Michael O’Riordan as the delegate from the C.P.I. to the twenty-fifth congress of the C.P.S.U., held in Moscow in 1976.¹¹³ As he stood to address the congress, O’Riordan was the pre-eminent Irish communist of his time. Born in Cork in 1917, as a youth he joined Na Fianna and later the I.R.A., with whom he confronted the Blueshirts in his native city. In 1936 he enlisted in the ranks of the Connolly Column within the Fifteenth International Brigade that fought for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War, where he was wounded at the battle of the Ebro.¹¹⁴ There he developed his communist convictions under the influence of U.S., British and Spanish comrades. After his return to Ireland and the commencement of the Second World War, he was interned by the government in the Curragh internment camp for three-and-a-half years. There he studied Marxism, took Irish and Russian language classes, and developed a communist group in the midst of I.R.A. internees. Following his release and an unhappy stint in the Labour Party, he founded the Cork Socialist Party, which established him as a party-builder and vote-getter. Those successes led to an invitation in 1947 from Dublin city – where a few dozen communists were scattered between the Labour Party, the Connolly Study Group,

¹¹¹ *Irish Socialist*, Mar. 1978.

¹¹² Mary Davis and John Foster, ‘Eric Hobsbawm, 1917-2012’, in *Praxis: Marxism for the 21st century* (Marx Memorial Library, London, spring, 2013), p. 25.

¹¹³ P.R. 25/76, ‘O’Riordan speaks at Soviet party congress’, 8 Mar. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238).

¹¹⁴ See Michael O’Riordan, ‘A vicious unequal fight’ in *New Hibernia*, iii, no. 7 (July-Aug. 1986) available at Ireland and the Spanish Civil War (<http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-NewHibORiordan.htm>) (23 Sept. 2013).

and a handful of volunteers running New Books in Pearse Street – to lead the reformation of a communist organisation. He subsequently gave unbroken service as the secretary of the Irish Workers' League (1947-62), the Irish Workers' Party (1962-70) and, following the unity congress with the Communist Party of Northern Ireland (C.P.N.I.) in 1970, of the C.P.I.¹¹⁵ Shortly after the organisation of Irish communists into one party, and drawing upon his republican credentials, O'Riordan made a determined, but unsuccessful, bid to bring the leaderships of the Official and Provisional movements together for a unity meeting in Dublin.¹¹⁶

As the public face and the lone standard-bearer at successive general elections for Irish communism, O'Riordan had prevailed through the bitterly anti-communist Cold War period. By 1976-7 his party had grown to contain thirteen branches, based in Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Waterford,¹¹⁷ with many of its members to the fore in trade unions. With an influence that reached beyond its circa 300 card-carrying membership, the C.P.I. was involved in two promising political developments. In Northern Ireland, party members were to the fore in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' (I.C.T.U.) 'better life for all' campaign, which sought popular support against 'unemployment, discrimination, lack of democratic rights, and against the bombers and assassins.'¹¹⁸ And in the Republic, the C.P.I. was involved in tripartite discussions for the formulation of the Left Alternative grouping, with Official Sinn Féin and the Liaison Committee of the Labour Left. These discussions led to the publication of an alternative economic policy to those of the National Coalition government and the Fianna Fáil opposition. Entitled, *Go to work Ireland*, it proposed a detailed programme for economic expansion.¹¹⁹ Hopes were high that a long-nurtured strategy of building a left platform for policy formation and electoral advance were about to be realised. While both of these initiatives failed to survive to the decade's end, the C.P.I. was showing a capacity to give leadership and forge alliances when Ambassador Brennan wrote his report. Consequently, O'Riordan could at that time address delegates of the C.P.S.U. congress and his fellow foreign representatives from a position of some domestic strength and optimism.

¹¹⁵ This biographical account is aided by Michael Quinn, *The making of an Irish communist leader, 1938-47* (Dublin, 2011), pp 1, 12-23.

¹¹⁶ Hanley and Millar, *The lost revolution*, p. 203.

¹¹⁷ Analysis sheet, 'Branch nominations for N.E.C.' n.d. but March 1975 (D.C.L.A., C.P.I., 8/043).

¹¹⁸ *Irish Socialist*, Aug. 1976.

¹¹⁹ Left Alternative, *Go to work Ireland!: the unemployment crisis, the left alternative* (Dublin, 1977), p. 3.

Ambassador Brennan began his report on O’Riordan’s address to the Soviet party congress with an account of O’Riordan’s analysis of the situation in both parts of Ireland. O’Riordan laid the blame on successive British policies of divide and rule that had led to the ongoing murders, bomb explosions and widespread imprisonments in Northern Ireland. He went on to identify, reported Brennan, a ‘subjective factor – the dominance of bourgeois political personalities...of the two states...[that] had always betrayed the national, political and economic interests of the people’.¹²⁰ Dr Brennan continued with O’Riordan’s positive news from the trade union movement that despite sectarian pressures in the north, unity of the movement had been maintained on an all-Ireland basis. Further, O’Riordan could report with some pride that the chairman of his party, Andrew Barr of Belfast,¹²¹ had been recently elected president of the I.C.T.U. But Brennan wrote more sharply as he recounted O’Riordan’s three rhetorical questions that he had put to the congress delegates: to the first question, ‘Could the divide, engendered by imperialism, between people in the North be overcome?’, O’Riordan had simply pointed to the example of ethnic harmony in the multi-national union of his hosts; to his second question (a little stranger, in Brennan’s view), ‘Is a small country powerless before the face of imperialism?’, O’Riordan pointed to the recent victory of the people of Vietnam over the Americans; and finally (and ‘strangest of all’ for Brennan), ‘Can the people of Ireland, situated beside a powerful imperialist exploiter, defeat it and embark on the building of socialism, despite its remoteness from the socialist camp?’, to which O’Riordan had offered the example of socialist Cuba. O’Riordan had gone on to assert that positive answers to his questions were possible because of the political and practical assistance and leadership of the C.P.S.U. to communist and national liberation movements worldwide. Together these alliances had helped to bring about a change in the *sootnoshenie sil* (correlation of forces) – a Soviet term corresponding to a tipping point in favour of anti-imperialist and socialist advances. Brennan wrote sceptically about O’Riordan’s optimism, yet he related verbatim his words: ‘We are convinced that the present congress will provide a further change in the correlation of forces for the benefit of humanity’. To make clear his interpretation of O’Riordan’s world analysis, the ambassador clarified: ‘in plain English O’Riordan seems to be arguing that the

¹²⁰ P.R. 25/76, ‘O’Riordan speaks at Soviet party congress’, 8 Mar. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238). All subsequent quotations in this section are from this P.R., unless otherwise referenced.

¹²¹ C.P.I., ‘Andy Barr (1913-2003)’ (<http://www.comunistpartyofireland.ie/s-barr.html>) (22 July 2013).

growing military might of the Soviet Union would help to establish “socialism” [Brennan’s ironic inflection] in Ireland’.

It is of interest to switch at this point to O’Riordan’s own account of the C.P.S.U. congress which appeared in his party’s newspaper, the *Irish Socialist*.¹²² Under a heading ‘U.S.S.R. forges ahead’ and writing in a style designed to convey the sense of *camaraderie* that he had experienced at the congress, O’Riordan contrasted recent announcements by western leaders President Gerald Ford, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson and ‘our own [Taoiseach Liam] Cosgrave’ regarding increases in unemployment, prices and inflation, and cutbacks in health provisions, with those contained in General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev’s five-hour speech. The Soviet leader had spoken of an expanding economy, real increases in wages, services and benefits, price and reductions.

Anxious to profile the ‘decision makers’ at the congress, O’Riordan focused on a social profile of the 5,000 Soviet delegates. He noted that seventy-seven per cent of them were straight from jobs in industry, 887 were rank-and-file farmers from collectives and state farms, 227 represented intellectual workers, and from the armed forces there were eleven cosmonauts and 314 servicemen. Just over twenty-five per cent of delegates were women, nearly ninety per cent had ‘higher, incomplete higher or secondary education’ and they were drawn from the U.S.S.R.’s sixty nationalities. Referring to the 103 foreign fraternal parties’ delegates, O’Riordan recounted:

The Irish delegation was accorded the privilege of speaking in the company with outstanding leaders of the international working-class and national liberation movements. It would be difficult to indicate which received the most tumultuous welcome, but high on the list were Fidel Castro; the Vietnamese leader, Le Duan; the representative of Angola, Alves Batista; Alvaro Cunhal of Portugal [the C.P. leader]; ‘La Pasionara’ [passion flower] of Spain, [the republican and communist leader of the civil war against Franco, exiled in Moscow until 1977] and Gus Hall, the steel-worker general secretary of the C.P.U.S.A. Each of them spoke eloquently of the selfless solidarity of the Soviet Union.¹²³

The above concluding reference to Soviet solidarity serves as a pointer to the C.P.I.’s sense of internationalism and close allegiance to the Soviet Union. This allegiance was rooted in its first members who were drawn from Irish republican and labour movement activists. They had been attracted by the Bolshevik revolution’s

¹²² *Irish Socialist*, Apr. 1976.

¹²³ *Irish Socialist*, Apr. 1976.

promise of self-determination for smaller countries and its socialist nature.¹²⁴ From 1917, Irish communists' faith in these ideals and their concern for the fortunes of the Soviets' attempt to create, defend and develop the world's first socialist state persisted. Being part of a movement with many millions of members worldwide sustained them amid the prevailing anti-communist attitudes in their own country. As their own domestic road to socialism was much informed by the politics of James Connolly – which they summarised as the reconciliation and unity of the twin struggles for national independence and socialism in Ireland – they were greatly taken with the philosophical and political worldview offered by Marxism and Leninism. An example of such attraction was the publication by the C.P.I. in 1970 of a booklet that was widely read among left and republican circles, *Lenin on Ireland*. Edited by A. Raftery, (the penname of Paddy Carmody, editor of the *Irish Socialist*), the booklet contained contemporary extracts from writings by Marx and Lenin on critical events in Irish history, including Marx's demand for the separation of Ireland from Britain, and Lenin's analyses of the 1913 lockout, and his defence of the strategy of James Connolly and the 1916 leaders.¹²⁵

Dr Brennan's report on Michael O'Riordan's speech to the C.P.S.U. congress also contrasted O'Riordan's contribution to that of the French and Italian parties' representatives. Brennan noted that those parties had failed to endorse the Soviet view of proletarian internationalism – the esoteric communist term for fraternal and ideological relations between individual communist parties – which Brennan defined in the report as an 'acceptance of the ideological primacy of the Soviets in the world communist movement and uncritical approval of their internal and foreign policies'. Dr Brennan was to put his analysis more expansively in his 1982 address to the Royal Irish Academy's conference on East-West relations. Speaking in a personal capacity, he asserted:

The key concept here is 'solidarity', i.e. the need for all anti-imperialist forces to fight the common enemy - capitalism...The Soviet Union fulfils its internationalist duty by building up its economic and political power to...firstly, exert a 'decisive' influence on world events...secondly, to render increasingly effective aid to all anti-western forces and against any western attempts to 'export counter-revolution', especially in the third world...thirdly, the Soviet

¹²⁴ See O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, pp 1-15.

¹²⁵ A. Raftery [pseud. for Paddy Carmody] (ed.), *Lenin on Ireland* (Dublin, 1970), p. 7.

Union becomes an increasingly attractive social model for the rest of the world, in other words the ‘force of example’.¹²⁶

It was in the final chapter of his report that Ambassador Brennan pointed to an aspect of O’Riordan’s speech to the C.P.S.U. congress that served to highlight another ideological division in international communism, the rift in Sino-Soviet communist relations. This was a subject which Ambassador Brennan addressed many times throughout his tenure in Moscow.¹²⁷ He recorded that O’Riordan ‘roundly condemned the Maoists’. In this matter O’Riordan was following the lead of his predecessor, Seán Murray,¹²⁸ who had spoken in 1960 on behalf of both the Irish Workers’ League and the C.P.N.I. at a meeting of eighty-one communist parties in Moscow. There, deep differences between the Chinese and Soviet parties emerged and were openly debated. Focusing on early Soviet moves towards détente, the international peace movement, and nuclear disarmament initiatives at the U.N., Murray had asserted:

Imperialism has not changed its spots but there has been a serious decline in its power, while the forces of socialism, headed by the Soviet Union, are constantly gathering strength...we believe that peaceful co-existence is possible...on this question we find ourselves in disagreement with our comrades in the Chinese C.P. It appears to us that they are committed to a pre-destination theory that one way or another, war is inevitable... [They] say we should mobilise the masses to fight for peace, they...would split the peace movement and drive out its non-communist allies...¹²⁹

Robert Service, in his recent biography of Stalin, expresses the view that the root of the rift lay with Mao Tse-tung’s belief that Khrushchev’s programme had made too great a break with the kind of communism espoused by both Stalin and Mao,¹³⁰ but Joan Urban’s comment on the causes and eventual direction of the Sino-Soviet rift is more insightful:

Underlying all the sound and fury of the Maoists’ ideological polemics against the C.P.S.U. was their fear that Khrushchev’s push for détente with the West and

¹²⁶ Paper delivered, 19 Nov. 1982, by Dr E.J. Brennan, ‘The role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy: an Irish perspective’, p. 16. Dr Brennan provided a copy of his thirty-five page script to this writer, May 2010.

¹²⁷ See ‘Sino-Soviet rift’ column in the summary of Appendix 1 of this present thesis, which lists twenty-six such P.R.s.

¹²⁸ Murray was general secretary of the C.P.I. from 1933 to 1940 and national organiser from then until his death. See C.P.I., ‘Seán Murray (1898-1961)’ at (<http://www.comunistpartyofireland.ie/s-murray.html>) (3 July 2012).

¹²⁹ Sean Murray’s address to meeting of communist and workers’ parties, Moscow, 1960, in Nolan (ed.) *Communist party of Ireland*, p. 42.

¹³⁰ Robert Service, *Stalin: a biography* (London, 2004), p. 595.

influence in the third world portended a reduction in Soviet diplomatic support and military-economic aid to Peking. In the longer run the Chinese communists would compensate for this loss by normalising relations with the West.¹³¹

It was this Chinese alignment with the western powers (most notably the Chairman Mao-President Nixon summit of 1972 that extended beyond Sino-American economic and cultural relations to a de facto anti-Soviet alliance) that prompted O’Riordan to condemn the Chinese so strongly. Even so, Joan Urban points to a contrary view from the Italian Communist party (P.C.I.) on Soviet attempts to orchestrate a collective denunciation of Maoism. She concludes that the P.C.I. had advocated ‘reasoned dialogue rather than confrontation and anathema in handling interparty disputes’,¹³² for fear that the Sino-Soviet rift would widen. A graphic example of how wide the rift was to become was provided to this writer during an interview with Eddie Glackin, the above mentioned executive committee member of the C.P.I. During Glackin’s visit to Cuba in 2011, he was told by an interpreter – who had served in Angola with the Cuban army in the 1970s in defence of the Angolan government – that some of his Cuban comrades were killed there by anti-government forces using Chinese-supplied rifles.¹³³

Eighteen months after his address to the C.P.S.U. congress, O’Riordan was the subject of prominent coverage in the pages of *Pravda* on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. Dr Brennan’s report gave details of the coverage and attached photocopies of relevant articles. Describing the coverage as an ‘unusual tribute’ and asserting ‘it is not every foreign communist party leader who rates an article like this, and certainly at such lengths’, Brennan reported that a copy of the congratulatory telegram sent to O’Riordan from the central committee of the C.P.S.U. had appeared on the front page of *Pravda*; that Brezhnev had awarded him the Order of the October Revolution (second only in ranking to the Order of Lenin); and that an extended ‘laudatory’ article, headed ‘Glorious son of the Irish people’ was carried in *Pravda* on the same date, accompanied by a photo of O’Riordan.¹³⁴ Dr Brennan also took the opportunity to forward to Dublin copies of other recent articles of O’Riordan’s that had been published in the Soviet media. Ambassador Brennan proceeded to put the reasons for O’Riordan’s ‘signal honour’ into a political context. He began with the C.P.I. – that ‘miniscule party’ – and

¹³¹ Urban, *Moscow and the Italian communist party*, p. 254.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 349.

¹³³ Joint interview with Tom Redmond and Eddie Glackin, national executive members of the C.P.I. in 1975 (11 May 2012).

¹³⁴ P.R. 117/77, ‘*Pravda* lauds Michael O’Riordan’, 15 Nov. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1975).

explained that similar to small states at the United Nations, a small party could take on a larger significance in the internal debate among communist parties. He continued:

It does not take much imagination to see why the Soviets have chosen to honour O’Riordan so demonstratively. *Pravda* acknowledges in so many words that it is the support that he has given the C.P.S.U. against the Eurocommunist parties who reject the Soviet brand of communism (Marxism-Leninism) and the claim of the C.P.S.U. to dictate their strategy and tactics (proletarian internationalism).¹³⁵

Brennan then provided a translation of a section of *Pravda*’s profile of O’Riordan:

He unshakably stressed that the achievements of the U.S.S.R. are the property of the world communist movement...that it is the duty of every communist, in unmasking the slander of bourgeois propaganda seeking to blacken the grandiose achievements of the Soviet Union, to give a decisive rebuff to anti-Sovietism...to show the erroneousness of theories [that] lead the peoples off the path laid by the party of Lenin sixty years ago.¹³⁶

Brennan extended his comments by referring to a recent article by O’Riordan in a Soviet publication to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the October revolution,¹³⁷ dismissing it as ‘anodyne’ and ‘a paean’ He also passed on extracts from O’Riordan’s recent speech in Moscow, wherein O’Riordan contrasted the consequences of British direct rule in Northern Ireland and the economic crisis on the whole island with the ‘solution of the national problems and the complete destruction of unemployment’ in the Soviet Union. To complete his report on the speech, the ambassador felt it necessary to tell Dublin – without making any allowance for the international ‘Árd Fheis’-type spirit surrounding that occasion (one where speeches could reasonably be expected to include generous expressions of comradely respect and solidarity) – ‘he [O’Riordan] concluded with some slogan-mongering with “long live proletarian internationalism.”’

Conclusion

In his correspondence with this writer, Dr Brennan stressed that ‘all [official Irish] policy was initiated in Dublin. The embassy did not play any role in this and simply executed it’.¹³⁸ Mindful of this principle, the ambassador’s first report on his exchange

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Michael O’Riordan, ‘The ideas of Lenin in Ireland’ in *The influence of the great October revolution on the development of the world communist movement* (Moscow, 1977), as cited in P.R. 117/77, ‘*Pravda* lauds Michael O’Riordan’, 15 Nov. 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1975).

¹³⁸ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

with the Soviet vice-minister in relation to the C.S.C.E. indicates that from the outset the approach of the Irish mission towards the Soviet authorities would be one of caution and distance. This is evidenced by the reaction of Ambassador Brennan to the Soviet minister's supportive response to Irish fears concerning Irish unity. That Dr Brennan was at pains to stress that his government was not actively pursuing Irish unity, amounted to a signal to the Soviets that they should keep their distance from this topic – and by extension exercise caution in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland. In this regard it is revealing to learn that as far as Ambassador Brennan was concerned, he succeeded in keeping Northern Ireland off any possible Soviet agenda for his embassy. He informed this writer: 'events in Northern Ireland were not an issue for the embassy. The Soviets never raised them with us'.¹³⁹

The overriding feature of the Northern Ireland reports is that they chimed closely with Dr FitzGerald's prime concern: monitoring of the coverage of the Provisional I.R.A. in the Soviet media. In this regard the P.R.s display clear evidence that the Soviet media coverage did not stand still as events unfolded in the North. FitzGerald's desire that the Provisional I.R.A. be debunked in the Soviet press as a left-wing group worthy of Soviet sympathy came to pass, if not quite for the reasons that FitzGerald wished. The Provisional I.R.A. was denounced for objectively aiding those British and loyalist elements who wanted a purely security solution, in favour of those campaigning for a new political arrangement. In this way the trend in the Soviet media was to take its cue from Irish communists, as exemplified by O'Riordan and Sinclair's 'fixation-with-the-gun' condemnation of the Provisional I.R.A. in *World Marxist Review*.

A certain amount of variety and inventiveness in Soviet coverage was in evidence. On the Provisional I.R.A. issue *Krasnaya Zvezda* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* presented contrasting coverage and comment from Dr Brennan. Moreover, *Krokodil's* two cartoons represent unique images in Soviet-Northern Irish commentary. The 'key to the solution of the problem of Ulster' sought to combine imagery with a Marxist economic analysis of the conflict, while the 'ultra pastor Ian Paisley' cartoon harked back to Czarist times for a demagogic figure urging on 'pogrom-makers' – a powerful image from Russian history relating to organised massacres of Jews.

¹³⁹ Email interview with former Ambassador Brennan (4 May 2010).

Evidence has been provided that Soviet interest extended beyond news coverage and political comment into cultural expression. Yevtushenko's poems in *Pravda* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta* – the foremost of the U.S.S.R.'s political and cultural publications – showed a measure of empathy and sophistication in the Soviet media's engagement with the Northern conflict. Yevtushenko had come to experience at first hand the Troubles, not as a tourist or a Soviet official, but as a poet willing and able to bear independent witness to the conflict. In this regard the incorporation of the Pushkin-in-Belfast scene in *Guns in Belfast* was especially symbolic.

Soviet coverage of Ireland's case at Strasbourg reflected the U.S.S.R.'s response to the internationalisation of the conflict in Northern Ireland, in which the maltreatment of prisoners in a British jurisdiction was brought before a global audience. The Soviet media gave considerable attention to the proceedings before the Court of Human Rights, and were not slow to heap criticism upon Britain for its responsibility in the issue. However, to say that the Soviet attention was merely taking opportunist advantage would be going too far. As has been discussed above, the Soviet media had been displaying interest and concern for the conflict by interacting with a range of the participants on the ground in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, and it had responded to the deterioration of the situation by extending its criticism of the security forces and loyalists to include the Provisional I.R.A. Nevertheless, as the timing of the Strasbourg case coincided with President Carter's increased emphasis on human rights issues in the socialist countries, it was to be expected that the Soviets would respond in kind on this issue. Irish sensitivity concerning this development can be detected throughout these P.R.s, as Ambassador Brennan both updated and forearmed Foreign Minister FitzGerald with chapter and verse to enable him to mount a rebuke of the Soviet action – a rebuke that FitzGerald tellingly reserved for delivery in Washington. In the event, FitzGerald's rebuke contained an unfounded assumption: that the court in Strasbourg could be relied upon to deliver justice to Irish victims of torture in British jails.

The Michael O'Riordan reports are valuable for placing on the record an 'official' view of the standing of O'Riordan and his party in Irish-Soviet relations. Despite the deprecatory and dismissive language that Brennan peppered throughout these and earlier P.R.s that included references to the C.P.I., such was the regard that O'Riordan commanded in Soviet official circles that the ambassador was obliged to acknowledge the Irish communist's standing in the Soviet Union as a factor of note in

the complexity of relations between the two countries. Indeed, the content of the P.R.s, and the positions of Ambassador Brennan and General Secretary O’Riordan, combine to indicate that the two men personified polar opposites in the complexity of Irish-Soviet relations. Furthermore, it is clear from his reports that Ambassador Brennan placed more stock in the prominence of O’Riordan’s role in the European and world communist movements than any threat that the pro-Soviet C.P.I. might offer to the status quo in Ireland. In that regard the O’Riordan P.R.s bring an added value to this present study, for they serve to introduce European and international political issues into its ambit. While issues such as Eurocommunism and Sino-Soviet differences may on the surface have appeared to have been of little relevance to 1970s Ireland, they were issues with which the Irish government was obliged to consider in some detail. In fact, structured consideration of these and other geopolitical issues had been ongoing since 1974 in the context of Ireland’s involvement in an E.E.C. framework on foreign policy formulation, which included a focus upon the Soviet Union. Accordingly, it is to that E.E.C. framework that this study must now turn.

CHAPTER FIVE

Irish-Soviet relations in the context of European Political Cooperation, 1974-80

Introduction

In his work on Irish international relations, Patrick Keatinge observed that by the 1970s a more complex world system had evolved from the decades immediately following the Second World War. While the dominance and rivalry between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, still persisted, Keatinge suggested that they had been joined on the world stage by three further power centres: Japan, China, and the E.E.C. Together, he wrote, these ‘five centres of influence’ were moving towards a ‘more complicated’ and even a ‘pentangular relationship’ to manage ‘the search for arms control, the persistence of bureaucratised alliance systems and ideological distrust [which] are fundamental characteristics of the politics of détente’.¹ This global sense of pentangularity has already been supported by new evidence referred to above, in the form of Ambassador Brennan’s P.R.s, in chapter four and set out in Appendix 1. Specifically, the appendix’s summary analysis confirms the predominance of the ‘big five’ in the Kremlinological concerns of Ireland’s ambassador to the Soviet Union in the period 1974-80, with the E.E.C. to the fore among the five major powers. As the subject of a total of 126 of the 519 P.R.s (including the thirty-five ‘ideology of Eurocommunism’ P.R.s), European Communities-Soviet affairs commanded the greatest amount of attention from Dr Brennan.

When Ireland, along with Britain and Denmark, joined the European Communities on 1 January 1973, it took its place alongside Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany (F.R.G., or West Germany), France, Holland, Italy, and Luxembourg in an amalgam of member states often referred to by diplomats and journalists as ‘the Nine’. Together the Nine were legally bound into three structured treaties and institutional communities that comprised the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Atomic Energy Community, and the European Economic Community (E.E.C.). Centred at Brussels and Luxembourg, the communities were

¹ Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 225.

governed by the Council of Ministers of the European Communities (Council of Ministers), the executive arm of which was the powerful Commission of the European Communities (the Commission).² Conventionally the term generally used in Ireland for the European Communities in the 1970s was the ‘E.E.C.’, for it was the laws of that community which most evidently impacted upon Irish economic, political and social affairs. Accordingly, both terms – the E.E.C. and the Nine – will be employed throughout this chapter.

But it is Irish involvement in an additional mechanism that operated alongside the E.E.C., a framework for political cooperation among the foreign ministers of the Nine, which is more central to the chapter. Within this intergovernmental mechanism member states agreed to confer with one another and arrive at common E.E.C. foreign policy positions on a consensual basis, whenever possible. Not governed by an E.E.C. treaty, this framework was a looser mechanism, and was accompanied by a set of protocols originally known as the Davignon machinery.³ In time, the official title of European Political Cooperation was applied to the framework, and very soon it was universally known as E.P.C. To accommodate a secure exchange of messages relating to E.P.C. operations, a communication system between the Nine’s foreign ministries and selected embassies was established in 1973. This telex system was known as COREU (acronym of CORrespondence EUropéenne).⁴ For the sake of efficiency, efforts were made in advance of meetings to build up knowledge of and agreement on the topics under consideration by means of the COREU system.

The impetus for the operation of the E.P.C. framework lay principally with the foreign minister of the country holding the presidency of the Council of Ministers, which was rotated alphabetically among the Nine every six months. All E.P.C. meetings were held in the capital of the presidency, to emphasise their distinction from Council of Ministers meetings held in Brussels. In theory, its structures were less formal than those of the E.E.C. proper. Most obviously, E.P.C. had no central institutional or compelling

² Noel Dorr, ‘Ireland in an independent world: foreign policy since 1973’, in Ben Tonra, Michael Kennedy, John Doyle, Noel Dorr (eds) *Irish foreign policy* (Dublin, 2012), p. 58.

³ These protocols were named after the head of the Belgian Foreign Office, Viscount Étienne Davignon, who formulated the first report on foreign policy consultation. See Denis Kennedy, *Irish Times*, 16 October 1973.

⁴ Bicchi, Frederica and Carta, Caterina, *The COREU/CORTESY network and the circulation of information within E.U. foreign policy*, available at RECON Online Working Paper, 2010/01 (<http://www.reconproject.eu/projectweb/portalproject/AbstractRECONwp1001.html>) (23 Nov. 2012)

mechanism. However, by 1978 a hierarchical mechanism and operational routines were well established. They were headed up by four annual meetings of the Nine's foreign ministers. Those meetings were prepared at monthly meetings of the Political Committee, composed of the heads (political directors) of the political divisions of the Nine's foreign ministries. Appointed in April 1974, Noel Dorr served as the Irish political director on the committee until 1980.⁵ Furthermore, to inform the Political Committee on the main issues of the day – by means of studies – a number of dedicated subgroups of experts were established. These working groups focused upon the United Nations, Africa, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (C.S.C.E.), the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Latin America, and – of most relevance for Irish-Soviet relations – the Eastern Europe Working Group (E.E.W.G.).⁶

The chapter's interest in Irish involvement in the E.E.W.G. has been triggered by the discovery of a series of E.E.W.G.-related files among those from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Registry files, for the years 1972-80, which have recently been made available at the National Archives, Dublin. As with Ambassador Brennan's P.R.s from Moscow, it is again the privilege of this writer to be among the very first beneficiaries of the availability of the E.E.W.G.-related files to researchers.⁷ These files are not official/centralised E.E.W.G. files relating to group meetings of all nine member states, and indeed it may well be that such files do not exist, in view of the E.P.C. framework's non-treaty status mentioned above. Rather, then, the D.F.A. files contain the records of Irish involvement in the E.E.W.G. These records include detailed reports on the business conducted at E.E.W.G. meetings for the Department of Foreign Affairs from the Irish representatives who attended the meetings (which contain agendas, studies under review, and topics raised); briefing documents (speaking notes) provided to Irish representatives by the D.F.A. in advance of E.E.W.G. meetings; copies of discussion papers submitted by other member states to E.E.W.G. meetings; internal D.F.A. discussion/commentary papers on various topics submitted by other member states to E.E.W.G. meetings; copies of some of the completed studies by the group; copies of telexes received via the COREU, with details of attendances at meetings; and

⁵ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013).

⁶ This analysis is informed by 'Background note on European Political Cooperation', 14 Feb. 1978, in Tenth report on developments in the European Communities, Political Division (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2009/120/625).

⁷ Noel Dorr could confirm to this writer that he is the first researcher to mention the E.E.W.G.-related files to him (Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013)).

E.E.W.G.-related communications from Ambassador Brennan and other officials in the Moscow embassy. As all Davignon/E.P.C. meetings were, by tradition, conducted in French, some of the documents in the E.E.W.G. files are in that language and indeed all of the E.E.W.G. studies were originally written in French. However, many documents are in English, including all the D.F.A speaking notes and reports back to the department from the Irish delegations, all the internal D.F.A. discussion papers and correspondence, and many other papers generated by Irish involvement in the group. Also, some records of Irish involvement relating to the E.E.W.G.'s 'parent' body, the Political Committee, are contained in these files. Lastly, it should be noted the group was also known as the Eastern Europe Experts Group and the Eastern Europe Group of Experts, but hereafter it will be referred to in this study as the 'E.E.W.G.'

As with Ambassador Brennan's P.R.s in chapter four, the E.E.W.G.-related files are so extensive that it is not possible in this study to discuss all of the files or all of the issues raised therein. However, to facilitate an overview of the group's work, the file for each E.E.W.G. meeting from 1974 to 1980 has been examined, and annual spreadsheets assembled. The sheets show key details of each meeting, principally the titles of the studies and other topics under consideration by the group. Also, a summary analysis, selected under subject headings of studies undertaken by the E.E.W.G., has been compiled. These compilations are appended to the thesis as Appendix 2.

Even though the decisions of E.P.C. and the E.E.W.G. were not binding, and all decisions on the formulation of papers and studies required a consensus, Ireland's participation with the other E.E.C. countries, all of whom were members of NATO, presented Ireland with a unique challenge. Some observers of Irish politics, concerned with the possible loss of Irish sovereignty, considered that the Irish people had only approved of joining the E.E.C. in 1972 on the basis of joining an economic community.⁸ Something of this sense was expressed privately by Eamon de Valera in his final days in public office, as recorded by his son, Terry de Valera:

I remember well speaking to him at the time of entry to the E.E.C. While he acknowledged that entry was inevitable, he accepted this with strong reservation regarding loss of sovereignty. He agreed fully with the concept of the

⁸ See Anthony Coughlan, *E.E.C. political union: menace to Irish neutrality and independence* (I.S.M. publications, Dublin, n.d., but 1986), p. 19. Coughlan is the long-time director of the National Platform that 'advocates a Europe of independent, democratic, cooperating nation states.' See National Platform at (<http://nationalplatform.org>) (19 Feb. 2013).

development of trade and commerce and the more desirable aspects of culture from the continent of Europe. Political union or the diminution or loss of sovereignty was quite a different matter in which he felt the smaller nations would fare worst.⁹

But Dr FitzGerald, who had been one of the seven signatories of the articles of association for the foundation of the Irish Council of the European Movement in 1954,¹⁰ took a different view. FitzGerald was favourably disposed not just towards Irish economic membership of the E.E.C. but also towards the adoption of a wholehearted commitment to the process of E.E.C. integration. Accordingly, as the newly appointed minister with responsibility for Irish participation in E.P.C. and the E.E.W.G., he set about organising his department for that purpose.

An indication of Ireland's immediate commitment to the E.E.W.G. was reflected in the standing of its representatives, known as a delegation, sent to meetings. After Dr Brennan attended the first two meetings, he was appointed as ambassador to Moscow, but thereafter he was briefed on the E.E.W.G.'s ongoing work. His successor on the group was A.E. Mannix, the newly-appointed D.F.A. expert on eastern Europe, and more often, counsellor Patrick MacKernan, a senior officer who was to become secretary general of the D.F.A. in the 1990s. Also, James A. Sharkey, who attended meetings in 1976-7, had been first secretary in the Moscow embassy from its foundation in 1974.¹¹ During the later years covered by this study, delegations often comprised two new and younger officials, Thelma Doran and Anne Anderson.¹² As will be shown later in the chapter, their reports to the department provided telling observations and clarity.

As already indicated, Ireland's relationship with the Soviet Union, as mediated through its involvement in European Political Cooperation, has not been the subject of scholarly study. However, this study has been informed by aspects of the contributions of Noel Dorr, Katy Hayward, Trevor Salmon, Diarmaid Ferriter, and Patrick Keatinge in the broader field of Irish participation in E.P.C. For additional and more critical analyses, interviews with Roger Cole, formerly of the Irish Campaign for Nuclear

⁹ Terry de Valera, *A memoir* (Dublin, 2004), p. 253, as cited in Ferriter, *Judging Dev*, p. 353.

¹⁰ As cited in the obituary of a fellow signatory, Professor Louis Smith (1923-2012), *Irish Times*, 15 Dec. 2012.

¹¹ V.E. Louis and J.M. Louis (eds), *Information Moscow*, p. 177, includes Sharkey in its listing of members of diplomatic corps for 1975.

¹² Anderson, who joined the D.F.A. after graduating from U.C.D. at nineteen-years-of-age with a degree in history and politics, is currently Ireland's first female ambassador to the U.S. See her interview with Simon Carswell, *Irish Times Magazine*, 5 Oct. 2013.

Disarmament, and Anthony Coughlan, formerly of the Irish Sovereignty Movement, have been drawn upon. Aspects of the Soviet and communist view of the topics raised in the chapter have been principally sourced from the contents of Ambassador Brennan's P.R.s, from C.P.I. publications, and Joan Barth Urban's publication on the Italian Communist Party.¹³ In relation to economic aspects of the rivalry between the E.E.C. and COMECON (the organisation for the promotion of economic cooperation between the Soviet Union and [principally] its socialist neighbours in eastern and central Europe) Mícheál Ó Corcora's unpublished thesis, 'Irish-Soviet trade relations and policy', has been a valuable reference.¹⁴ Finally, for sources relating to President Patrick Hillery and legal implications of E.P.C., publications by biographer John Walsh and from the Supreme Court of Ireland have been consulted.¹⁵

In general terms Hayward and Dorr share a common understanding of Irish experience within the E.E.C. This commences with, as Hayward put it, the contention that the motives behind Ireland's applications to join the E.E.C. 'were primarily economic',¹⁶ and that even before membership was achieved Ireland felt under pressure to assuage the anxieties of the existing six member states about Irish foreign policy and military neutrality. Hayward sums up this view:

The Irish government felt obliged to launch something of a diplomatic offensive to reassure Ireland's putative partners that Irish neutrality and its non-membership of NATO did not represent any basic ambivalence towards European political integration. Statements reassured those partners that Ireland supported and would participate constructively in that integration without reservation or precondition.¹⁷

And following Irish admission to membership of the E.E.C., Hayward accounts for the strategies adopted by Ireland within E.P.C over the past forty years:

The traditional Irish foreign policy approach to Europe has been to build political capital within the E.E.C and bilaterally with partners and then to deploy this – with adroit diplomacy – to the many short and medium term strategic objectives of the state. From an E.U. [E.E.C.] point of view, if not a

¹³ Urban, *Moscow and the Italian communist party* (London, 1986).

¹⁴ Mícheál G. Ó Corcora, 'Irish-Soviet trade relations and policy' (M. Litt. thesis, T.C.D., 1980).

¹⁵ John Walsh, *Patrick Hillery: the official biography* (Dublin, 2008).

¹⁶ Katy Hayward, 'The European Union: national and supranational dimensions to foreign policy' in Ben Tonra, et al (eds), *Irish foreign policy*, pp 131-52, p. 132.

¹⁷ Hayward, 'The European Union', p. 138.

domestic political one, there was never any difficulty in accommodating either Irish neutrality or Ireland's difficulty with the justice or home affairs portfolio.¹⁸

Noel Dorr, now a prominent authority on Irish foreign policy history, previously enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the Irish diplomatic service. During the 1970s he was closely involved in the formulation and exercise of Irish policy in the country's relations with the Soviet Union. While he has made little comment on the details of Irish involvement in E.P.C., Dorr expresses a similar assessment to Hayward, and indicates how the Irish strategy paid off in terms of delivering for the country's economic interests:

It tried where possible to show willingness in principle while seeking accommodation for its particular difficulty...but it always tried to confine 'opt-outs' to a minimum. This helped to create the impression that Ireland, in contrast to Britain, had a committed and wholehearted approach to European integration. This worked to its benefit in later decades in the allocation of structural funds...¹⁹

Trevor Salmon's *Unneutral Ireland* offered a more comprehensive view on Irish involvement in E.P.C. Drawing on interviews he had conducted with officials of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in 1981 and 1983, he wrote: 'despite some initial fears that E.P.C. might be the "thin edge of the wedge", Ireland settled into it "fairly quickly", finding it was "very tolerant [of non membership of NATO]"'.²⁰ In taking a different perspective, and quoting from other sources presenting more critical analyses, Salmon also noted: 'it [E.P.C.] has occasionally been regarded as exhibiting a tendency towards "groupthink"',²¹ possibly leading to a European impulse and involvement in a framework of collectivism and consensus-building from which it could become difficult to depart.

Patrick Keatinge's work has been an insightful source throughout this thesis. His *A place among the nations* (1978) noted that by 1975 the E.E.C. Nine had already increased the number of times that they voted as a bloc in the United Nations to sixty-one per cent on contested issues, up from forty-three per cent in 1973.²² He has updated

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 144.

¹⁹ Dorr 'Ireland in an independent world', p. 57.

²⁰ Unnamed Irish diplomats as cited in Trevor C. Salmon, *Unneutral Ireland: an ambivalent and unique security policy* (Oxford, 1989), p. 266.

²¹ See Christopher Hill, 'National interests: the insuperable obstacles' in Hill (ed.) *National foreign policies and European political cooperation* (London, 1983), p. 189, as cited in Salmon, *Unneutral Ireland*, fn.198, p. 266.

²² Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 167.

that early observation more recently to assert that the E.E.C. has ‘replaced the U.N. as the backbone of Irish foreign policy.’²³ However, it is Keatinge’s assessment that the consultative E.P.C. framework was evolving with the ‘maximum of pragmatism and the minimum of publicity,’²⁴ which is to be tested with evidence contained in the E.E.W.G. files and discussed below.

Apart from the political parties of the left, the independent voices that raised concerns about Irish involvement in E.P.C. in the 1970s were organised into two main advocacy groups: the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (C.N.D.), and the Irish Sovereignty Movement (I.S.M.) – as was indicated to this author by two leading activists, Roger Cole and Anthony Coughlan. Irish C.N.D. was part of the British and international campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament that attracted popular support from the 1960s. Irish C.N.D. was opposed to E.P.C., in so far as its members were aware of its operations, on the basis that it had the potential to draw Ireland into the NATO and ‘nuclear club’ of western Europe.²⁵ Irish C.N.D.’s main claim to success at this time was keeping Ireland a nuclear-free country following its gatherings at Carnsore Point, County Wexford from 1978 – the site that had been earmarked for Ireland’s first nuclear power station. Following the gatherings the government abandoned its plan to build such a power station. However, it was a publication by the Irish Sovereignty Movement – an organisation that grew directly out of the Common Market Defence Campaign that opposed Ireland’s entry into the E.E.C. in 1972 – that articulated the case against E.E.C. integration, and its likely impact upon the Soviet Union:

A politically united E.E.C., integrated with NATO and dominated economically by West Germany, would alarm the Russians and add to East-West tension, the lessening of which is the most urgent task facing humanity today.²⁶

And specifically upon E.P.C., it stated:

[E.P.C.] has no legal basis...there is no obligation on Ireland to take part...it gives endless opportunities to civil servants for foreign junkets and it increases the self-importance of Irish politicians to be consulting with their opposite numbers in the larger states about foreign issues that are at best marginally

²³ See Patrick Keatinge’s introduction in Ben Tonra, Michael Kennedy, John Doyle, Noel Dorr (eds) *Irish foreign policy* (Dublin, 2012), p. ix.

²⁴ Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 166.

²⁵ Interview with Roger Cole of Dalkey, Co. Dublin (11 Feb. 2013). Cole has been chairman of PANA, the peace and neutrality alliance, since 1996. The alliance opposes ‘the integration of Ireland into U.S./E.U./NATO structures.’ See PANA at (<http://www.pana.ie>) (19 Feb. 2013)

²⁶ Anthony Coughlan, *E.E.C. political union: menace to Irish neutrality and independence* (I.S.M. publications, Dublin, n.d., but 1986), p. 3.

relevant to this country...if we meant what we say about our neutrality...[our efforts should be] channelled through the U.N., the non-aligned movement or joint action with the west European neutrals.²⁷

The chapter is divided into three sections, commencing with an examination of a number of key E.E.W.G. meetings and decisions, as reflected in the records of Irish participation in those meetings and contained in the D.F.A. files. This section considers E.E.W.G.-related files covering the first eighteen months of E.E.W.G. operations and studies, which range from the first meeting attended by Ireland in January 1974 to the last meeting of the Irish presidency of the E.E.C., in June 1975. These files are examined for the purpose of discovering the aims and *modus operandi* of the group and its members, especially that of the Irish representatives. It goes on to shed some light on ethical concerns relating to Irish involvement in studies conducted by the group on communist parties of the E.E.C. Here the chapter expands its discussion into the strengths and prospects for communism across Europe, including the relationship between Soviet communism and Eurocommunism in western Europe, and an Irish involvement in that relationship. It then looks at those E.E.W.G. files that contained studies relating to the military affairs of the Soviet Union and its allies – with a view to considering the implications of those studies for Irish neutrality. It will also consider Ireland's response to a British proposal that the group be empowered to share certain studies with NATO.

The second section proceeds to examine newspaper and archival sources to discuss whether the change of government in 1977, which resulted in the replacement of Fíne Gael's Garret FitzGerald with Fianna Fáil's Michael O'Kennedy, brought about a change in Irish policy within E.P.C. towards the Soviet Union.

The chapter's final section – in the form of a postscript – focuses upon sources that include the judgement of Justice Seamus Henchy as part of the supreme court's ruling on the constitutionality of Ireland's adoption of the Single European Act (Single Act, or S.E.A.) in 1987. That ruling expressed the majority opinion of the court's judges that the ratification of the Single Act, which contained a provision for the incorporation into E.E.C. law of E.P.C., was impermissible under the constitution without the approval of the Irish people by means of a referendum.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

E.E.W.G-related files: January 1974-June 1975

The first meeting of the E.E.W.G. with the participation of the Irish delegation of Dr Edward Brennan (not yet the Irish ambassador to Moscow) and A.E. Mannix took place on 28 January 1974 in Bonn.²⁸ The German presidency identified three major pillars to support the group's future work: foreign ministries of the Nine's member states, E.E.C. embassies in Moscow and other east European capital cities, and the current delegation assigned to C.S.C.E. work. However, after 'considerable discussion', it was agreed for consensus and security reasons that the Moscow embassies should not combine to produce studies, but rather they would be informed in general terms of the ongoing work of the group. Furthermore, it was agreed that the E.E.W.G. could, where appropriate, put questions to embassies, via their head offices. In this way a vibrant network was established between the Nine's missions to Moscow, their various home ministries, and the E.P.C. framework.

The question of privacy for the group was carefully considered. It was agreed that the E.E.W.G.'s work and existence would be regarded as 'particularly confidential.' The following set of words for release to the press, as a guideline, was made available to delegations by the presidency: 'it is a matter of common knowledge that the Nine are interested in the development of common foreign policy...only natural that the future relations between the Nine and eastern Europe are one of the subjects.'²⁹ However, (needless to say) the closing words of the guideline were not for publication: 'the group hopes to avoid telling the press that a working group on this topic has been...specially created.' In this regard the hopes of the first meeting have been remarkably fulfilled – the E.E.W.G. did not feature in scholarly or newspaper sources accessed during the research for this study. Indeed, the above mentioned interviewees, Roger Cole and Anthony Coughlan, each of whom has been a vigilant observer of all matters relating to the E.E.C. and E.P.C. for over forty years, insisted they had never previously heard of the E.E.W.G.³⁰ Finally, Noel Dorr's information to this writer is revealing: he recalled

²⁸ This paragraph is informed by the report 'Meeting of E.E.W.G., 28 Jan. 1974', initialled 'A.E.M.', 31 Jan. 1974, in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

²⁹ Report 'Meeting of E.E.W.G., 28 Jan. 1974', initialled 'A.E.M.', 31 Jan. 1974, in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

³⁰ Separate interviews with Coughlan and Cole (11 Feb. 2013).

that the group was ‘confidential, but not a secret. If the issue came up in the dáil (it did not) the minister would deal with it. [It was] political, not legal.’³¹

Having dispensed with administrative and confidentiality issues, the January 1974 meeting proceeded to the task of assembling studies. To set the scene, Herr Meyer-Landrut, the West Germans’ expert representative, gave an exposition of the presidency’s view of the Soviet Union’s position vis-à-vis the E.E.C. under a number of headings. The following extracts have been selected from the summary (provided to the D.F.A. by A.E. Mannix after the meeting) of Herr Meyer-Landrut’s paper to recreate the tone and tenor of the German’s introduction to E.E.W.G. business:

1. Maximum objectives of the Soviet Union in its *Westpolitik*:
 - Maintenance of its own sphere of domination
 - Politically guaranteed access to western Europe’s economy
 - Block progress of European integration
 - Expulsion of U.S. influence followed by a power vacuum which would both reduce west European political options and increase Soviet influence
2. Soviet attitude towards west European unification:
 - A unified Europe could defend its interests more effectively than its individual component-states. It might even realise its proper weight in the security field
 - The success of this process would be contrary to the dogma of inherent contradictions between irreconcilable capitalist states.
 - It would exercise an attraction for the East Europeans as a unified group not based on hegemony
3. Soviet tactical measures to block European integration:
 - There will be no military intervention as long as the risk of American reaction remains. This is true even if U.S. troops leave Europe
 - Soviet political pressure can be exercised by press campaigns and diplomatic means. The Soviet Union could accuse the E.E.C. of conducting itself in an anti-détente manner by pressing ahead with its policy of integration and especially to the extent that this involves the security area. [underlining in original]
 - The Soviets could create internal difficulties for western governments both by legal means – through communist parties – and illegal means by subversion [and] exploitation of social problems.³²

³¹ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh (16 Apr. 2013).

³² ‘Summary of exposition by Herr Meyer-Landrut’, attached to A.E. Mannix’s report of the E.E.W.G. meeting of 28 Jan. 1974, 31 Jan. 1974, to the D.F.A. in European Political Cooperation: reports of meetings of the eastern European Expert Group, 1974-5 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/913).

In some contrast, however, Herr Meyer-Landrut's statement ended upon a less strident note, which made allowance for the Soviet Union's favourable response to Chancellor Willy Brandt's policy of cooperation with eastern Europe, *Ostpolitik*: 'while the above should not be underestimated, it must be remembered that the Soviets have themselves a real interest in détente.'³³ Only one comment in A.E. Mannix's report was made on Meyer-Landrut's exposition. He drew attention to the underlined words above, putting the D.F.A. on notice that Ireland's position on military alliances could be caught up in E.E.C.-Soviet rivalry.

Two key procedural issues were also considered at the E.E.W.G. meeting. The first issue was its terms of reference, which had been set by the Nine's Political Committee (the group's superior body) earlier that month. Those terms read:

The group of experts will study the future relations of the Nine with the countries of eastern Europe after the C.S.C.E [at Helsinki, which did not publish its Final Act until August, 1975], and [it] will report to the Political Committee.³⁴

Despite this, two papers were before the meeting regarding the group's mandate, one each from the German presidency and Britain. It emerged that the group felt that rather than studying the Nine's views on the East, they should look at the relationship from the opposite direction, i.e. a perception of COMECON's view of the Nine, or, indeed, to update and build upon aspects of Herr Meyer-Landrut's exposition, as listed above. Consequently, to begin the work, it was agreed on the proposal of the presidency that in the short-term the group should 'deal generally with Eastern attitudes towards the European [E.E.C.'s] integration process. This would require an analysis of eastern attitudes and of the possible effects of eastern reactions to the attitudes of the Nine.'³⁵

The second fundamental issue under consideration was the format to be adopted by the group for its future studies. Two polar views emerged: France contended that the content of papers should be confined to analyses; whereas the British held that papers should also contain policy recommendations for the Political Committee – a position which was more likely to lead to a collective and proactive E.E.C. foreign policy

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Internal D.F.A. letter, R.J. T...[not legible] to A.E. Mannix, 'Meeting of Group of Experts of the Nine on Eastern Europe, 28 Jan. 1974', 24 Jan. 1974, in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

³⁵ Report 'Meeting of E.E.W.G., 28 Jan. 1974', initialled 'A.E.M.', 31 Jan. 1974, in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

towards the Soviet Union. A.E. Mannix's report back to the D.F.A. recorded the contribution of the Irish delegation consisting of Mannix and Dr Brennan:

Ireland agreed that [some of the British paper was] outside the mandate. However, there were elements in both papers which could be combined...As he saw it, the group was called to provide factual analysis of Soviet strategy and tactics. Therefore, it would be difficult to provide such analysis of the problems which would not in one way or another imply policy recommendations as the group would have to consider the Soviet reaction to western initiatives and the complications of these reactions for the West. The analysis would inevitably lay bare policy implications and opinions.³⁶

In essence, this contribution was supportive of the British position, and as seen in chapter four, it was much in line with the comprehensive Kremlinological format – with policy recommendations – that Ambassador Brennan was soon to deploy in his P.R.s from Moscow to Dublin. The group agreed to combine the German and British drafts, and adopted a two-stage compromise: first, to commence with analytical studies, and second, to seek clarification from the Political Committee as to whether the group should furnish policy recommendations for the future. The Irish delegation's report back to the D.F.A. on the February meeting of the E.E.W.G. confirmed both the Political Committee's approval for the change of direction for its work, and its approval that some time in the future studies should go beyond analyses and towards the inclusion of policy recommendations. It stated:

...the Political Committee agreed on 6-7 February 1974 that the object of the studies of the group shall be in the first place, the present and potential reactions of the countries of the East with regard to the process of European construction... They should equally permit later the evaluation of the political consequences which will result from this for the Nine.³⁷

The report then proceeded to itemise the Political Committee's ambitions on an expansive programme of studies of a more intrusive nature, including studies: 'on political and military developments within the Warsaw Pact; on efforts towards economic integration within COMECON; and on internal development of member states of the Warsaw Pact'.³⁸ According to the Irish report, no objections to the actual plan of work were raised by delegations present, but when the presidency proposed that a representative of the European Commission should attend and participate when

³⁶ Report 'Meeting of E.E.W.G., 28 Jan. 1974', initialled 'A.E.M.', 31 Jan. 1974, p. 2, in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

³⁷ See 'Meeting of Eastern Europe Experts Group, 15 Feb. 1974, Bonn' in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), p. 4, no. 5 (11).

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5, no. 3.

economic matters were being discussed, France did raise a procedural objection. 'Although most delegations [including Ireland] were in favour', read the D.F.A. report, 'France immediately entered reservations.'³⁹ It was agreed that this reservation – a key indicator of France's view on the question of keeping the treaty-based E.E.C. separate from the voluntary E.P.C. – would need to be resolved by the Political Committee for the group's next meeting. The decision of the Political Committee was revealed after the June 1974 meeting when the Irish representative's subsequent report stated that a Commission representative had been 'present and participated in the discussion' on a Belgian paper on the Soviet economy.⁴⁰ This development signalled that even a country as powerful as France had been prevailed upon to drop its stance (temporarily, as it turned out) on the future direction of the E.E.C. for the purposes of compiling information on the Soviet Union.

Also arising from the January E.E.W.G. meeting, A.E. Mannix provided an internal critique for the department of the paper that the British had submitted. His critique was anxious to stress that the basic British analysis – that Soviet policies of détente and involvement in the C.S.C.E. were an attempt to 'Finlandise' [that is, neutralise] Europe – should only be seen as a possible scenario. Mannix argued that the U.K. went:

...much too far in its [negative] assumption...Furthermore, the [British] concept that the 'first task of western governments should be to defend their own national interests against Soviet encroachment even on very small points' is contrary to the declared policy of the Nine to contribute to cooperation and détente in Europe.⁴¹

This makes available valuable evidence, from the outset of the E.E.W.G., that the Irish were evaluating papers, and arriving at an informed opinion of their own. In a practical sense, this was a considerable achievement – the group's work was largely in French, and all the D.F.A.'s departments were then undergoing rapid expansion.⁴² Finally, while Mannix expressed support for the switch in direction of E.E.W.G. studies to studying COMECON's views on the E.E.C., he did so with hints of mild disapproval:

³⁹ See 'Meeting of the Eastern Europe Experts Group, 15 Feb. 1974, Bonn', in *European Political Cooperation: eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), p. 2.

⁴⁰ As cited in 'Eastern Europe Expert Group meeting, 26 June 1974, Bonn', n.d., in *European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), p. 1.

⁴¹ See 'United Kingdom paper "Relations with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe"', initialled 'A.E.M.' [A.E. Mannix], n.d., in *European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), p. 3.

⁴² See Dorr, 'Ireland in an independent world', p. 68.

I agree with the statement that our policy should be based upon an analysis of communist motives to the extent that the group had not been permitted to discuss the Nine's objectives...the political directors have directed the group to study Soviet reactions...Obviously, Soviet objectives in Europe must be included, but this should not provide the entire spirit of the inquiry.⁴³

The June 1974 meeting of the group was the last during the German presidency. Its main business was to finalise discussions on a lengthy report, summarising the group's work to date for the Political Committee. The Irish report back to Dublin indicated that the meeting was far from an exercise in unanimity. Papers presented on economic topics, and on the attitude of the U.S.S.R. and the Warsaw Pact to E.E.C. construction were subjected to 'a good deal of criticism all round', and 'certain revisions and excisions'.⁴⁴ The principal objections were that aspects of the papers were inclined to exceed the group's current mandate by making proposals on what the Nine ought to adopt as policy vis-à-vis COMECON into the future. In other words, once the papers went beyond analyses of the COMECON countries to proposals for the Nine to take up, representatives became much more cautious and reluctant to commit their countries to policy positions. This was an early indication that even as E.E.C. member states were willing to cooperate to a varying extent at the E.E.W.G., they remained conscious of their own state-to-state relationships, principally on trade, with the Soviet Union. This observation was supported by Noel Dorr who informed this writer that member states could on occasions 'hold back on information with a view to promoting their own separate relations with the Soviets.'⁴⁵ In this context it is of interest to note from the memoir of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko that the French, West German, Italian, French, Belgian and Dutch governments had all entered into bilateral trade, political and cultural agreements in the 1970s with the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ Furthermore, even as the British delegations to the group were taking a strong line for Kremlinologist studies, British-Soviet relations were also entering a period of active cooperation. Gromyko recorded that in February 1975 Prime Minister Harold Wilson's visit to Moscow led to the signing of a Soviet-British protocol to deepen consultations on international problems. Gromyko further stated:

⁴³ See 'United Kingdom paper "Relations with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe"', initialled 'A.E.M.' [A.E. Mannix], n.d., in *European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889)

⁴⁴ See 'Eastern Europe Expert Group meeting, 26 June 1974, Bonn', n.d., in *European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), p. 1-2.

⁴⁵ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013).

⁴⁶ See Gromyko, *Memories*, pp 239-88.

Also signed was a joint declaration on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and two long-term programmes, one on the development of economic and industrial cooperation and the other on scientific and technical cooperation. In the joint declaration, both sides asserted their intention to work together to extend détente to all regions of the world.⁴⁷

Gromyko also recalled that Wilson was ‘well disposed towards the Soviet Union’, that the Englishman was a frequent visitor to Moscow, and after his retirement as prime minister in 1976 that he was chosen as the honorary president of the Great Britain-U.S.S.R. Association – the British government funded organisation founded in 1959 to promote non-political contacts between the two states.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, as indicated in the Irish files, British delegations continued to adopt forceful positions at the E.E.W.G., a factor which may suggest that those F.C.O. officials who were keen to pursue an anti-Soviet course were afforded a role at the group. In this regard a sense of disconnection between the group’s studies on the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the prevailing climate of détente that existed between all the members of the Nine and the Soviet Union on the other, has become apparent. This disconnection may well be accounted for by the character of the E.E.W.G., in that it was made up of influential delegations with strong Kremlinological inclinations. However, it should also be borne in mind that the E.E.W.G. was a subgroup within the E.P.C. framework and its agendas and studies were decided upon and made available to all of the Nine’s foreign ministries in the formulation of a common understanding of the Soviet Union.

Following the expiry of the German presidency of the E.E.C. on 1 July 1974, the French presidency was next in line to facilitate the group’s work. In an escalation of the reluctance shown by its delegations at the January-June meetings, France convened only one meeting during its term of office. Even there, the business was mostly devoted to tidying up the previous Germans’ report (‘a report not circulated to any missions abroad because of the highly confidential nature of the document’).⁴⁹ If the French ‘Non’ to E.E.W.G. meetings prompted some re-evaluation among other member states of the group’s value, the following information from the Moscow embassy at this time left no doubt as to the Irish ambassador’s view. Then *in situ* for six months at the Irish embassy,

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 207.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 208. See also Great Britain-U.S.S.R. Association archive available at (<http://archiveshub.ac.uk/data/gb206-ms1499>) (4 Sept. 2013).

⁴⁹ See ‘Group of experts eastern Europe: note for ambassadors’ conference, 14-5 Dec. 1974’, in European Political Cooperation: reports of meetings of the Eastern European Expert Group, 1974-5 (N.A.I., D.F.A.2007/111/913).

Ambassador Brennan expressed his regard for the quality of E.E.W.G. representatives, the need for an ongoing Irish commitment to the group, and proposed some key economic and ideological areas for future studies:

The group are specialists with access to a wider range of information that would not be available here... [they have] results of...intelligence, research work, etc. ...the group should be as active as possible. Suggested group work: Mediterranean and Middle East; what are Soviet goals, including oil? The state and prospects for COMECON integration; how badly does the Soviet Union need technology and to what extent will this influence their foreign policy? How do they really feel about the deepening crisis of capitalism?⁵⁰

But the D.F.A. added another ingredient to Dr Brennan's enthusiasm – a sense of pragmatism. This was expressed by the Irish delegation to the October 1974 meeting of the Political Committee, which informed the meeting: 'Ireland felt that the emphasis should be on matters of specific relevance to E.P.C. activities rather than academic studies; consequences for the Nine should be the watchword.'⁵¹ It appears that the Irish approach found some favour, for after consultations in October and November the directors of the Political Committee redefined the group's mandate with scaled-back instructions for medium-term examinations of just four business-like topics. Commencing with an investigation into the Soviet Union and the current oil and energy crisis, the group was also tasked with compiling studies on the visa position for east European citizens travelling to E.E.C. states; on the position in Romania (where the leadership under Nicolae Ceausescu had embarked upon an autonomist position in its relations with the Soviet Union and the world communist movement),⁵² and on a Europe-wide congress of communist parties scheduled to take place in 1975. However, the French still failed to act, and it would fall to Ireland – during its first presidency of the E.E.C. – to get E.E.W.G. operations back on track.

It was to take until 26 March 1975 for the Irish presidency to assemble the first of three E.E.W.G. meetings. The business of the meetings was dominated by three topics: visas for east European citizens, the prevalence of the term 'peaceful coexistence' (a generic Soviet term for the improvement of East-West relations that was

⁵⁰ Ambassador Brennan to McHugh, D.F.A., 15 Oct. 1974, in European Political Cooperation: reports of meetings of the Eastern European Group, 1974-5 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/913).

⁵¹ Extract from 'Report of meeting of the Political Committee of European Political Cooperation, 18 Oct. 1974, Paris, in European Political Cooperation: reports of meetings of the Eastern European Group, 1974-5 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/913).

⁵² As cited in Urban, *Moscow and the Italian communist party*, p. 20.

becoming increasingly popular in the West), and the energy crisis. Again, it should be noted that the following discussion draws upon documents relating to Irish involvement in these meetings. Even though Ireland held the E.E.C. presidency and was responsible for assembling and preparing for the meetings, only Irish accounts of the group's meetings have been located by this study.

The discussions in Dublin on visas for Eastern Europeans were of an introductory nature, and it appears that it soon emerged that member states were determined to maintain the status quo for issuing such visas. This was later confirmed in an internal D.F.A. report:

The August meeting [in Rome] will probably focus on whether a common Nine position on visas for east European citizens can, or should, be elaborated. It is unlikely that such agreement will emerge on this as most countries regard visa policy and procedure as falling primarily within their own sovereign competence because of its relation to their national security.⁵³

Nevertheless, the records of the meetings do indicate that the Nine shared information on visa procedures in place in their respective states for east European countries, and the number of visas issued in recent years. A report submitted by Ireland with details of a sixteen-month period revealed the number of eastern European citizens coming into the state: 'Bulgaria, 25; the G.D.R, 65; Hungary, 165; Poland, 310; Romania, 40; Czechoslovakia, 200; and the Soviet Union, 295.'⁵⁴ Britain's report stated that visas granted had increased from 5,588 in 1970, to 8,258 in 1974. Despite the increase in traffic, Britain made it clear 'we do not believe the time has arrived when we could contemplate a visa abolition agreement with any Warsaw Pact country.'⁵⁵ The Irish report indicated that it had abolished visa requirements for Yugoslavia only.

Reports of the June meeting reveal that the question of the Soviet use of the term, 'peaceful coexistence', was the main business for the day's proceedings. The group's concerns were encapsulated in this extract from the discussion document: 'the Soviet Union has been increasing its efforts to gain acceptance in the West for the principle of peaceful coexistence between states of different social systems, as defined and

⁵³ See J. Neary, 'Visas for east European citizens', 26 Aug. 1975, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/923)

⁵⁴ See 'Statistics of visas issued by Ireland to eastern European citizens, 1 Jan. 1974 to 23 Apr. 1975', in Visas for east European countries (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/921).

⁵⁵ See British visas report in Visas for east European countries (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/921).

proclaimed by the Soviet Union.’⁵⁶ This definition, it was felt, was deceptively presented by the U.S.S.R. to western audiences as an expression of its peace policies and its desire for warmer relations based upon increased East-West trade and cultural contacts. However, the E.E.W.G. was anxious to expose the political ambitions of the Soviet Union accruing from peaceful coexistence. This had been highlighted in the study of the European communist parties’ conference considered at the April 1975 meeting. Quoting Soviet sources, the study recorded that high volume Soviet contracts to purchase western goods would make employment safer for workers in the West, demonstrate through constant exchanges the superiority of the socialist system, and underline the sincerity of Soviet peace policy – thus facilitating the political struggle of progressive forces (principally the communist parties) in the West.⁵⁷ Moreover, it was contended, Soviet adherence to peaceful coexistence did not compromise Soviet political support for ongoing class struggle in capitalist societies. Referring to an article in *Izvestia*, it was noted that a political analysis therein had specifically denied that the principles of ‘peaceful coexistence apply to the inter-social space’ in the West.⁵⁸

Drawing upon such concerns, the group noted with some alarm that the term ‘peaceful coexistence’ had been incorporated into a number of bilateral documents, including the American-Soviet joint statement on basic principles of May 1972; Soviet-Italian communiqué of July 1974; the above mentioned Anglo-Soviet joint statement of February 1975 following Harold Wilson’s visit; and the charter of economic rights and duties of states adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December 1974. Accordingly, the group agreed to determine that the ‘Nine might therefore seek a common attitude that it [the term peaceful coexistence] will not be included in [further] treaties or multilateral documents’, and ‘where necessary, the term “peaceful cooperation” may be used...as a western alternative’. In this way it can be seen that the terminology of the 1970s détente period was subjected to the E.E.W.G.’s efforts to coordinate an E.E.C.-wide response to thwart a perceived Soviet propagandist advantage.

The third of the major topics discussed at the E.E.W.G. meetings during the Dublin presidency – eastern Europe and the energy problem – was set against the

⁵⁶ This paragraph is informed by ‘Peaceful coexistence’ in, European Political Cooperation: reports of meetings of the Eastern European Group, 13 June 1975 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/923).

⁵⁷ See study: ‘Conference on European communist parties’ in April 1975 meeting of E.E.W.G. (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/921-2).

⁵⁸ See ‘Peaceful coexistence’ in *Izvestia*, 11 Sept. 1973, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/923)

background of the world energy crisis of the 1970s. Just two years previously, the crisis had been dramatically demonstrated by an oil embargo proclaimed by Arab member states of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in response to U.S. support for Israel during the Yom Kippur war. Increasingly, the U.S.S.R. was seen as an alternative supplier of oil to western Europe. Mícheál Ó Corcora's thesis captures the growing importance of Soviet oil imports for Ireland in this period: '1973, £1.4m.; 1974, £10m.; 1975, £14.7m.; 1976, £14.9m.; 1977, £20.5m.'⁵⁹ The June meeting in Dublin focused on the ramifications of what it viewed as limited or underdeveloped Soviet oil reserves and a developing financial and political dilemma for the Soviet Union and its COMECON allies. In its summary sheet the Dublin document held:

The Soviet Union is at present a net exporter of oil and coal, whilst an importer of gas. However, given the rate of industrial expansion there, unless something drastic is done...it is likely that it will be a net importer in the 1980s.⁶⁰

The report noted that the Soviet Union was the main supplier of COMECON's oil needs. It claimed that the Soviets were both passing on some of the recent world price increases, and indicating to those states that it could no longer supply their rising demands for oil. At the same time, the Soviets were increasing exports to the West via new gas pipelines and trans-shipment complexes. The report concluded:

The main reasoning behind all this [higher exports to the West] appears to be scarcity – the scarcity of hard currencies [the Soviet rouble was not a convertible currency in the West] to pay for its industrial needs and expansion. Thus as long as these exist it will be an exporter to the West – even if it is a net importer – in order to pay for its future.⁶¹

However, evidence for a Soviet view of the Soviet and COMECON economies is also contained in these E.E.W.G. files. An article from *Soviet Weekly*, headed 'A Europe-wide perspective', recorded in February 1976 that COMECON had proposed to the E.E.C. the signing of an agreement for all-round European economic cooperation.⁶² In doing so the article made the case for COMECON's economic progress to date and industrial potential for the future. In 1974 COMECON's output of steel and electricity had exceeded that of the E.E.C. by 29 per cent; gas by 80 per cent; coal by 220 per cent;

⁵⁹ See Mícheál G. Ó Corcora, 'Irish-Soviet trade relations and policy', table 4.21, p. 152.

⁶⁰ See 'Eastern Europe and the energy problem', 9 June 1975, in European Political Cooperation: meeting of Eastern European Experts Group, 13 June 1975 (2007/111/923).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² This paragraph is based upon a clipping from *Soviet Weekly*, 26 June 1976, in COMECON: relations with the Community (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/917).

mineral fertilisers by 60 per cent; and meat and milk by 20 per cent. The article noted the ‘springing up’ of united Europe movements in the West, but proposed that the visionary scope of cooperation should be extended beyond the River Elbe by means of mutually beneficial trade arrangements between the two economic bodies. In doing so, it accepted that there were ‘unsolved problems’ on the COMECON side, including: ‘objective obstacles determined by the different forms of ownership and various economic methods...the prolonged isolation of the world’s socialist markets from capitalist ones.’ Also, it was noted, there was a need to expand COMECON exports beyond those that currently predominated – raw materials, oil and agricultural products – to value-added products. To assist this, *Soviet Weekly* noted, new five year plans were under way to enhance exports by raising quality and technical supports for machinery exports to western Europe. The article concluded with some practical suggestions for European cooperation:

for example, by the carrying out of worldwide projects and the protection of the environment on a continental scale, or by the creation of a single electric power grid, a Europe-wide network of gas and oil supply and an all-Europe system of roads and river routes.⁶³

However, in opposition to this optimistic Soviet proposal for pan-European cooperation were E.E.C. plans for its own internal market. These plans had Irish support, a record of which is also contained in the E.E.W.G. files. Among the files is a report dating back to 1973, entitled ‘COMECON approach to the Communities’. The report contained details of a briefing from the Danish presidency of an early proposal from the secretary-general of COMECON to the E.E.C. for discussions on future trade arrangements.⁶⁴ An Irish response to this suggestion was pointedly discussed in an accompanying D.F.A. document:

The logical consequence of this development would be that in a short time the member states of the Community and of COMECON would deal with each other on a multilateral basis through those bodies. We must consider to what extent we are prepared to see the status of COMECON thus enhanced or if COMECON is capable of this.⁶⁵

⁶³ *Soviet Weekly*, 26 June 1976, in ‘COMECON: relations with the Community’ (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/917).

⁶⁴ See ‘Comecon approach to the Communities’, Sept./Aug. 1973, and other related documents in European Political Cooperation: eastern Europe group of experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

⁶⁵ See ‘Speaking notes’, August 1973 in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), p. 1.

The advice to Minister Garret FitzGerald was for opposition to acceptance of any COMECON proposal for multilateral trade arrangements, on the basis that it was ‘undesirable for political reasons...it would restrict bargaining of the satellite countries and tie them more into the Soviet sphere of influence than they are at the moment.’⁶⁶ This formulaic expression of concern for the independence of the Soviet Union’s partners within COMECON was much used by diplomats and experts in the documents of the E.E.W.G. files, on the basis that:

We are aware that many of the states of eastern Europe regard a development such as this with great misgiving. They are rightly concerned to preserve their freedom to negotiate bilaterally with the E.E.C. ... One of our major concerns is that détente should also find expression in free contacts at all levels between the countries of eastern and western Europe. To this end we should do whatever we can to contribute to a loosening of the rigid structures in eastern Europe.⁶⁷

However, the reports made no reference to the inherent contradiction between an E.E.C. policy position that sought to maintain economic independence for certain states within COMECON, while at the same time the process of integration was under way towards a single market for E.E.C. member states. Needless to say, the Soviet Union and its allies were keenly aware of the E.E.C. policy, as was reported to Dublin by Ambassador Brennan in his June 1976 in a report entitled: ‘Soviets warn E.E.C. against exploiting trade ties with COMECON’.⁶⁸ In his report Dr Brennan provided an apposite citation from an article in the international communist journal, *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, by Professor V. Iskra of the Polish United Workers’ Party:

The problem is clear. What is involved is an attempt to weaken the unity of the member countries of COMECON, to pit the united economic strength of the E.E.C. against individual countries of COMECON with the aim of receiving corresponding economic and political advantage. Such an approach would open to the corresponding economic circles in the countries of western Europe the possibility of maximising profits, influence the formation in the COMECON countries of incomplete industrial structures, put a brake on their economic integration and also differentiate them from the economic, political and ideological point of view.⁶⁹

A record of Dr Brennan’s own suspicions towards Soviet attitudes to the E.E.C. dated back to the time of his role as a senior member of Ireland’s permanent representation to

⁶⁶ ‘K’ to minister, 27 July 1973, in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

⁶⁷ See ‘Speaking notes’ for Irish delegation, Aug. 1973 in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), pp 1-2.

⁶⁸ P.R. 61/76, 14 June 1976, in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2006/131/238).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

the E.E.C. at Brussels. On the eve of his departure to his new post in Moscow, he wrote to the D.F.A.:

‘It [the E.E.C.] was in itself a significant and unique achievement in western Europe, and it was a powerful economic force in the world. We all knew that the Russians intensely disliked it and we further knew from their public statements that it was their objective, if at all possible, to break up the Community. This objective would have to be reckoned as high on their list of priorities for their policy in western Europe.’⁷⁰

And after the E.E.C. had decided against joint E.E.C.-COMECON cooperation, Ambassador Brennan wrote to further counsel the department against ongoing Soviet efforts to overturn stated E.E.C. policy:

The Soviets naturally have a strong wish for very thorough discussions. We for our part should rule this out completely and abide by the E.E.C. Council of Ministers’ decision not to get involved in bilateral discussion on the Community question. The predictable Soviet tactic is to drive a wedge between the E.E.C. member states to push the E.E.C. Commission out of the picture and conduct negotiations as far as possible at intergovernmental level.⁷¹

It is against the backdrop of such forthright policy analysis from Dr Brennan that it can be suggested that the ideas of the German-American international relations theorist, Hans Morgenthau, were having an ongoing influence upon the ambassador. As mentioned in chapter two, Morgenthau had been Brennan’s PhD supervisor at the University of Chicago in the 1950s. Morgenthau’s prominence as ‘perhaps *the* critical figure’ in the emergence in the mid-1940s in the U.S. of the discipline of the ‘infant social science of international relations’, has recently been highlighted by the professor of world order studies at Columbia University, Mark Mazower (2012).⁷² Mazower argues that:

Morgenthau developed his opposition to the old internationalist certainties [i.e. to overreliance upon the ideals of the defunct League of Nations and the newly established U.N.]...and depicting the pursuit of national interest as the motor of international politics... Morgenthau’s chief goal was to get policy makers in Washington to think clearly about the national interest and to understand the Cold War not as a moral crusade but as a power struggle...Supporting the U.N.

⁷⁰ Dr Brennan to P. Keating, deputy secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 20 Feb. 1974, in *European Political Cooperation: reports of meetings of the eastern European Expert Group, 1974-5* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/913).

⁷¹ Ambassador Brennan to R. McDonagh, ‘E.E.C./C.M.E.A [COMECON] relations’, 28 Apr. 1976, in *U.S.S.R. relations with Ireland, 1975-7* (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/140).

⁷² Mark Mazower, *Governing the world: the history of an idea* (London, 2012), p. 238

was all very well, but it was important not to lose sight of the basic importance of the balance of power, especially in Europe.⁷³

Accordingly, it can be suggested that in his analyses for the Irish government, Dr Brennan was updating and adapting Morgenthau's Cold War theories from the late 1940s for the 1970s' period of détente, in order to establish and maintain the economic and political advantages accruing to the E.E.C. from its policy of bilateral trade relations with individual members of COMECON.

E.E.W.G. –related files: studies on west European communist parties

At the close of the first E.E.W.G. meeting of January 1974 in Bonn, the Italian delegation volunteered to bring forward a report on the attitude of communist parties of western Europe towards the E.E.C.⁷⁴ This proposal was in line with the fears expressed in the last point in Herr Meyer-Landrut's introductory exposition listed above⁷⁵ – a suggestion that western communist parties would be used by the Soviet Union to hinder progress towards E.E.C. integration. If so, this was, at best, a problematic presumption, as neither the Soviet state nor the C.P.S.U. had the executive authority in the world communist movement to order such directions in the 1970s. Such powers, to the extent that they did effectively exist, were directed through the efforts of the Communist International, or the Comintern, in the 1920s and 1930s. However, during the Second World War – at the request of the American government – Joseph Stalin and the presidium of the Comintern dissolved that organisation. Emmet O'Connor has concluded regarding the demise of the Comintern and the prospects of its revival:

But there would be no return to the central direction or conformity of the Comintern era, or the dream of a world party building a global revolution under the guidance of a general staff in Moscow.⁷⁶

Fraternal communist relations were thereafter maintained through one-on-one relationships between parties, often by the exchange of delegates to national party congresses, and at intermittent international and European congresses. More pertinently, however, by 1974 some of the most powerful west European communist parties were

⁷³ Ibid., pp 238-9.

⁷⁴ See 'Eastern Europe Working Group (brief for Political Committee, 6-7 Feb. 1974)' in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

⁷⁵ See the final point under 'Soviet tactical measures to block European integration' in this thesis, p. 230.

⁷⁶ O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 235.

pursuing policies quite independent of Moscow, as discussed in chapter four in relation to Eurocommunism and the Italian (P.C.I.) and Spanish parties.

Joan Urban relates that the P.C.I.'s strategy for socialism included support for Italy's membership of the E.E.C., but that it was 'couched in terms of an adaption to national conditions, not a dissent from the Soviet position'.⁷⁷ Likewise for those western parties that continued in their principled opposition to the E.E.C., including the Portuguese and Irish parties, it was their analysis of their own country's needs and strategies for socialism that was fundamental. Michael O'Riordan was critical of the Eurocommunists' line on the E.E.C. when he wrote in the C.P.I.'s theoretical journal: 'The very term "Euro" smacks heavily of the Common Market, the instrument of west European monopoly capitalist integration', and castigating the E.E.C. as 'Little Europe', he continued: 'We belong in Europe, by that I mean western Europe. It is difficult to escape the impression that in the last analysis Eurocommunism is no more or less than 'Common Marketcommunism'.⁷⁸ And his final point of critique was for those who would propose the Eurocommunist model for Ireland. He listed conditions in Ireland that were absent in Italy, France and Spain:

None of them have a national independence question; ... [they are not] situated beside an imperial aggressor [Britain], both historical and current, that dominates Ireland economically and portioned the island into two states; [they do not have] a northern state in which side by side with imperial repression there is a mini-sectarian war; [they do not have a neighbouring] imperial power with reserves of counter-revolution in the form of a big bourgeoisie in the two Irish states to call on.⁷⁹

Included in those who had proposed the Eurocommunist model for Ireland was Sam Nolan. Nolan had been a longstanding Dublin communist but he and twenty-one other members of the C.P.I. who agreed with the Eurocommunist approach to socialism resigned from the party in 1976 after losing an internal ideological battle. Those who resigned formed the Irish Marxist Society.⁸⁰ But the society only lasted for about a year, and thereafter most of its members joined the Labour party, where some took up

⁷⁷ Urban, *Moscow and the Italian communist party*, p. 306.

⁷⁸ O'Riordan, 'What is Eurocommunism?' in *Irish Socialist Review*, i (Dublin, 1978)

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ For Nolan's account of these developments, see Brian Kenny, *Sam Nolan: a long march on the left* (Dublin, 2010), pp 68-71, and for O'Riordan's see Michael O'Riordan, 'The resignations from the C.P.I.' in *Irish Socialist Review*, i (Dublin, 1977).

prominent positions, including Nolan. Asked by this writer if the resignations from the C.P.I. could have been avoided, Nolan replied:

It could have been held together [the C.P.I.] but the main goal for O’Riordan was to be politically correct for the Soviets, to aim for the Soviet model of Leninism, rather than strive for Gramscian hegemony.⁸¹ O’Riordan had a mindset: only the Soviet model. O’Riordan was a sincere guy, but the Soviet Union did his thinking for him, he believed the Soviets had an answer to everything, on the national question, etc.⁸²

However, O’Riordan’s reputation as a Sovietist⁸³ can perhaps be more fully appreciated in the longer run and in the context that his allegiance had been predicated on the basis of Soviet Union’s own adherence to socialism. This was indicated when the Soviet system approached its collapse in 1990. O’Riordan branded Gorbachev and Yeltsin as betrayers of socialism, and declared: ‘our [his party’s] flag stays red’.⁸⁴

To return to the January 1974 E.E.W.G. meeting, it seems safe to assume that the Italian foreign ministry’s proposal to the E.E.W.G. to initiate a study on communist parties of the Nine was motivated by domestic considerations (the P.C.I. then had a membership of nearly two million), and that this found favour with other delegates to the group who were keen to learn of the complexities of the policies of the various communist parties throughout the Nine.

Further revelatory Irish comment on the decisions of the January 1974 meeting is contained in a D.F.A. briefing paper for the next meeting of the Political Committee, set for early February. It seems that the Irish were having some reservations about the Italians’ study of west European communist parties. The briefing observed:

Unusual for the Davignon machinery...to discuss a legitimate political party...France could return a socialist-communist government at the next election [The French and Italian communist parties secured in excess of twenty per cent and thirty per cent, respectively, at elections to their national

⁸¹ Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Marxist political theorist whose ideas reached their peak popularity in the 1970s - see Hobsbawm, *How to change the world*, p. 336. Hobsbawm states that Gramsci ‘provided a Marxist strategy for countries in which the October Revolution might have been an inspiration, but could not be a model – that is to say for socialist movements in non-revolutionary environments and situations.’

⁸² Interview with Sam Nolan and Helena Sheehan of Ballymun (9 July 2012).

⁸³ This description of O’Riordan was provided to this writer by Michael ‘Mick’ O’Reilly of Dublin (9 May 2012). O’Reilly, the retired regional secretary of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union in Dublin had also been among those who had resigned from the party in 1976 but was to resume personal and comradely relations with O’Riordan thereafter.

⁸⁴ See C.P.I. ‘Michael O’Riordan (1917-2006)’ available at (<http://www.comunistpartyofireland.ie/s-oriordan.html>) (5 Oct. 2013)

parliaments throughout the 1970s]⁸⁵ ...an embarrassing P.Q. [parliamentary question] as to whether the Nine had a *droit de regard* into internal political matters [could be asked]. On the other hand, our partners seem keen to have this subject included.⁸⁶

It is noteworthy that this Irish expression of diplomatic reservations about the prospect of empowering the clandestine E.E.W.G. to pry into western political parties failed to extend to a sense of duty of care concerning the C.P.I. While it was to take until 1976 for the C.P.I. to secure its ratification as a political party at Dáil Éireann (it successfully appealed before Justice Liam Hamilton of the supreme court the refusal of the registrar to place it on the dáil register twelve years beforehand), it had never been a proscribed organisation in Ireland.⁸⁷ Tellingly, the greatest deterrent for the department seems not to have been the principle involved, but rather the fear of an ‘embarrassing’ leak. But even here, it had prepared a contingency plan to: ‘deal with it with a formal response drawn from the appropriate Davignon documents.’⁸⁸ It seems that the protocols of E.P.C. were very flexible indeed! In the event, the Irish chose not to exercise their right to veto the study, and the Italians proceeded to forward a report for the February meeting of the E.E.W.G.

Such was the extent of business on the agenda at the February meeting that the group failed to reach the communist parties item, and further Irish comment on the topic was contained in a D.F.A. report of the June 1974 meeting.⁸⁹ First, the report observed that the C.P.I. was not actually named in the Italian document, but rather ‘by implication’ the C.P.I.’s policy towards the E.E.C. was contained in a section that read: ‘In the countries which have recently joined the Community [Britain, Denmark and Ireland] the communist parties campaign for the total withdrawal from the E.E.C.’ The report counselled the D.F.A. that the above sentence was ‘probably accurate’, and that there was no need to submit any revision to the presidency.⁹⁰ However, a concluding paragraph again articulated the unease of the report’s writer:

⁸⁵ Urban, *Moscow and the Italian communist party*, pp 264, 270.

⁸⁶ See ‘Eastern Europe Working Group (brief for Political Committee, 6-7 Feb. 1974)’ in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

⁸⁷ See *Irish Socialist*, Jan. 1976.

⁸⁸ Report ‘Meeting of E.E.W.G., 28 Jan. 1974’, initialled A.E.M., 31 Jan. 1974, in European Political Cooperation: eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

⁸⁹ ‘Eastern Europe Expert Group meeting, 26 June 1974, Bonn’, n.d., in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 2, nos. 6-7. In the case of the C.P.I., the report was entirely correct, as discussed above.

In any event one has hesitations about the propriety of the exercise undertaken...in view of the fact that communist parties...are legal organisations...concentration on the communists alone and neglecting...conservative right-wing groups or anti-E.E.C. elements in political parties (some of them in government) gives a rather sectarian political cast to the work of the group which seems somewhat at variance with the conception of the E.E.C. as a union of member countries and not of particular governments and political systems. Moreover...[if it ever] became public it could be rather embarrassing.⁹¹

These were fine words, and an eloquent expression of liberal-democratic values within the Irish diplomatic corps. But the die had been cast, and Ireland again kept its counsel. The Italian paper was adopted by the E.E.W.G. and sent forward to the Political Committee for adoption as E.P.C. policy.

Two further studies on communist parties were undertaken by the group, both of which focused on a forthcoming Europe-wide conference, originally expected to take place in 1975. The conference, which had been initiated by the Italian and Polish parties in 1974, eventually took place in east Berlin, the capital of the G.D.R. on 29-30 June 1976, with Michael O’Riordan chairing the final session of the proceedings.⁹² Ambassador Brennan, too, was well aware of this conference – it had been the subject of four of his P.R.s.,⁹³ but he was either unaware of O’Riordan’s role or failed to report it. However, O’Riordan’s participation is noted in an attendance listing attached to the E.E.W.G.’s study that was considered at the November 1976 meeting in The Hague.⁹⁴ The ideological issues under debate at the Berlin congress – principally those of Eurocommunism and the C.P.S.U’s leadership of the world communist movement – have already been discussed. Suffice it to add here that the E.E.W.G. was concerned to ascertain the points of difference between those parties adhering to Eurocommunism and those taking a more pro-Moscow line, and to identify possible fault lines between them. In the event, the D.F.A.’s worry – that these E.E.W.G. papers would become public – did not come to pass. Nevertheless as member states’ involvement in E.P.C. was not governed by a treaty, the legal status of Irish government officials being party

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 2, no. 7.

⁹² *Irish Socialist*, Aug. 1976.

⁹³ See P.R.s 72-3/76, ‘Berlin European C.P.s conference, I and II’, 12 July 1976; P.R. 27/77, ‘Berlin conference: concept of party independence re-defined’, 15 Feb. 1977, and P.R. 50/77, ‘Soviets renege on Berlin conference concessions’, 13 May 1977 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/221).

⁹⁴ See European Political Cooperation: meeting of Eastern European Experts Group, 17 Nov. 1976 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/936).

to such studies (and indeed all E.P.C. studies) remained to be tested. We shall consider this issue later in the chapter's postscript on the Single European Act.

E.E.W.G.-related files: studies with military aspects

With five completed studies concerned partly or wholly with Soviet military and defence matters, as listed in Appendix 2, this was a significant area of work for the E.E.W.G. If Ireland expressed some reservations in relation to studies on communist parties, it was careful to ensure that the formulation of words contained in a study dealing with future defence talks among the Nine would not prejudice Irish military non-alignment. The appropriate section in the Irish delegation's report to the D.F.A. of the February 1974 meeting read:

The draft programme of work of the expert group in its study of the Soviet Union's and Warsaw Pact states' reactions to the process of European integration proposed to study their reactions to 'the discussion on the subject of eventual cooperation in the realm of defence'. In the event this was rephrased so as to read equally innocuously, reaction to '*une discussion au sujet d'une eventuelle cooperation en matiere de defense*'. Our [Irish] interest lay in avoiding any formulation which might suggest current involvement on our part in defence discussions among the Nine – and thus in ensuring that a qualification such as 'eventual' [sic] was maintained, as in fact it was.⁹⁵

Hardly a ringing declaration of Irish neutrality, this formulation nevertheless had the value of putting off the 'evil day' of reckoning for discussions of Irish involvement in any new military arrangements. Of relevance here is the insight given to this writer by Noel Dorr on what he indicated was the then common use in diplomatic documents of the adjective '*eventuelle*'.⁹⁶ This translates as 'possible',⁹⁷ rather than in the English 'eventual', as contained in the last sentence of the above extract. Accordingly, in the original French sense its use represented no concession by Ireland, beyond the bounds of 'possible'. In that regard, it is of interest to note the information in Trevor Salmon's *Unneutral Ireland* (1989), gained from his sources among Irish diplomats, that

⁹⁵ See 'Meeting of Eastern Europe Experts Group, 15 Feb. 1974, Bonn', in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889), p.3, no. 5.

⁹⁶ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013).

⁹⁷ As cited in Jacques Van Roey, Sylviane Granger and Helen Swallow (eds) *Dictionnaire des faux amis: francais-anglais, English-French* (Paris – Louvain-la-Neuve, 1991, 2nd edition), p. 277. The writer acknowledges the help of Dr Kathleen Shields, Department of French, N.U.I.M. for bringing this lexicographical source to his attention.

‘Ireland’s “special position” was accepted...no division of the eight in NATO against Ireland...it [E.P.C.] operated “pragmatically and by consensus.”’⁹⁸

It would appear that when it came to participating in studies relating to Soviet and Warsaw Pact military matters, the Irish did not raise objections. While there is some evidence of Irish unease regarding the British contribution to the paper on the efforts of the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries (including Cuba) to influence young people in the Third World, it was confined to a proposal that the study should not repeat lengthy intelligence material.⁹⁹ The most revealing evidence for Irish cooperation with its E.E.W.G. partners’ wishes in this area is contained in the D.F.A.’s steering note raised after the January 1978 meeting in Copenhagen. This confirmed that Ireland was agreeable to a formal decision to share military studies with NATO, and at a time when another member state, France, had procedural objections. The steering note read:

The U.K. proposed that the final version of the group’s study on ‘The role of the Soviet armed forces in the conduct of domestic and foreign policy’ be circulated to members of NATO. The U.K. had previously consulted the Irish delegation, who, having sought instructions from Dublin, confirmed that we had no objection of principle to this course. The French delegation however objected to the proposal on procedural grounds, arguing that a decision of this nature could only be made by the Political Committee.¹⁰⁰

The steering note went on to state that the Political Committee had failed to agree on the issue and that the presidency had been instructed to prepare a report for the March meeting on the distribution of the group’s report. This debate, with France alone holding out for the E.E.C.’s independence from NATO and the U.S., had been ongoing for some years. Noel Dorr has alluded to debates of this nature in a recent article, wherein he included the issue with a number of other items that Ireland had ‘dealt with’ during the Irish presidency in 1975, as follows:

...and the sensitive issue of briefing the United States appropriately on emerging E.E.C. policy decisions without offending strong French susceptibilities about admitting a tenth state to the table.¹⁰¹

Further investigation is required to ascertain whether the Political Committee resolved the debate at the March meeting, but evidence for a positive decision in NATO’s favour

⁹⁸ Salmon, *Unneutral Ireland*, p. 266.

⁹⁹ See ‘Steering note for eighty-fifth meeting of the E.P.C.’s Political Committee, Paris, 5-6 June 1979’, in Meeting of Eastern Europe Experts Group, 29-30 May 1979 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2009/120/632).

¹⁰⁰ See Steering note, no. 6, ‘Eastern Europe: the question of the distribution of expert studies group’, n.d. (but Feb. 1978) in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1477).

¹⁰¹ Dorr, ‘Ireland in an independent world’, p. 59.

is contained in a letter sent from the Irish embassy in Bonn to Dublin in December of the same year.¹⁰² Attached to the letter was a copy of a recent communication from the Canadian delegation to NATO, which had as its subject heading, ‘European Community paper on the situation in Hungary.’ The opening paragraph read:

The European Community paper...provides useful background and an informed perspective for assessing developments in Hungary. As we concur with it in general, we have only a few specific comments to offer, beyond those which were already provided by the U.S.A. delegation on 3 Oct. 1978.¹⁰³

It seems reasonable to assume that the study on Hungary referred to above is the same as the E.E.W.G. study, ‘Situation in Hungary’, listed on the sheet of 1978 (May meeting), in Appendix 2, and the likelihood was that other studies deemed appropriate were also shared with NATO.

When asked by this writer about the principle of Ireland sharing its studies with NATO in the context of the E.E.W.G., Noel Dorr indicated that such decisions were a judgement call, part of ‘managing the relationship.’¹⁰⁴

The above E.E.W.G.-NATO development must be seen in conjunction with the level of coordination among the Nine’s embassies in Moscow, where clandestine meetings of E.E.C.’s diplomatic officials were taking place. These commenced shortly after Ambassador Brennan’s arrival. He is recorded as having attended a meeting of the Nine’s ambassadors hosted by the West German ambassador in April, 1974.¹⁰⁵ Further evidence for such meetings was contained in P.R. 36/78, signed – in the place of Dr Brennan – by another official at the Irish embassy, M. Barrington. Belying its rather innocuous subject matter of British-Soviet consultations, the P.R. frankly disclosed that Irish officials were meeting with their E.E.C. counterparts in a structured format, and on an ongoing basis. The confirming extract read: ‘attached briefing from British counsellor for minister-counsellors [representatives from the other eight E.E.C. member states]...meet here every two weeks in special bugging-free rooms to exchange information and views’.¹⁰⁶ Taken alongside similar information supplied by the Irish

¹⁰² Embassy of Bonn (illegible signature for the ambassador) to secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 11 Dec. 1978 in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1483).

¹⁰³ Report from Canadian delegation to NATO, Brussels, 10 Nov. 1978, attached to Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Noel Dorr of Clonskeagh, Dublin (16 Apr. 2013).

¹⁰⁵ J.A. Sharkey, embassy Moscow, to ‘Barney’ [D.F.A.], 2 May 1974, in European Political Cooperation: eastern Europe group of experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

¹⁰⁶ P.R. 36/78, ‘Soviet-British annual consultations, 1978’ (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2009/120/1030).

export board representative, Reggie McHugh (as discussed in chapter two), this communication furnishes written confirmation of E.P.C. information sharing.

As indicated in chapter two, this study has adopted a neutral attitude to reports of real, exaggerated or imaginary matters of spying, surveillance, etc. Such practices – especially among those larger states with generously-endowed intelligence organisations – undoubtedly existed on both sides of the divide in the pursuit of East-West rivalries. However, by virtue of the decision to enter into the ‘bugging-free’ environments (located in the larger embassies) in which the Moscow meetings were held, Irish diplomats were knowingly upping the stakes for Ireland in this area. The import of this outcome was spelt out for Ambassador Brennan at his first such meeting in Moscow. In a report to Dublin, a member of the ambassador’s staff captured the security lesson delivered by the West German ambassador:

The German presidency cautioned his colleagues against dictating [in their own embassies] the information that has emerged when reporting to capitals. He pointed out that the listening-device-free cage in which the meeting was held would not serve a purpose if colleagues did not take the necessary precautions afterward. Whether the advice was proffered to all or only some or one of those present I cannot judge. I have not in any event kept a copy of this letter.¹⁰⁷

Consequently, it can be assumed that this security advice from the ambassador of a powerful member of the Nine could only have served to heighten a sense of suspicion towards the Soviet Union, and one of togetherness among the diplomatic corps of E.E.C. diplomats in Moscow. Indeed, it can be seen that by 1979 an *esprit de corps* had evolved to the extent that Ambassador Brennan could inform Dublin:

Political cooperation among the Nine is very intensive here. The Soviets are very secretive about their policies and the Nine embassies find it advantageous to meet frequently to compare notes. The ambassadors meet every two weeks, and so do their deputies which means there is a consultation nearly every week.¹⁰⁸

Finally, in terms of providing evidence of a network between the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Moscow embassy, the E.E.W.G., and NATO, the following extract from a communication between Ambassador Brennan and the department is felicitous: ‘I should be glad to receive copies of the recent U.S. C.I.A. reports on (a) the Soviet

¹⁰⁷ J.A. Sharkey, embassy Moscow, to ‘Barney’ [D.F.A.], 2 May 1974, in European Political Cooperation: Eastern Europe Group of Experts, 1972-4 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2007/111/889).

¹⁰⁸ P.R. 2/79, ‘Visit of the Spanish foreign minister’, 31 Jan. 1979 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/601).

economy, and (b) Soviet civil defence'.¹⁰⁹ A reply to the ambassador's request is not contained in the file, but a file copy of an earlier item of correspondence from Dublin to Moscow indicates that a transfer of classified documentation from the U.S., via Dublin, to Ambassador Brennan did take place:

Please find enclosed copy of report received in the Department [of Foreign Affairs] from the [Irish] embassy [to] Washington concerning prospects for the current Soviet five year plan. As you will appreciate the document is for destruction after perusal.¹¹⁰

Notwithstanding the above evidence for Irish and E.P.C. cooperation with NATO, it is appropriate to close this discussion of the E.E.W.G.-related files in the D.F.A. with a more nuanced view of Ireland's role at the group. The need for such a view is indicated by reports generated by those Irish delegations (delegates) who attended on a regular basis during 1979-80 – Thelma Doran and Anne Anderson. The style and content of their reports perhaps best reflected the spirit in which Ireland attended to its commitment to the E.E.W.G., and lifted the lid on the atmosphere that prevailed at the group's meetings. The following extracts are but two that are indicative of a sense of some mild despondency and distance from the proceedings. The first is from Thelma Doran's report on a meeting held in Rome, at which a draft study on the C.P.S.U. was considered:

All delegations were lavish in their praise of the twenty-two page draft but there were requests for a covering summary for busy ministers and political directors which the presidency agreed to prepare. There was a lengthy discussion on small rather esoteric points between the French, German and U.K. 'Kremlinologists' [critics of the Soviet Union] in the light of which the presidency will revise the text.¹¹¹

And from Anne Anderson, following another meeting in Rome that deliberated on Soviet influence south of the Sahara:

Ireland sought to avoid references in the paper which appeared to exaggerate Soviet influence in Africa. There was little or no support for this approach as the

¹⁰⁹ Ambassador Brennan to secretary D.F.A., 17 Oct. 1978 in Correspondence with Moscow (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1476).

¹¹⁰ The secretary to Ambassador Brennan, 446/13/23, 16 Jan. 1977, in Correspondence with Moscow (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2008/79/1476).

¹¹¹ Report, 6 Feb. 1980, in East European Experts meeting, Rome, 28-9 Jan. 1980' in (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/531).

group – composed largely of representatives who have spent some time in eastern Europe – tends to have a rather hard-line anti-Soviet character.¹¹²

The arrival of Michael O’Kennedy – a new departure in policy?

The replacement of Garret FitzGerald by Michael O’Kennedy of Fianna Fáil as Irish foreign minister in the aftermath of the 1977 general election suggested that Irish foreign policy might be about to undergo a shift away from wholehearted commitment to E.P.C. in its early years. Like his Fíne Gael predecessor, O’Kennedy too had been an officer of the Irish Council of the European Movement.¹¹³ However, that affiliation did not hinder him from taking a different political stance. Four months prior to the election that was to sweep the national coalition out of office, O’Kennedy put forward a more independent Fianna Fáil vision of Irish involvement in the E.E.C. Addressing his party’s árd fheis, he told delegates that his party’s leadership was not happy with the manner in which the economic terms of the treaty of accession were being applied, and on E.P.C. matters, he continued:

That Fianna Fáil was committed to the ideal of European unity – a Europe committed to peace and independence, which would stand aside from the military blocs and be neither anti-American nor anti-Soviet...[the E.E.C.] must forge new links with eastern Europe...¹¹⁴

Immediately after his appointment Minister O’Kennedy gave indications that he planned a shift towards a more neutral position in foreign policy, and that he even harboured an understanding of the Soviet Union’s approach to human rights. In the course of an interview with the *Irish Times*, he responded to a question on President Jimmy Carter’s heightened emphasis on the role of human rights in East-West détente. Aware of the first C.S.C.E. follow-up conference (held from October 1977 to March 1978) in Belgrade and the expected clash on human rights, O’Kennedy acknowledged that progress had been made in all countries, and said:

There are concepts which are deeply held in the West and the East...but both sides are going to have to understand each other’s commitment...it is probably fair to say that the Soviet commitment would be to equal distribution of wealth and the safeguard of people’s minimum right to employment and

¹¹² Report by A. Anderson, in Eastern Europe Working Group, 12-3 June 1980 (N.A.I., D.F.A., 2010/19/535).

¹¹³ As cited in Ferriter, *Ambiguous republic*, p. 395.

¹¹⁴ *Irish Times*, 19 Feb. 1977

opportunity...the West say the same but also do not want to achieve these at the expense of individual liberties.¹¹⁵

In line with expectations, the Belgrade meeting was dominated by human rights differences. The Soviet Union accused the U.S.'s chief representative, Arthur Goldberg, of trying to wreck the conference by interfering in its internal affairs. A press report included a concession from Irish and other western sources that Mr Goldberg's tactics were 'not all that helpful...But they deny any split between the U.S. and other western states.'¹¹⁶ In the event, the conference ended with no mention of human rights in its four-page final report. Furthermore, Foreign Minister O'Kennedy seemed to push the neutrality boat out even further when he went out of his way in Belgrade to refer twice to Ireland's special interest in the non-aligned movement in world affairs, and to stress that 'this interest had in no way slackened since Irish membership of the E.E.C.'¹¹⁷ As a follow-up, the minister attempted to 'establish close contacts with states such as Yugoslavia', and exchanged visits with his counterpart in Belgrade.¹¹⁸ At the same time, however, O'Kennedy was careful to make public his adherence to E.P.C., and he chose the next Fianna Fáil árd fheis to dampen down suggestions that his assertions on neutrality were at variance with Ireland's role in E.P.C. A draft copy of his address is extant in the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the following extract sums up the minister's message:

In the 1970s, while maintaining these aims [disarmament, etc. at the U.N.] Ireland has undertaken a new commitment and accepted a new opportunity in foreign policy matters. As a necessary and important consequence of our commitment to work with our partners towards economic and political integration in the E.E.C., we have accepted the commitment involved in what has become to be called E. P. C. Our commitment to the E.E.C., endorsed here overwhelmingly by our people in a referendum, necessarily involved also a commitment to this process of foreign policy coordination.¹¹⁹

According to the traditionally pro-Fianna Fáil newspaper, the *Sunday Press*, O'Kennedy's árd fheis message failed to dispel unease among certain diplomatic and media circles concerning the minister's independent stance. The *Sunday Press* claimed that ambassadors of the E.E.C. countries in Dublin were pleased with a press campaign

¹¹⁵ *Irish Times*, Aug. 1977.

¹¹⁶ *Irish Times*, 22 Dec. 1977.

¹¹⁷ *Irish Times*, 22 Dec. 1977.

¹¹⁸ As cited in Salmon, *Unneutral Ireland*, p. 253.

¹¹⁹ 'Draft speech for Fianna Fáil árd fheis', n.d. (but Feb. 1978) in Neutrality of Ireland file, 1969-80 (N.A.I., D.F.A. 2010/19/127).

against O’Kennedy, saying that Robin Haydon, the British ambassador, had canvassed opinions about O’Kennedy’s speech in favour of neutrality. The report claimed: ‘O’Kennedy’s neutrality policy contrasts with that of Garret FitzGerald’s line which was highly regarded by E.E.C. ambassadors and is still the line favoured at Iveagh House.’¹²⁰ That analysis had been articulated earlier in the year by the *Irish Socialist*:

Dr FitzGerald pursued a behind the scenes policy of actively encouraging Irish support for NATO...to be found echoing every NATO policy line...there is a serious lobby of civil servants within the Department of Foreign Affairs campaigning for Irish membership of NATO whose zeal for membership involves subversion of the present minister (Michael O’Kennedy) who has remained firm in his commitment to oppose Irish membership of NATO.¹²¹

Seven months later, another article by the *Sunday Press*’s diplomatic correspondent headed, ‘Iveagh House split on neutrality’, pointed to a new neutral group that had been formed at the Belgrade conference.¹²² Consisting of Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Liechtenstein, Malta, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia, the group was united by its concern at the lack of progress on halting the arms race. The article claimed that Ireland was unaware of the moves to form this group, and that the minister was embarrassed to discover that there were four blocs at Belgrade: the NATO group, the Warsaw Pact, the neutral group, and Ireland. It further claimed that Mr O’Kennedy favoured positive neutrality, but that he was encountering stiff resistance in his department.

Alongside his determination to follow an independent line, during the second Irish presidency of the E.E.C. (July-December 1979) O’Kennedy continued to fulfil all his duties, including speaking to the U.N. General Assembly ‘on behalf of the E.E.C. and its nine member states and as foreign minister of Ireland.’¹²³ Even so, and against the background of this alleged battle of wills, O’Kennedy failed to see out the government’s full term in office at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Charles Haughey, who succeeded Jack Lynch as taoiseach in December 1979, replaced O’Kennedy at foreign affairs with Brian Lenihan, and O’Kennedy was redeployed to the Department of Economic Planning and Development.

¹²⁰ *Sunday Press*, 23 Apr. 1978.

¹²¹ *Irish Socialist*, Feb. 1978.

¹²² *Sunday Press*, 20 Nov. 1978.

¹²³ Salmon, *Unneutral Ireland*, p. 255.

As far as Irish-Soviet relations within E.P.C. were concerned, however, the Irish archival record indicates that it was ‘business as usual’ under O’Kennedy as it had been in Garret FitzGerald’s time. This is best reflected in the instruction to the Irish delegation to the January 1978 E.E.W.G. meeting which confirmed that Ireland had no objection of principle to sharing a report on the Soviet armed forces with NATO, as discussed above. In short, while O’Kennedy was willing to look favourably towards the non-aligned movement, it appears he was not prepared to interfere with the established course of activities at E.E.W.G. meetings.

Postscript: the Single European Act

While the adoption by Ireland in 1987 of the Single European Act lies outside the timeframe of this thesis, such is the relevance of the Single Act to E.P.C. that it requires some salient comment in relation to Irish-Soviet affairs. Under the chairmanship of a close colleague of Garret FitzGerald’s, Professor Jim Dooge,¹²⁴ an E.E.C. committee was empowered to facilitate a process to overhaul and expand the Rome Treaty of 1957, by bringing forward the Single European Act as an international treaty between the E.E.C. member states.¹²⁵ The act provided not just for a ‘great leap forward’ towards deeper economic and legal integration among member states, but also – for the first time – incorporation into E.E.C. law of the operations of E.P.C. The E.P.C. element of the act was contained in a section entitled ‘Title III’.

By 1 January 1987 all the other eleven of the then twelve members of the E.E.C. had ratified the Single European Act, but it could not come into force until it had been ratified by all member states. Ratification in Ireland had been delayed by the June 1986 referendum on divorce, and so the Single European Act was left in abeyance until later in the year. Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald decided upon a course to ratify the new treaty in full by a simple vote of the oireachtas, maintaining that a referendum was not required for it to be constitutionally adopted into Irish domestic law – despite the insistence of the leader of the opposition, Charles Haughey, that a ‘constitutional issue hung over the entire ratification process like a cloud.’¹²⁶ Tánaiste Dick Spring, the leader of the Labour party, was also supportive of this approach, and enlisted the help of

¹²⁴ Professor James Dooge (1922-2010) combined an academic career in the sciences with a senior role in *Fine Gael*. He served as minister for foreign affairs in Taoiseach FitzGerald’s short-lived government of 1981-2.

¹²⁵ Dorr, ‘Ireland in an independent world’, p. 59.

¹²⁶ *Irish Times*, 12 Dec. 1986.

the taoiseach to overcome opposition in his own party. Dr FitzGerald recorded how this was achieved:

I was asked by Dick Spring to postpone introducing the necessary legislation until after a Labour party conference in the autumn of that year...I agreed with his request in order to minimise problems the Labour party might face in mobilising support by its deputies for ratification in the dáil.¹²⁷

Thereafter, the ratification process was completed by both houses of the oireachtas in mid-December. Only a possible referral to the supreme court by President Patrick Hillery to test the act's constitutionality could halt the deposit of the instrument of ratification with the Italian presidency on 1 January 1987.

During his terms as president Dr Hillery summoned the Council of State into session on four occasions, and subsequently forwarded three items of legislation to the supreme court for judgement on their conformity with the constitution.¹²⁸ Indeed, a team of legal experts, assembled by the government, was standing by in some expectation that the president would send the act to the court.¹²⁹ But Dr Hillery, who as foreign minister had negotiated Ireland's accession to the E.E.C. in the early 1970s, and subsequently served for three years as an E.E.C. commissioner, chose not to do so. On Christmas Eve, he signed the Single European Act and affixed the seal of state to its instrument of ratification.

A challenge to the president's move was quickly made by the T.C.D. lecturer and campaigner against Irish entry into the E.E.C., the economist Raymond Crotty. Crotty contended that the Single European Act entailed a further surrender of Ireland's sovereignty, and that only the people could agree to that surrender. Therefore, he held, ratification of the act in Ireland required a referendum. His academic colleague and fellow activist against Ireland's integration into a federalist Europe, Anthony Coughlan, later recorded the urgency and effect of Crotty's legal initiative:

At 5 p.m. that Christmas Eve, High Court Justice Mr Donal Barrington injuncted the state from ratifying the Single European Act pending trial of Raymond Crotty's contention. Judge Barrington gave his judgement in the funereal gloom of a darkened Four Courts, with the judge and the lawyers in civvies because it was outside official law term, and a couple of bored policemen standing around wondering when they would get home. News of the Crotty injunction was the

¹²⁷ FitzGerald, *All in a life*, p. 600.

¹²⁸ See Walsh, *Patrick Hillery*, p. 492.

¹²⁹ Irish Times, 29 Dec. 1986.

first item on the radio news the Christmas morning following, and it was widely reported internationally.¹³⁰

Eventually, the supreme court ruled in Crotty's favour, not in relation to the act's economic and other provisions, but rather in relation to its Title III – which covered E.P.C. The court's majority ruling by three of the five-man court was best expressed in the 'swing' judgement of Justice Seamus Henchy. Renowned for the clarity and readability of his judgements at the supreme court, Henchy noted that he had tested the act's articles against article one of the Irish constitution. That article declared that the Irish nation affirmed 'its inalienable, indefeasible and sovereign right to determine its relations with other nations...in accordance with its own genius and traditions.'¹³¹

For the purposes of this study, three further extracts from the Henchy judgement have been selected. First, in rejecting the government's submission that the conduct of foreign policy was the exclusive concern of the executive, and not amenable to control by the courts, the judgement referred to articles 28 and 29 of the constitution and stated:

It follows, therefore, that in the conduct of the state's external relations, as in the exercise of the executive power in other respects, the government is not immune from judicial control if it acts in a manner or for a purpose which is inconsistent with the constitution.¹³²

This extract takes on a special significance with regard to the legal standards and safeguards that governed the conduct of Ireland's ministers and diplomats generally within E.P.C. and, specifically, the E.E.W.G. As the existence and operations of the E.E.W.G. were effectively a state secret, the minister did not have to account for its operations to the dáil. Reference was made earlier in this chapter to the Davignon machinery as a controlling guide for E.P.C., but was that machinery vetted by the Irish state's law officer, the attorney-general, for its constitutionality? It is not possible for this study to enquire further at this stage, but suffice it to say that the involvement of Ireland in the study of the communist parties of the Nine may well have been an unwarranted extension of executive power at the time and therefore arguably also inconsistent with the constitution.

¹³⁰ See Anthony Coughlan, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Raymond Crotty's injunction, in the *Irish Democrat*, 22 Dec. 2012, available at (<http://www.irishdemocrat.co.uk/window-on-the-eu/25th-anniversary-of-the-late-raymond-crottys-s/>) (2 Jan. 2013).

¹³¹ See The Supreme Court of Ireland, 'Raymond Crotty, plaintiff v. An taoiseach and others, defendants, no. 12036P, 9 Apr. 1987', available at (<http://www.bailii.org/ie/cases/IESC/1987/4.html>) (2 Jan. 2013), p. 787.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 786.

The second extract has been chosen for its clarity in stating the essence of the significance of the ratification of the S.E.A. for Irish foreign policy:

Each member [state] will immediately cede a portion of its sovereignty and freedom of action in matters of foreign policy [emphasis added by the present writer]. National objectives and ideological positions must defer to the aims and decisions of an institution known as E.P.C., which is to work in tandem with the E.E.C. A purely national approach to foreign policy is incompatible with the accession to this treaty. The methods of cooperation between the member states, which hitherto has been informal, aspirational...now pass into the realm of solemnly covenanted commitment...in a way that will lead to European political union...in the sphere of foreign policy.¹³³

Thirdly, Justice Henchy brought his judgement to its logical conclusion:

For the foregoing reasons I am of the opinion that, without the appropriate constitutional amendment, the ratification of the Single European Act (insofar as it contains Title III [of E.P.C.]) would be impermissible under the constitution. I would declare accordingly.¹³⁴

The supreme court's decision ensured that a referendum would have to be held to ratify the Single European Act, and indeed all subsequent treaties to transfer further powers to E.E.C. institutions were also submitted for popular approval to the electorate. But for this thesis the court's findings include evidence to suggest that the conduct of Irish foreign policy within E.P.C. from 1974 *in effect* lay outside the provisions of the Irish constitution. While Justice Henchy's judgement was concerned with the constitutional position in the event of the adoption of the Single European Act., and while he noted that E.P.C. had hitherto been voluntarily entered into, *in practice* the work of the E.E.W.G., etc. amounted to a de facto yielding up of elements of Irish sovereignty over its foreign policy. Indeed, it was the very practice of E.P.C. from 1974 onwards that made the formulation of Title III of the Act possible in the first place. This is confirmed by Noel Dorr: 'On E.P.C. the Single European Act did little more than codify existing foreign policy coordination procedures but the supreme court in the "Crotty Case" held that Ireland could not ratify without a referendum'.¹³⁵

The Single European Act was duly put before the electorate in May 1987. In a referendum campaign dominated by economic matters, it was approved by voters, with seventy per cent for and thirty per cent against the act, on a forty-four per cent turnout.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 789.

¹³⁵ See Dorr, 'Ireland in an independent world', p. 59

However, there was to be a further, if delayed, constitutional sting in the tail: during the campaign the government used considerable sums of public money to promote its Yes-side case, a practice that was in due time found to be unconstitutional by the supreme court in the 1995 McKenna case. In her contribution to the four-to-one ruling on that occasion, Justice Susan Denham concluded:

My decision in this case does not infringe upon the right and duty of the government to give information, to clarify situations, or to give explanations and deal with unforeseen matters and emergencies. However, the government is not entitled to expend public monies for the purpose of promoting a campaign for a particular outcome to a proposed referendum to amend the terms of the constitution. I would allow the appeal.¹³⁶

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the passage of the Single European Act and the provisions relating for E.P.C. into Irish law was assisted, to some extent at least, by a means of funding later judged to have been unconstitutional. That having been said, however, in all probability it was the impact of another kind of funding – E.E.C. funding – which had been more decisive not just for the Yes-side in the Single European Act referendum, but also for Irish commitment to E.P.C. in pursuit of the state's economic policies in the 1970s and subsequently. In his study on the 1970s, Diarmaid Ferriter (2012) sets out the extent to which Ireland benefited from an E.E.C. fund, the Regional Fund: 'In 1975 the commitment was £8.3 million and increased thereafter in 1976 (£14.4 million), 1977 (£12.6 million), 1978 (£23.6 million) and up to the summer of 1979 (£31.9 million)'.¹³⁷

Conclusion

From the outset Ireland sided with the procedural decisions that ensured that the E.E.W.G.'s studies would inform the E.E.C.'s efforts to maximise the strength of its position in its economic, political and security relations with the Soviet Union. Chief among these was the proposal to switch the direction of E.E.W.G. studies from the original terms of reference (to study the Nine's relations with the East) – which could have challenged E.E.C. member states to think creatively and collectively in terms of

¹³⁶ See The Supreme Court of Ireland, 'Patricia McKenna, plaintiff v. an taoiseach and others, Nos. 361 and 366', 17 Nov. 1995, available at (<http://www.supremecourt.ie/supremecourt/sclibrary3.nsf/pagecurrent/9FA0AA8E8D261FC48025765C0042F6B3?opendocument&l=en>) (7 Jan. 2013), p. 55. The case was raised in the context of a referendum on the question of the removal of the bar on divorce in the constitution.

¹³⁷ Ferriter, *Ambiguous republic*, p. 410.

progressing détente – to the opposite direction. The effect of the decision was to strengthen the hands of Kremlinological agenda-setters, and the E.E.W.G. was quickly set to become a vehicle for the commissioning of agreed papers on the external relations and internal affairs of the Soviet Union and other member states of COMECON.

Coupled to that strengthening of Kremlinological hands was the British proposal for the group's studies to move beyond factual analyses of current Soviet policies to include recommendations for collective E.E.C. stances to counter possible Soviet reaction to the *processus européen*. That proposal was designed to prejudge Soviet policies on the E.E.C., and to achieve in advance E.P.C. consensuses on the basis of Kremlinological studies. And while A.E. Mannix offered some mild internal criticism indicating that 'but this [focus on Soviet objectives] should not provide the entire spirit of the enquiry', Dr Brennan's more assertive prompting in support of the British proposal was to find most favour in the D.F.A., as was to become manifest during the Irish presidency.

Ireland's first presidency of the E.E.W.G. in 1975 was notable for Dublin's success in re-establishing regular group meetings after France had effectively suspended operations during its term of presidency. Moreover, the Irish presidency was marked by its diplomats' ability to achieve group consensuses of understanding on the control of visas for Soviet and COMECON travellers to E.E.C. countries, on Soviet oil and energy reserves in the overall context of COMECON, and on the non-use of certain phrases in the language of diplomacy in members' future relations with the Soviet Union. The basis of those consensuses represented a continuation of the strategy of maximisation of the E.E.C.'s position in its relations with the Soviet Union. Any consideration of an easing in members' strict controls on visas to encourage greater East-West travel by business people and tourists was noticeable by its absence. The adoption of a common policy to exclude the use of 'peaceful coexistence' in members' future documents with the Soviets was soon to become instructive for Ireland. As discussed in chapter two in relation to Garret FitzGerald's visit to the Soviet Union – just one year later – the Irish can only have felt honour-bound to avoid the incorporation of any such Soviet terminology in the joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit. The pessimistic contents and downbeat tenor of the group's studies on the status of Soviet oil production and the wider COMECON economy was indicative of the E.E.C.'s policy approach to trade relations with those countries. In this context we have seen that the advice from

Ambassador Brennan urging the maintenance of the E.E.C.'s bilateral trade policy with individual members of COMECON was much in line with the content of E.E.W.G. studies.

Irish acquiescence in 1974 in the commissioning of ethically and legally-questionable studies of west European communist parties – an undertaking that added a self-serving (especially for Italy and France) domestic and ideological ingredient to the group's work – did produce some expressions of distaste within the confines of the D.F.A. However, such was the evolutionary and encompassing nature of the E.E.W.G.'s Kremlinological course for Ireland that its delegations not only engaged in the compilation of studies on the Soviet Union containing military matters, but by 1978 Ireland could agree in principle with the proposal that certain E.E.W.G. studies could be circulated to NATO. That Ireland found it expedient to comply with Britain's request in this matter is at variance with the already cited assurances given to Trevor Salmon by his sources among Irish diplomats that 'Ireland's "special position" was accepted' by NATO members in E.P.C.¹³⁸ Rather, it appears more plausible that the decision was taken in the broader context of 'managing the relationship', as mentioned to this writer by Noel Dorr. The broader context of Ireland's relationship with the E.E.C. from the mid-1970s included the allocation of regional funds to Ireland, as detailed above. In any event, Ireland's decisions in relation to studies on the communist parties and military studies can but remain on the record as two further examples of the phenomenon encountered throughout this study whereby a country's official public values could take second place to its perceived national interests. Patrick Keatinge articulated the occurrence of such phenomena throughout the practice of international relations: 'But the expression of a value is one thing in the form of a statement of principle; in the form of policy leading to government action it is something yet again.'¹³⁹

Such was Dr FitzGerald's energy and commitment to European integration that his Fianna Fáil successor was faced with a daunting political challenge. To surmount this Minister Michael O'Kennedy attempted to 'do a Frank Aiken' on FitzGerald (Aiken had achieved a respected international status for Ireland at the U.N. in the late 1950s by adopting a more independent line than his Fíne Gael predecessor, Liam

¹³⁸ Salmon, *Unneutral Ireland*, p. 266.

¹³⁹ Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 176.

Cosgrave).¹⁴⁰ O’Kennedy sought to assert himself by stressing Irish neutrality and engaging in talks with Yugoslavia, the leading nation in the non-aligned movement. Nevertheless, without an Eamon de Valera behind him and faced by a combination of the legacy of the state’s immersion in three years’ support for E.P.C. cooperation in the Department of Foreign Affairs and a supportive E.E.C. lobby, O’Kennedy’s tenure in the department was short-lived. His two-year period in office can be summarised as one that was more overtly demonstrative about Irish neutrality and more assiduous in its contacts with the non-aligned states – to an extent that was uncomfortable for those diplomatic and political forces in and around the D.F.A. which were more politically committed to E.P.C. Nevertheless, his outspoken commitment to Ireland’s neutrality contrasted with his department’s agreement in principle to share E.E.W.G. studies with NATO.

The supreme court’s ruling that the ratification of the Single European Act required the electorate’s approval to comply with the constitution casts a retrospective cloud over Ireland’s early involvement in E.P.C. As already suggested, Irish participation in E.E.W.G. policy formation on the Soviet Union arguably took place outside the boundaries of constitutional legitimacy between 1974 and 1987. However, there is a further conclusion to be drawn from an assessment of the Crotty case. Such was the extent of the commitment by key figures in the Irish political and diplomatic elite to the process of E.E.C. integration and E.P.C., that it overcame their obligation to ensure that their proposal to introduce the Single European Act treaty into Irish law followed a prudent and constitutional course. It appears that their commitment to and immersion in the process of European integration combined to prompt members of that elite to fast-track the act into Irish law. That fast-tracking chimes with Christopher Hill’s assertion already cited in the introduction to this chapter, that E.P.C. had a tendency to foster ‘groupthink’.¹⁴¹ Part and parcel of that tendency, no matter how large or small, was Irish involvement in the formulation of common E.P.C. positions on the Soviet Union.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Keatinge, *A place among the nations*, p. 161, regarding the greater emphasis placed upon the pursuit of disarmament measures at the U.N. during Aiken’s tenure of office than in Cosgrave’s.

¹⁴¹ See Christopher Hill, ‘National interests: the insuperable obstacles’, fn.198, p. 266.

Thesis Conclusion

Six major issues stand out in this study of Irish-Soviet relations, the first of which was the influence of the policies of Eamon de Valera. Beginning in New York in 1919-20 when de Valera recognised the value of linking the nascent Irish republic with the promises of the Russian revolution and Soviet Russia on the basis of a common opposition to imperialism, his influence continued beyond the tenure of his able lieutenant in external affairs, Frank Aiken, which came to an end in 1969, down to Dr Patrick Hillery's time as foreign affairs minister until 3 January 1973. During those decades de Valera was prepared to work within the limits of the prevailing international and domestic political climate (which was customarily anti-Soviet in character) to engage with the Soviet Union whenever he considered that to do so was in the interests of Irish sovereignty, and of other small states seeking to establish a secure place in a world dominated by the major powers.

The opening chapter of this thesis has charted a series of such engagements, including de Valera's management of relations with the Soviet representatives, Martens and Nuorteva in New York, and his sanctioning of substantial cash loans to them; his sending of Dr McCartan to Moscow to have the draft treaty of joint recognition signed after it became clear that U.S. recognition for an Irish republic was not going to be granted by President Wilson; and his support for Soviet membership of the League of Nations. That such support was not reciprocated by the Soviet Union for Irish membership of the United Nations in 1946 (because of East-West rivalries at the world body) was much resented by de Valera, as was demonstrated by his undiplomatic outburst against the Soviets in his interview with the *Irish Times* in 1947. Nevertheless, when Ireland was admitted under the Soviet 'package-deal' to the U.N. in 1955 the opportunity for a resumption of Irish-Soviet cooperation was re-established. Of relevance here were Aiken's various initiatives at the U.N. on the admission of the People's Republic of China, and on disarmament that involved Soviet cooperation. Such policies bore fruit in 1969 with Soviet support for Dr Hillery's quest for a peacekeeping force for Northern Ireland at the U.N. All of those actions were part of de Valera's commitment to the building up of the Irish state, in which his ability to maximise the international impact of independent Ireland's sovereignty gained for him and his country a unique respect on the world stage – a respect that was acknowledged by the

Soviet Union when it honoured his stalwart devotee in foreign affairs, Frank Aiken, by inviting him to ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in Moscow in 1968.

But the parameters of de Valera's willingness to work with the Soviet Union were strictly limited. No efforts were made by him or Aiken to establish relations with the U.S.S.R. – they were content to confine the conduct of such affairs to international forums. De Valera's support did not extend beyond the U.S.S.R.'s right to be part of the League of Nations – as demonstrated by the evidence presented in chapter one of the Free State's decision in 1935 at the prompting of the Vatican to block possible Soviet influence on the League's policy on birth control – and by the above cited summary from Patrick Keatinge of the voting record on Cold War-related topics which showed that Ireland voted with the U.S. at least three times as often as against it at the United Nations. At home, de Valera's actions were even frostier. He demonstrated his disapproval of the Irish-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society in 1947 by his warning to Dr Kostal, the chargé d'affaires of Czechoslovakia, to be wary of the society. This example of de Valera's frostiness was but a milder expression of a succession of negative reports, analyses and actions undertaken by Irish diplomats towards the Soviet Union in the wider de Valera era. Such undertakings included Dr McCartan's negative reports containing political scepticism and ideological opposition to efforts in Soviet Russia in 1921 to begin the process of building a socialist society; the 'debt collection' approach of Ambassador John Dulanty to the Soviet ambassador in London in 1949 to finalise the republican loan-for-czarist-jewels saga; and the inclusion of the analogy in Frederick Boland's report on Nikita Khrushchev's behaviour in 1960 at the U.N. that drew a comparison between the Soviet leader and Hitler.

Nevertheless, the record of Irish foreign policy in the de Valera period is notable for those occasions when Ireland either supported or worked in unison with the Soviet Union in the interests of small nations, world peace and nuclear disarmament. Finally, Dmitri Shostakovich's reception in *Áras an Úachtaráin* in 1972 can be seen as de Valera's belated imprimatur for the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

The second major issue in this study was the sensitive three-way relationship between Ireland, the Soviet Union and Britain. During the establishment of the formal diplomatic relations process, astute interventions and representations made to the Irish

government by the British ambassador to Dublin, Sir John Peck, were highly effective. Peck was successful in delaying the implementation date for diplomatic relations, and in achieving the imposition of travel restrictions on Soviet officials in Ireland to the extent that F.C.O. authorities could internally express their satisfaction for the cooperation secured from their Irish counterparts. Moreover, Ireland's request for British help in establishing its embassy in Moscow, Ambassador Brennan's high regard for the British ambassador to Moscow (Sir Terence W. Garvey) and most of all Ireland's full participation in E.P.C. and the E.E.W.G. (including Ireland's agreement in principle to share the group's study on the Soviet armed forces with NATO, at Britain's request) can only have combined to allay British fears concerning an independent Irish relationship with the Soviet Union. Even the one cloud on the horizon – the prosecution of Ireland's 'torture' case against Britain before the European Court of Human Rights during 1977-8 – could not have unduly disturbed British sensitivities. As has been discussed, Dr FitzGerald went out of his way to attempt to 'ring-fence' the Irish case from Soviet criticisms of Britain on the matter. Armed with chapter and verse supplied by Ambassador Brennan's P.R.s from Moscow, the Irish minister stated in Washington that Soviet expressions of support for the Irish case were simply a Soviet tactic to embarrass Britain internationally and to distract attention from the plight of dissidents in the Soviet Union. However, the credibility of Dr FitzGerald's decision to publicly join in President Carter's human rights campaign against the Soviet Union in this way – at a time when Ireland's quest for justice against Britain had not yet been resolved – was undermined by the Strasbourg court's failure to uphold the earlier verdict of the European Commission for Human Rights that the R.U.C.'s techniques against certain prisoners had amounted to torture.

The third major issue in this study was the impact of the E.E.C. on the relationship between the two states. Ireland's entry into the E.E.C. on 1 January 1973 was a complementary factor in establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Thereafter, E.E.C. membership determined that Ireland would have two overlapping relationships with the U.S.S.R. The first and most obvious relationship was on a direct nation-to-nation basis; while the second and less well known relationship was mediated through the institutions of the Community. As indicated by his founding membership of the Irish Council of the European Movement in the 1950s, Dr FitzGerald was favourably disposed not just towards Irish membership of the E.E.C. but also to the

adoption of a wholehearted commitment to the process of E.E.C. integration. Following his appointment as foreign minister in 1973 FitzGerald was anxious to ensure that Ireland's participation in the E.P.C. framework, as it related to the Soviet Union, would be an informed one. In this regard he had the good fortune to have available Dr Brennan as Ireland's first ambassador to Moscow, a man whose skills fulfilled all the requirements for the post, not least of which was his appreciation for the *processus européen*. Ambassador Brennan's skills were put to an early test in Moscow when he was obliged by E.E.C. trade obligations to inform the Soviet foreign trade ministry in 1974 that Ireland would have to terminate the Irish-Soviet trade agreement that had formed part of the establishment of official relations process. As former Commercial Attaché McHugh indicated, Dr Brennan could withstand the ensuing Soviet frustration, as expressed by trade ministry official Manzhulo's 'you Irish are more Catholic than the pope' retort, and a level of Irish imports was maintained in place until Dr FitzGerald's official visit in 1976 led to the signing of a replacement cooperation agreement. E.E.C. connections were also in evidence surrounding FitzGerald's visit, as was shown by the minister's briefing of the Nine's ambassadors in Moscow, and subsequently to a representative of the British presidency of the E.P.C. in Dublin. The content of the joint communiqué agreed at the end of the official visit, devoid as it was of Soviet-style terminology such as 'peaceful coexistence', was also influenced by an E.E.W.G. resolve to neutralise any perceived Soviet propagandist gain. E.E.C. considerations for the Irish embassy to Moscow further involved Irish officials in an ongoing information gathering and sharing exercise, often in 'listening-device-free cages' in the larger embassies, as has been attested to from oral and archival sources presented in the chapters of this thesis.

Further evidence of the influence of the E.E.C. in Irish-Soviet affairs arises from the level of cross-fertilisation that existed between Ambassador Brennan's political reports from Moscow and the work of the E.E.W.G. While the study of these areas in this thesis has been ordered into two separate chapters, the full import of the evidence gleaned from those sources can be further appreciated when they are viewed together. This can be done by cross-referencing the P.R. titles listed in Appendix 1 against the subject matters of E.E.W.G. meetings listed in Appendix 2 (or vice versa). Just one brief example, arising from the topic of E.E.W.G. reports with military aspects discussed in chapter five, is indicative of the value of such a cross-referencing exercise. On 16

November 1977 Dr Brennan sent from Moscow to the D.F.A. a political report entitled, 'The role of Soviet armed forces in elaboration of Soviet domestic and foreign policy',¹⁴² – just twelve days in advance of the Irish delegation's attendance at an E.E.W.G. meeting in Brussels where a study entitled, 'The role of the Soviet armed forces in the conduct of Soviet domestic and foreign policy', was considered.¹⁴³ Accordingly, it can be seen that Ireland's political reporting mechanism from Moscow to Dublin was available, when the D.F.A. deemed it appropriate to inform Irish representatives at the E.E.W.G.

Furthermore, the evidence presented regarding the commissioning of ethically and legally-questionable studies of west European communist parties, Ambassador Brennan's requests for C.I.A. reports from America through the D.F.A., and the department's decision to share E.E.W.G. studies with military aspects with NATO, has shown that these actions were not Irish initiatives but rather arose in response to requests from other member states. In particular, that the request to share studies with NATO should have been made is all the more questionable in that it might have been expected that the contents of E.E.W.G. studies would have been unofficially available to NATO from one or other of its members. The answer to that question may lie in inter-member rivalries, perhaps with the British delegation attempting to put pressure on France's anti-NATO stance? Whatever the reason, and mindful of Noel Dorr's observation that such decisions were made in the context of Ireland managing its relationship with the E.E.C. – which from 1975 included generous transfers from the Regional Fund – it is clear that Ireland's decision was one of pragmatism. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the country's commitment to the E.E.W.G. corresponded to Patrick Keatinge's prescient assessment from 1978, cited above, that the consultative E.P.C framework was evolving with the 'maximum of pragmatism and the minimum of publicity.'

At the same time, evidence presented in chapter five shows that Irish involvement in the E.E.W.G. was not unconditional. This was at its most evident and effective at the group's February 1974 discussions on its study on the Soviet Union/COMECON'S reaction to E.C.C. members' cooperation in the realm of defence. Ireland had no difficulty in postponing the implications of that eventuality for Irish

¹⁴² See P.R. 119/77, Appendix 1.

¹⁴³ See Appendix 2, p. 308.

neutrality to another day, with the retention of the adjective '*eventuelle*' in the study. Also, the first E.E.W.G.-related files indicate that Ireland took serious account of draft papers being presented by the larger states. This was shown in January 1974 by A.E. Mannix's debunking for the D.F.A. of the British characterisation of Soviet policy towards western Europe as one of 'Finlandisation'. Further, Ireland seems to have played the role of seeking to restrict the inclusion of the extent, if not the essence, of British intelligence studies dealing with Soviet influence in the Third World.

Yet a much more effective brake on the operations of the E.E.W.G. than any Irish reservations was the expression by France of its determination to maintain the voluntary E.P.C. separate from the treaty-based economic framework of the E.E.C. By its initial resistance to allow the European Commission's representative to attend the group's meetings, and by effectively suspending E.E.W.G. operations during its presidency term in 1974, France showed an early determination to keep the E.E.W.G.'s work to a minimum. In contrast, as Ireland had adopted a wholehearted approach to European integration under the direction of Dr FitzGerald, Ireland was drawn into the orbit of the British-German alliance that led the way in the production of Kremlinological studies. The return of France – after the Irish presidency had ensured a resumption of E.E.W.G. meetings and studies – and French acceptance of the Commission's representative at the E.E.W.G. table, revealed that it had conceded ground to its more federalist-minded opponents, at least in relation to E.E.C. attitudes towards the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, the E.E.W.G.-related files have also shown that it was possible for a member state with an aversion to a federalist Europe to be a committed player at the E.E.W.G. In this regard Britain was regarded as the most anti-federalist member of the E.E.C., but it was also a dominant force in proposing and compiling papers for the group. Clearly, Britain's reluctance to embrace the *processus européen* did not apply when it came to an opportunity to continue with its traditional penchant for anti-Sovietism.

To say that the extent of pragmatism shown by Ireland at E.E.W.G. meetings in relation to the Soviet Union was at total variance with Liam Cosgrave's principles declared before the U.N. in 1955 which included, 'The adoption of an independent line on all issues of foreign policy and non-association with any blocs' (as cited in chapter two) would be an oversimplification. After all, not only did Cosgrave's principles include a commitment to support 'those powers principally responsible for the defence

of the free world in their resistance to the spread of communist power and influence’, but even Frank Aiken more often sided with the Americans on Cold War issues than he did with the U.S.S.R. However, the pragmatism displayed by Cosgrave and Aiken was of a fundamentally different order than that displayed at the E.E.W.G. under ministers Garret FitzGerald and Michael O’Kennedy. As has been shown in chapter five, with evidence and extracts drawn from the judgement of Justice Henchy of the supreme court in relation to the S.E.A., Ireland in effect had ceded ‘a portion of its sovereignty and freedom of action in matters of foreign policy’ by its structured involvement in E.P.C. without the prior approval of the Irish people at a constitutional referendum.

It is against the background of its new evidence from the Moscow P.R.s and the E.E.W.G.-related sources, together with the implications arising from the Supreme Court’s ruling, that this thesis can suggest that questions arise in relation to the conclusions on the impact of E.E.C. membership on Irish foreign policy in Diarmaid Ferriter’s *Ambiguous republic: Ireland in the 1970s* (2012). While Ferriter does allow for ambiguity in the E.E.C.’s impact,¹⁴⁴ he underestimates the degree of surrender by Irish governments of their control over foreign policy. In this regard the present writer notes that Ferriter’s work does not only not include a mention of political reports from Moscow or the Irish E.E.W.G. files (understandable for a general history), but that its endnotes for its section on foreign affairs rely on the Department of the Taoiseach – and do not include references to files from the Department of Foreign Affairs.¹⁴⁵

The fourth major issue in the study was the reception afforded to the Soviet embassy to Ireland. Before the arrival of Ambassador Anatoli Kaplin’s mission in 1974, his two unofficial predecessors, Lev Sedin of *Novoe Vremya* in the early 1960s, and Yuri Ustimenko of TASS during the early détente years from 1970, had been favourably received in Ireland. Sedin’s public engagements were confined to speaking at information meetings of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society and personal engagements with the society’s officers and members of the Irish Workers’ Party, among whom he made a lasting impression. Ustimenko’s presence was much more high profile. He took advantage of the more advantageous political conditions and of his own communication skills to gain access to prominent social groups and the Irish media, ranging from the Dundalk Debating Society to *The late late show* and the *Irish Times*.

¹⁴⁴ See Ferriter, *Ambiguous republic*, p. 391.

¹⁴⁵ See notes Part V in Ferriter, *Ambiguous republic*, pp 747-755.

In support of the favourable impact that Ireland made upon the two Soviet emissaries, and of the contention of the specialist on Soviet education, Dr Hainsworth, concerning the ‘pervasive readership culture in the Soviet Union’, both Sedin and Ustimenko published accounts of Ireland upon returning to their homeland. Accordingly, Sedin’s small volume, *The many shades of green*, and Ustimenko’s book, *Get to know Ireland*, can be added to the historical record of Irish-Soviet relations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. can only have been satisfied by the achievements of Ambassador Kaplin’s mission to Ireland. These included securing diplomatic premises in keeping with the U.S.S.R.’s world status; overcoming politically-biased planning objections to the Orwell Road embassy with a level of cooperation with Dublin City Council that impressed Senator Ruairi Quinn; the honour of presenting Seán MacBride with a Lenin Peace Prize; and the ambassador’s success – despite his reputed reserved manner – in reaching out to a cross-section of Irish society. This latter success was in no small measure due to the friendship and guidance of the officers of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, Frank Edwards and John Swift. Edwards and Swift could identify appropriate guests for ambassadorial occasions in Kaplin’s ongoing series of embassy receptions. But beyond the confines of his embassy, Ambassador Kaplin was also a noted attendee at Gaelic games at Croke Park, and he interacted with a range of social bodies, including the Christian Brothers’ school in Carrick-on-Suir. Accordingly it can be seen that Kaplin’s societal involvement was in some contrast to that of his counterpart in Moscow, where Ambassador Brennan’s social circle was largely restricted to the western diplomatic and media community and with Soviet officials in the conduct of his duties and the collection of research materials for his political reports. Needless to say, it is to be expected that Ambassador Kaplin was also involved in regular reports to his home ministry, details of which are beyond this present study.

Ambassador Kaplin did have to contend with protests and pickets by groups concerned about dissidents and charges of human rights abuses in the Soviet Union. In this regard the thesis has focused upon two Irish Jewish groups and their campaigns to highlight the issue of Jewish emigration to Israel, together with an account of the Soviet view of the issue. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the question of Jewish emigration to Israel became embroiled in East-West rivalries, and that an international

debate for the hearts and minds of Soviet Jews was being fought out across the globe, including in Ireland. That debate featured in the Irish media, but in an uneven manner, as typified in an *Irish Times*' report which carried details of only the Jewish groups' claims.¹⁴⁶ However, no evidence has come to light of Ambassador Kaplin attempting to present his state's view on the matter – an omission that may well have added to the Irish Jewish organisations' successes in promoting their particular view on this issue.

Ambassador Kaplin's death in office in 1979 resulted in expressions of condolence which showed signs of being sincerely meant, especially from Taoiseach Jack Lynch, trade unionists, Irish communists, as well as from Garret and Joan FitzGerald. In that regard it was perhaps the condolences of the FitzGeralds which were the most notable. Those condolences can be seen as a reflection of the mutually-respectful working relationship that had developed between the Irish minister (and his officials in the D.F.A.) with Kaplin in the course of occasions such as Dr FitzGerald's official visit to the Soviet Union in 1976. However, it was details in the review conducted by the D.F.A. of the state of Irish-Soviet relations in 1980 that best presented a realistic assessment of the achievements of the first Soviet mission to Ireland. The principal focus of the assessment was on the growth in trade, and improvements in Irish export levels following implementation of the economic cooperation agreement signed by Dr FitzGerald in Moscow in 1976. As discussed in chapter two, the assessment included the security of reliable oil supplies to meet the increasing needs of the E.S.B. and C.I.É. at a time of the oil crises of the 1970s, and the benefits from dairy and meat exports for Irish agriculture. To that official stocktaking can be added the growth of the activities and membership of a close supporter of the embassy, the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society.

The fifth major area in this study was the role of various Irish-Soviet friendship organisations. General conclusions can be made here: for the societies to be effective, two interconnected political conditions were required: first, a domestic scene that was, at a minimum, tolerant of Irish-Soviet contacts; and secondly, an international relations climate that provided for East-West cooperation. Also, it can be seen that the course of the Soviet Union's historical development – from initial construction, emergence from

¹⁴⁶ *Irish Times*, 5 July 1976, as discussed in chapter three.

the Second World War, *détente*, and through the *perestroika* and *glasnost* period to the dismantlement of the U.S.S.R. – were the chief determinants for the societies’ agendas.

It was the Ireland-USSR Society in Dublin that took centre stage in relations after the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1974. The society took advantage of the complementary domestic and international conditions that arose in the 1960s. It quickly established itself as a focused group, with a dedicated leadership that became adept at building up a membership and contacts well beyond its wellspring in the Irish Workers’ Party. As the society’s officers were careful to keep a considerable distance between the two organisations it did not encounter significant societal animosity. It set out unashamedly to influence the ‘makers and shakers’ in Ireland, and many notables travelled at the society’s invitation to experience Soviet life, and report back on their experiences. That their involvement did not result in them being labelled as communist sympathisers is a mark of how Irish society from 1966 was increasingly prepared to accept engagement with the Soviet Union.

To say that the society was a major factor in establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries would be an overstatement. Even so, the society’s successes, such as the reestablishment of connections between Irish and Soviet trade unions, and the launch of its annual holiday tours in the Soviet Union, all point to the society’s role in the breaking down of previous taboos. In these practical ways the society helped build a social consensus that eased the way forward for commercial and political considerations to compel the establishment of formal relations. In this regard this thesis has added to Ó Corcora and Hill’s assessment of the society’s role in Irish-Soviet affairs: that its main importance had been ‘an informational one’.¹⁴⁷

The society failed in its attempt to have the Irish government adopt its proposal for a state-to-state cultural agreement, indicating the limits of its reach. However, the consequence of this was that the society continued to benefit from the ‘soft power’ that went with its role as the principal non-governmental link between the two countries – a unique organisation located at a conjunction of cultural, informational, academic, trade union and tourist affairs in Irish-Soviet relations.

¹⁴⁷ Mícheál Ó Corcora and Ronald J. Hill, ‘The Soviet Union in Irish foreign policy’ in *International Affairs*, liix, no. 2 (spring, 1982), pp 258-9.

While the main focus of this thesis has been on Irish-Soviet diplomatic and friendship relations, aspects of those relations have frequently touched upon another relationship that existed throughout the short Soviet twentieth-century – connections between Irish and Soviet communism. This topic represents the sixth and final major subject to emerge from the thesis. Until the Second World War such connections were mediated through the Comintern, and thereafter as Irish communist organisations north and south united into the all-island C.P.I. in 1970, connections were conducted between the C.P.I. and the C.P.S.U. Even though Ambassador Brennan described the C.P.I. in 1977 as ‘that miniscule party’, the 1970s represented the party’s zenith in terms of its influence in both parts of Ireland. This was evidenced by its prominent role in the I.C.T.U.’s ‘better life for all’ campaign in the North, and its tripartite Left Alternative discussions with Official Sinn Féin and Labour Left in the South (as discussed in chapter four). But as was indicated by Dr Brennan to Dublin, it was the ability of the C.P.I.’s general secretary, Michael O’Riordan, to play a prominent role in the world communist movement that has commanded most significance in this study. This has been shown by O’Riordan’s role in the Eurocommunist debate that was a major issue at political and theoretical levels within the communist parties of western Europe, and for their ruling counterparts in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. In this context the C.P.I.’s support for the leading role of the C.P.S.U., as highlighted by the content of O’Riordan’s address to the twenty-fifth congress of the C.P.S.U., his organisational role at the Europe-wide conference of communist parties in east Berlin in 1976, and his subsequent acclamation in *Pravda*, confirmed that the Irish party did play a notable part in the Eurocommunist debate. While this thesis has brought new evidence from its oral and state archival sources to bear on the historical record of Eurocommunism, it was beyond its scope to attempt a full assessment of this significant topic in 1970s European history. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the thesis will help reignite an interest among historians on this neglected topic.

It is also the hope of the writer that this present thesis will help elevate the status and awareness of the subject area of Irish-Soviet relations onto a higher plain within Irish historiography, and that other researchers and historians will further engage with the topic. It is in this spirit that the writer has appended his registers of Ambassador Brennan’s P.R.s from Moscow and of the records of Irish attendances at the E.E.W.G. meetings to the thesis. With the emergence of these and other the new sources it is

perhaps now timely that Janet Hartley's, *Guide to documents and manuscripts in the Irish Republic relating to Russia and the Soviet Union* (1994), be updated accordingly. Also, the writer is keen to collaborate with Angela McQuillan and John P. Swift to assemble the surviving archival materials of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, and with Barry Bruton of Belfast for materials relating to the Northern Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, with a view to depositing these records of Irish-Soviet friendship in appropriate archives.

As a possible area of further research in a wider European context into the E.E.W.G., it is the writer's ambition (perhaps in a collaborative project with European colleagues) to engage with the records of other E.E.C. member states' involvement in the E.E.W.G. and E.P.C. In this regard he notes from preliminary searches on the website of the National Archives, Kew, that records relating to British involvement in E.P.C. appear to be available to researchers.

In the first instance, however, it is the ambition of the writer to continue with his labours beyond the end date of this present thesis of 1980 to 1991, so that that he may be in a position to present in the form of a monograph a comprehensive account of Irish-Soviet relations for the full span of the 'short Soviet twentieth-century'.

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APPENDIX 1

A register of Ambassador Brennan's political reports (P.R.s) from Moscow to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 1974-80

**Source: National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, Central
Registry files, 2006-2013 releases**

Summary analysis, by geopolitical topics, of political reports from Moscow, 1974-80

				Island				Euro-		Sino-		
	Total	N/A		of	Soviet	COM-		comm-		Soviet		Rest
<u>Year</u>	<u>P.R.s</u>	<u>P.R.s</u>	<u>P.R.s</u>	<u>Ireland</u>	<u>Union</u>	<u>ECON</u>	<u>E.E.C.</u>	<u>unism</u>	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>rift</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>world</u>
1974	41	-2	39	3	6	1	12	0		1	0	16
1975	80	-2	78	4	15	5	18	4	3	4	3	22
1976	118	-3	115	5	16	17	18	10	9	5	1	34
1977	130	-4	126	7	29	4	14	16	18	8	3	27
1978	92	-13	79		26	7	10	4	11	1	3	16
1979	46	-3	43	4	9	4	7	1	6	5	1	6
1980	49	-10	39	1	6	2	11		3	2	0	14
Totals	556	-37	519	24	107	40	91	35	50	26	11	135

Political reports from Moscow, 1974				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2005/4/75	1/74	20-May	Meeting of F.R.G. ambassador, Moscow, with Fadeyev, secretary general of COMECON - opener on E.E.C. contacts	3
2005/4/75	2	20-May	Soviet-British relations: meeting of British ambassador with Prime Minister Kosygin	2
2005/4/75	3	20-May	Cancellation of invitations to foreign scientists by the Soviet Academy of Sciences	2
	4	missing		
	5	missing		
2005/4/75	6	31-Jul	Soviet assessment of present state of Conference for Security and co-operation in Europe (C.S.C.E.)	3
2005/4/75	7	31-Jul	Cyprus (re Ambassador's interview with Vice Minister Kozyrev on solution to Cypriot crisis)	2
2005/4/75	8	31-Jul	F.R.G. Environment office in West Berlin (interview with Kozyrev)	2
2005/4/75	9	31-Jul	'Peaceful change' (interesting exchange with Kozyrev on the possibility of Irish unity in C.S.C.E. talks)	2
2005/4/75	10	01-Aug	Cyprus: Ambassador's meeting with Cypriot ambassador, a Greek Cypriot	3
2005/4/75	11	31-Jul	Establishment of F.R.G. Environment office in West Berlin	3
2005/4/75	12	06-Aug	Cyprus: Soviet newspaper views	3
2005/4/75	13	03-Aug	Arab-Israel conflict: Syrian view (Ambassador Brennan's meeting with Syrian ambassador)	2
2005/4/75	14	08-Aug	The Soviet leadership (ambassador's analysis of state and C.P.S.U. structures and personalities)	4
2005/4/75	15	08-Aug	Recognition of Palestinian Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.) by the Soviet Union	4
2005/4/75	16	08-Aug	Cyprus (Soviets feel problem is being solved in a NATO framework)	3
2005/4/75	17	08-Aug	Views of a representative of the Soviet military-industrial complex	4
2005/4/75	18	13-Aug	Cyprus (Ambassador's meeting with Turkish ambassador)	2

Political reports from Moscow, 1974				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2005/4/75	19	12-Aug	Cyprus (Ambassador's meeting with Greek ambassador)	2
2005/4/75	20	14-Aug	N. Ireland (comments on <i>Pravda</i> and <i>Izvestia</i> articles by reporter, Vasilyev)	2
2005/4/75	21	14-Aug	F.R.G. Environment office in West Berlin: further Soviet views	3
2005/4/75	22	14-Aug	F.R.G. Environment office in West Berlin: U.S. attitude (and resolution of issue)	1
2005/4/75	23	14-Aug	Cyprus: another Soviet signal of reassurance to the U.S.? (from <i>Za Rubezhom</i> , weekly from foreign press)	4
2005/4/75	24	15-Aug	Cyprus: further Soviet statement	2
2005/4/75	25	21-Aug	law of the Sea: Soviet preoccupations	2
2005/4/75	26	01-Sep	Relations between COMECON and E.E.C.	2
2005/4/75	27	01-Sep	Visit of Foreign Minister Gromyko to Bonn, with description of Gromyko's personality and abilities	2
2005/4/75	28	15-Oct	Relations between COMECON and E.E.C.	3
2005/4/75	29	17-Oct	Watergate in the Soviet Union (dissident Marxist historian, Roy Medvedev, draws parallels in Soviet society)	6
2005/4/75	30	14-Oct	October revolution celebrations, with letter of instruction from Dáithí Ó Ceallaigh, Iveagh House, to J. Sharkey, Moscow re P.R.s	2
2005/4/75	31	14-Nov	The October (revolution) celebrations (2) speeches	6
2005/4/75	32	20-Nov	Inflation in the capitalist world: Soviet recipe for cure	4
2005/4/75	33	21-Nov	Greek election results: Soviet assessment	2
2005/4/75	34	21-Nov	Why are the (Soviet) trade unions not standing up for workers' rights?	4
2005/4/75	35	25-Nov	A cooling in Franco-Soviet relations	4
2005/4/75	36	25-Nov	French and Yugoslav communist polemics	2
2005/4/75	37	28-Nov	Sino-Soviet border dispute: (1) Chinese version (Ambassador's briefing from Chinese ambassador)	8

Political reports from Moscow, 1974				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2005/4/75	38	02-Dec	Negotiations between Norway and Soviet Union on delimitation of Continental Shelf	5
2005/4/75	39	03-Dec	Soviet-Albanian relations: a Soviet olive branch	6
2005/4/75	40	05-Dec	Middle East: latest Soviet pronouncement and visit of P.L.O. delegation to Moscow	5
2005/4/75	41	06-Dec	P.L.O. interview (in <i>New Times</i>) in Moscow	3

Political reports from Moscow, 1975				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2005/145/1798	P.R.1/75	03-Jan	Postponement of Brezhnev visit to Middle East	5
2005/145/1798	2	09-Jan	Kissinger threat on military intervention in Middle East: Soviet reaction	4
2005/145/1798	3	21-Feb	Visit of British prime minister, Harold Wilson to the Soviet Union	9+20
2005/145/1798	4	20-Feb	Brezhnev's health	2
2005/145/1798	5	05-Mar	(Ambassador Brennan's) visit to M. Zamyatin, head of TASS	2
2005/145/1798	6	missing		
2005/145/1798	7	07-Mar	The succession question (II) (to Brezhnev)	4
2005/145/1798	8	13-Mar	Western credits to the Soviet Union	2
2005/145/1798	9	14-Mar	Sino-Japanese negotiations on a peace treaty: Soviet reaction	7
2005/145/1798	10	21-Mar	law of the sea conference: latest Soviet assessment	6
2005/145/1798	11	27-Mar	Failure of Kissinger's Middle East peace mission: initial Soviet reaction	6
2005/145/1798	12	26-Mar	Non-proliferation treaty review conference: Soviet démarche	6
2005/145/1798	13	27-Mar	Visit of Prime Minister Jacques Chirac to the Soviet Union, 19-24 March	4+12
2005/145/1798	14	04-Apr	Chirac in Moscow: a latter day Laval (Pierre, French foreign minister, 1935)	6
2005/145/1798	15	10-Apr	Apology to Tito (re slight over war-time achievements of Yugoslav partisans)	6
2005/145/1798	16	11-Apr	Soviet reaction to events in Vietnam (collapse of the Saigon army)	6
2005/145/1798	17	17-Apr	Ambassador Brennan's call on Mr Inozemtsyev, head of Institute of World Economy	6
2005/145/1798	18	18-Apr	The Middle East: latest Soviet pronouncements	4
2005/145/1798	19	18-Apr	Soviet-Iraq relations (following visit of Vice-President Saddam Hussein)	3
2005/145/1798	20	20-Apr	Ouster of Shelepin (thought to be an opponent of Brezhnev's in the politburo)	3
2005/145/1798	21	18-Apr	Foreign policy review by the Central Committee	3
2005/145/1798	22	25-Apr	Middle East: new Soviet policy pronouncements	7
2005/145/1798	23	05-May	Soviet reaction to elections in Portugal	2

Political reports from Moscow, 1975				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2005/145/1798	24	19-May	Soviet reaction to communist takeover of South Vietnam	8
2005/145/1798	25	30-May	Economic reform under discussion?	6
2005/145/1798	26	02-Jun	Middle East: moderation of Soviet position	6
2005/145/1798	27	02-Jun	Ambassador of Thailand's view of situation in Indo-China (post unification of Vietnam)	5
2005/145/1798	28	05-Jun	Meeting of Danish foreign minister with Gromyko	6
2005/145/1798	29	05-Jun	Middle East (rights and tactics of the Palestinians)	3
2005/145/1798	30	09-Jun	Reopening of Suez canal and Israeli withdrawal	2
2005/145/1798	31	09-Jun	British referendum (on E.E.C.) result	3
2005/145/1798	32	13-Jun	Dampening down excessive consumer expectations	4
2005/145/1798	33	16-Jun	Greek application for membership (<i>Izvestia</i> doubts E.E.C. membership would help economy)	2
2005/145/1798	34	16-Jun	Soviet denial of military base in Somalia	3
2005/145/1798	35	16-Jun	Brezhnev on detente and control	4
2005/145/1798	36	23-Jun	Sino-Japanese peace treaty: Soviet warning to Japan	7
2005/145/1798	37	23-Jun	The Israeli map: initial Soviet response	6
2005/145/1798	38	25-Jun	Belgian briefing on discussions with Soviets: Kosygin 'fed up' with E.E.C., claims it wants to exercise a 'monopoly' and 'brake' on E. Europe	4+10
2005/145/1798	39	30-Jun	Secret Kremlin instructions (to Western C.P.s to seize power): Soviet denial	4
2005/145/1798	40	07-Jul	<i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> on violence in N. Ireland	4
2005/145/1798	42 (41)	07-Jul	Visit of U.S. Senators (discussions on trade, arms control and emigration of Soviet Jews)	6
2005/145/1798	42	21-Jul	Soviet-Iranian relations	5
2005/145/1798	43	01-Aug	Anglo-Soviet political consultations (report on policy discussions)	4
2005/145/1798	44	01-Aug	Soviet-Egyptian relations: 'coolness' is the key note	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1975				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2005/145/1798	45	06-Aug	trouble in Azerbaijan (need to counter 'remnants of private property psychology)	4
2005/145/1798	46	08-Aug	Soviet policy on Portugal	4
2005/145/1798	47	08-Aug	Two tactics of social democracy' (<i>Pravda</i> anniversary article on Lenin's treatise of 1905)	6
2005/145/1798	48	08-Aug	Soviet attack on avant-garde artists in <i>Ogonyok</i> magazine	7
2005/145/1798	49	15-Sep	Soviet press on N. Ireland (reaction to wave of sectarian killings)	3
2005/145/1798	50	01-Oct	26th anniversary of Chinese revolution	5
2005/145/1798	51	06-Oct	Danger of Japanese surrender to Chinese on anti-hegemony clause	5
2005/145/1798	52	13-Oct	Award of Nobel peace prize to Sakharov	4
2005/145/1798	53	13-Oct	Soviet - G.D.R. Treaty	6
2005/145/1798	54	15-Oct	Soviet feelings on eve of visit of President Giscard d'Estaing (1) economic	3
2005/145/1798	55	15-Oct	Soviet feelings on eve of visit of President Giscard d'Estaing (2) political	5
2005/145/1798	56	missing		
2005/145/1798	57	22-Oct	Visit of French president, 14-18 Oct. 1975	7+10
2005/145/1798	58	23-Oct	Soviet press, <i>Ogonyok</i> , on N. Ireland ('the blood and tears of Ulster'), with cartoon from Krokodil	3+2
2005/145/1798	59	27-Oct	Visit of French president to Soviet Union: Soviet evaluation	6
2005/145/1798	60	27-Oct	Soviet attack against Sadat (president of Egypt)	6
2005/145/1798	61	31-Oct	Condemnation of I.R.A. bombings in England	3
2005/145/1798	62	31-Oct	Cancellation of visit of Soviet mayors to West Berlin	2
2005/145/1798	63	03-Nov	Visit on Le Duan (Vietnamese vice-prime minister and C.P. secretary) to Moscow	9
2005/145/1798	64	10-Nov	October revolution celebrations	8
2005/145/1798	65	17-Nov	Visit of President Scheel (of F.R.G) to Moscow	10+10

Political reports from Moscow, 1975				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2005/145/1798	66	19-Nov	Carpeting of a deputy-minister (for inefficiency in research institutes)	5
2005/145/1798	67	20-Nov	Publicising the Final Act of Helsinki: a 'first' obligation - Pravda and Izvestia have combined readership of twenty million	4
2005/145/1798	68	21-Nov	Political line-up in Spain: Soviet assessment	5
2005/145/1798	69	24-Nov	Visit of Italian president, Leone, 18-21 Nov. 1975	6+14
2005/145/1798	70	01-Dec	Visit by President Husak to Moscow, 25-9 Nov. 1975	6
2005/145/1798	71	08-Dec	Soviet economic setbacks: political implications	4
2005/145/1798	72	15-Dec	Conference of European C.P.s : first public comment by Soviets on the problems	5
2005/145/1798	73	15-Dec	Kremlin debate on revolutionary strategy towards the West: the Soviets answer 'no'	8
2005/145/1798	74	10-Dec	Angola: Soviet policy (détente for the Soviets does not mean 'freezing of status quo')	7
2005/145/1798	75	15-Dec	The third basket (human rights provision of the Helsinki Final Act): current Soviet position	10
2005/145/1798	76	17-Dec	Soviet proposal for ban on new types of weapons: some clarification by <i>Pravda</i>	4
2005/145/1798	77	17-Dec	Meeting of east European foreign ministers in Moscow	6
2005/145/1798	78	22-Dec	Visit of Yugoslav deputy prime minister, Munich, 8-11 Dec. 1975	4
2005/145/1798	79	22-Dec	Franco-Soviet relations	6
2005/145/1798	80	22-Dec	Opposition to Soviet economic dependence on the West?	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1976				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2006/131/238	P.R. 1/76	05-Jan	No 'liberalisation' in the Soviet Union (re Helsinki Final Act)	7
2006/131/238	2	09-Jan	Détente and social progress (re advantages for Soviet policy objectives)	6
2006/131/238	3	05-Jan	<i>Pravda</i> editorial calling for end of foreign intervention in Angola	5
2006/131/238	4	05-Jan	<i>Izvestia</i> comment on Angola	4
2006/131/238	5	08-Jan	Angola: Soviets rebuff U.S. Overtures	4
2006/131/238	6	12-Jan	SALT 2 negotiations: Soviet position	5
2006/131/238	7	12-Jan	Soviet involvement in Angola and détente	5
2006/131/238	8	12-Jan	E.E.C.-COMECON relations: Soviets do not want E.E.C. to have relations with individual E. European countries	8
2006/131/238	9	16-Jan	A painful up-coming anniversary: 20th Party congress (Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956)	6
2006/131/238	10	19-Jan	Sino-Soviet relations in new year: no improvement	5
2006/131/238	11	19-Jan	The Tindemanns report (proposal for E.E.C. to expand beyond economic unity)	4
2006/131/238	12	19-Jan	The dictatorship of the proletariat: (Soviet concern of French Eurocommunism)	9
2006/131/238	13	19-Jan	New Brezhnev proposals on pan-European cooperation	4
2006/131/238	14	23-Jan	Tops-turvy commemoration of Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation	4
2006/131/238	15	23-Feb	Soviets warn Japan against supplying weaponry to China	3
2006/131/238	16	23-Feb	Soviet comment on COMECON initiative (on trade with E.E.C.)	4
2006/131/238	17	23-Feb	Soviets keep up pressure on new weapons of mass destruction	4
2006/131/238	18	27-Feb	F.R.G. soundings on draft COMECON agreement	5
2006/131/238	19	27-Feb	Soviets lay down political limits to COMECON foreign ties	4
2006/131/238	20	27-Feb	Brezhnev on Middle East initiative	5
2006/131/238	21	27-Feb	Brezhnev unexpectedly modest on the Helsinki Final Act	5
2006/131/238	22	01-Mar	Brezhnev on détente	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1976				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2006/131/238	23	08-Mar	Soviet clarification of proposal for world treaty on non-use of force	5
2006/131/238	24	08-Mar	Soviets acknowledge their Asian collective security idea as impractical	5
2006/131/238	25	08-Mar	Michael O'Riordan (C.P.I. secretary) speaks at Soviet Party congress	3
2006/131/238	26	22-Mar	Courcel (French foreign minister) visit to Moscow	7
2006/131/238	27	22-Mar	Soviet press coverage of N. Ireland features poetry of Yevtushenko, includes text and cartoon from Krokodil	
2006/131/238	28	22-Mar	I.R.A. condemned for West Ham explosion	3
2006/131/238	29	24-Mar	<i>Pravda</i> attack on ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines)	4
2006/131/238	30	29-Mar	Soviet attack on Sadat's economic policies	4
2006/131/238	31	05-Apr	Soviets reject (Israeli-U.S.) proposal for 'end to state of war'	3
2006/131/238	32	05-Apr	Soviet review of post-Helsinki initiatives	5
2006/131/238	33	05-Apr	Soviet analysis of main post-Helsinki trends in W. Europe	4
2006/131/238	34	05-Apr	Soviet assessment of stiffening U.S. attitude on strategic arms talks	8
2006/131/238	35	12-Apr	Political aspects of COMECON proposals (attitude of E.E.C. Nine)	5
2006/131/238	36	12-Apr	<i>Pravda</i> warning to (President) Ford administration	4
2006/131/238	37	12-Apr	Brezhnev cult endorsed by <i>Pravda</i>	6
2006/131/238	38	26-Apr	COMECON proposal aired by <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i>	8
2006/131/238	39	26-Apr	Soviets insist on proletarian internationalism (re Eurocommunism)	7
2006/131/238	40	03-May	Surprised appointment of Ustinov (a civilian) as minister for defence	4
2006/131/238	41	03-May	A rare happening: Brezhnev appears among the people	4
2006/131/238	42	03-May	Formal Soviet statement on Middle East	5
2006/131/238	43	07-May	Brezhnev snubs Laotian communist leader	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1976				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2006/131/238	44	06-May	First direct clarification of Soviet new weapons and systems	4
2006/131/238	45	10-May	Cult of Brezhnev reaches new heights	5
2006/131/238	46	14-May	Soviet pronouncement on Brezhnev's proposal for pan-European congresses	5
2006/131/238	47	17-May	Soviet comment on COMECON proposals (concedes need for western technology)	4
2006/131/238	48	21-May	Yugoslavia rejects proletarian internationalism	7
2006/131/238	49	24-May	Re-enter Zarodov (editor of <i>World Marxist Review</i> , and opponent of Eurocommunism)	11
2006/131/238	50	24-May	Significance of Zarodov's re-emergence	6
2006/131/238	51	31-May	Soviet statement on FRG relations on détente and peaceful co-existence	8+4
2006/131/238	52	07-Jun	Kosygin (Soviet prime minister) visit to Iraq	3
2006/131/238	53	07-Jun	Visit to the Soviet Union of the prime minister of Angola	5
2006/131/238	54	07-Jun	Kosygin (Soviet prime minister) visit to Syria	6
2006/131/238	55	07-Jun	Soviet-Rumanian relations: Rumanians push too far (raise a territorial claim on Moldova)	4
2006/131/238	56	07-Jun	Soviet-Rumanian relations: Ceausescu backs down	4
2006/131/238	57	07-Jun	Conference of European C.P.s: unresolved problems (Ambassador Brennan indicates that he quotes from 'an east European ambassador')	5
2006/131/238	58	14-Jun	Germans seek clarification from Soviets on declaration on relations with FRG	5
2006/131/238	59	14-Jun	Soviets condemn French strategic doctrine (re-integration into NATO)	5
2006/131/238	60	14-Jun	Soviet echo of polemics on Rumanian territorial claims	4
2006/131/238	61	14-Jun	Soviets warn E.E.C. against exploiting trade ties to split COMECON	5
2006/131/238	62	14-Jun	Soviet-Portuguese relations 1: visit of Foreign Minister Melu Antunes	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1976				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2006/131/238	63	14-Jun	Soviet-Portuguese relations II: more modest Soviet expectations and aims	6
2006/131/238	64	14-Jun	TASS statement on Lebanon crisis	4
2006/131/238	65	17-Jun	Palliser (British foreign office under-secretary) visit	4
2006/131/238	66	21-Jun	European C.P.s conference: Yugoslav problems solved	3
2006/131/238	67	21-Jun	Visit to the Soviet Union of Indira Ghandi, prime minister of India	5
2006/131/238	68	21-Jun	U.S. Presidential elections: Soviets uncertain as to outcome	6
2006/131/238	69	28-Jun	Soviets assess events in Lebanon	5
2006/131/238	70	28-Jun	Soviets criticise French president over Petain's (head of Vichy government) 'rehabilitation'	6
2006/131/238	71	05-Jul	West Berlin: F.R.G. see increasing Soviet pressure	4
2006/131/238	72	12-Jul	Berlin European C.P.s conference I: Western parties reject proletarian internationalism	9
2006/131/238	73	12-Jul	Berlin European C.P.s conference II: balance sheet for the Soviets	6
2006/131/238	74	12-Jul	<i>Pravda</i> attacks Eurocommunists	4
2006/131/238	75	19-Jul	Soviet assessment of U.S. Policy in Southern Africa	5
2006/131/238	76	missing		
2006/131/238	77	missing		
2006/131/238	78	missing		
2006/131/238	79	10-Aug	Visit of President Ceausescu of Romania to the Soviet Union	6
2006/131/238	80	06-Sep	Spanish official reports Saharan people betrayed	3
2006/131/238	81	06-Sep	Soviet-Spanish relations: stalled by ban on the Spanish C.P. (interesting details on leasing of embassy buildings in USSR)	4
2006/131/238	82	06-Sep	Soviets' strategy for C.S.C.E. Belgrade meeting: attack the best form of defence	11+4
2006/131/238	83	08-Sep	Soviets explain rationale of emigration restrictions (re Jewish emigration)	5
2006/131/238	84	08-Sep	Soviet claims on Lebanon	7
2006/131/238	85	13-Sep	Soviets declare preference for F.R.G. coalition parties	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1976				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2006/131/238	86	14-Sep	Soviets condemn F.R.G. defence policy	5
2006/131/238	87	13-Sep	Soviet reaction to Mao's death	5
2006/131/238	88	20-Sep	Rumanians set strict limits to proletarian internationalism	10
2006/131/238	89	21-Sep	Soviets re-assert 'socialist internationalism' for eastern Europe	8
2006/131/238	90	21-Sep	P.L.O. foreign affairs spokesman meets Gromyko	5
2006/131/238	91	22-Sep	Suslov (politburo member and ideological <i>eminence grise</i>) visits Leningrad	4
2006/131/238	92	27-Sep	Governor Harriman (advisor to President Carter) meets Brezhnev	6
2006/131/238	93	27-Sep	Vienna negotiations: <i>Pravda</i> rejects principle of unequal reductions in arms	6
2006/131/238	94	29-Sep	Soviets intervene again in F.R.G. election campaign	5
2006/131/238	95	29-Sep	Soviet policy in wake of Lusaka summit (to determine future of southern Africa)	6
2006/131/238	96	04-Oct	Soviets condemn latest Syrian military operations	3
2006/131/238	97	04-Oct	Middle East: Soviets call for the re-convening of Geneva peace conference	6
2006/131/238	98	05-Oct	Conciliatory Soviet signal to Peking	11
2006/131/238	99	12-Oct	Soviets condemn Provisional I.R.A., with Michael O'Riordan and B. Sinclair, 'Irish communists and terrorism' in <i>World Marxist Review</i>	10+3
2006/131/238	100	13-Oct	Rhodesia: more moderate Soviet stand	5
2006/131/238	101	18-Oct	Visit of Foreign Minister Gromyko to Denmark, 5-6 October	5+2
2006/131/238	102	19-Oct	Kirilenko's (politburo member) 70th birthday and Kremlin politics	9
2006/131/238	103	19-Oct	Lebanon: Soviets condemn Syrian intervention	5
2006/131/238	104	20-Oct	Mongolian party leader, Tsendenbal, espouses 'drawing together'	5
2006/131/238	105	26-Oct	90th anniversary of Ordzhonikidze's (Stalin victim) birth	6
2006/131/238	106	26-Oct	Soviets discount U.S. presidential election rhetoric	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1976				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2006/131/238	107	02-Nov	C.P.S.U. central committee meeting announces only minor leadership changes	5
2006/131/238	108	03-Nov	Sino-Soviet relations: Brezhnev sends a congratulations message to Hua Kuo-feng. (Ambassador Brennan claims that the Soviets were ready to launch a nuclear strike in 1969)	7
2006/131/238	109	03-Nov	New five year plan, 1976-80, finally approved	10
2006/131/238	110	10-Nov	October revolution celebrations	9
2006/131/238	111	10-Nov	Soviet warning (in <i>Red Star</i>) to Austria against arms deal with Israel	5
2006/131/238	112	16-Nov	C.P.S.U. central committee decrees wider opportunities for young intellectuals	9
2006/131/238	113	24-Nov	Changes in Soviet attitude towards E.E.C. commission?	5
2006/131/238	114	23-Nov	Soviets seeking foreign policy coordination organ for East bloc countries?	7+3
2006/131/238	115	24-Nov	Brezhnev visit to Belgrade and Tito (84), with 'Circulated to all missions' - Ambassador Brennan anxious not to upset Yugoslav ambassador!	10
2006/131/238	116	30-Nov	<i>Pravda</i> endorses N. Ireland peace movement, and condemns 'terrorists from the I.R.A.'	4
2006/131/238	117	30-Nov	Warsaw Pact summit, Bucharest (consideration of communiqué)	13
2006/131/238	118	07-Dec	Sino-Soviet relations: strange repeat performance of Victor Louis	11+5

Political reports from Moscow, 1977				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2007/111/221	1/77	11-Jan	Belgian ambassador lured to symposium at Serbsky Institute (alleged to be run by K.G.B.)	6+1
2007/111/221	2	11-Jan	Soviets call for more effective safeguards on exports of nuclear materials	6
2007/111/221	3	12-Jan	Soviet arms build-up 1: unconvincing Soviet disclaimers	7
2007/111/221	4	12-Jan	Soviet arms build-up II: unconvincing Soviet disclaimers	6
2007/111/221	5	18-Jan	The Middle East: more flexible Soviet position	6
2007/111/221	6	18-Jan	Visit of Italian foreign minister	6+2
2007/111/221	7	18-Jan	Non-first use of nuclear weapons: Gromyko proposes preliminary conference	4
2007/111/221	8	19-Jan	<i>Pravda</i> bids good riddance to Ford (U.S. President)	7
2007/111/221	9	19-Jan	Brezhnev speech on foreign policy	6
2007/111/221	10	26-Jan	Renewed Soviet calls to prevent nuclear proliferation	4
2007/111/221	11	26-Jan	Cyprus: <i>Pravda</i> attack on Clerides (ex-president of the Cyprus parliament)	6
2007/111/221	12	25-Jan	Civil defence programme: Soviet rejoinder to General Keegan (U.S. Air force chief)	8
2007/111/221	13	25-Jan	Soviet reaction to President Carter's inaugural speech	5
2007/111/221	14	25-Jan	COMECON meeting in Havana	5
2007/111/221	15	26-Jan	<i>Pravda</i> assesses breakdown of negotiations on Rhodesia	3
2007/111/221	16	01-Feb	Intourist head extols Soviet tourism record	4
2007/111/221	17	01-Feb	COMECON meeting in Havana II	2
2007/111/221	18	01-Feb	Non-first use of nuclear weapons: Soviets seek to answer objections	5
2007/111/221	19	02-Feb	Northern Ireland: Bloody Sunday commemoration	5
2007/111/221	20	08-Feb	Soviet arms build-up II: Arbatov (foreign affairs advisor to Brezhnev) enters the fray	11
2007/111/221	21	08-Feb	Sharp Soviet reaction to Carter's espousal of dissidents	9
2007/111/221	22	09-Feb	N. Ireland gets caught up in East-West polemics (Strasbourg Court hearings)	4
2007/111/221	23	04-Feb	The Soviet drug scene	6
2007/111/221	24	07-Feb	Visit of Iraqi vice-president	5
2007/111/221	25	16-Feb	Soviet press sum up Strasbourg Court hearing	5
2007/111/221	26	14-Feb	Soviet physicist condemns existing (Soviet) nuclear reactors as unsafe	7

Political reports from Moscow, 1977				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2007/111/221	27	15-Feb	Berlin conference of European C.P.s: concept of party independence re-defined	4
2007/111/221	28	15-Feb	Direct elections to European parliament: Soviets voice concern	4
2007/111/221	29	15-Feb	West Berlin: Soviet retort to western Europe	5
2007/111/221	30	23-Feb	Soviet condemnation of President Sadat	4
2007/111/221	31	08-Mar	Sino-Soviet relations: Soviets ready to resume polemics?	6
2007/111/221	32	09-Mar	Eurocommunists lectured by <i>Pravda</i>	10
2007/111/221	33	15-Mar	Sino-Soviet relations: Soviets resume polemics	4
2007/111/221	34	16-Mar	Carter administration's human rights policy: Soviet reaction	11
2007/111/221	35	22-Mar	Brezhnev speech to Soviet trade union congress	8
2007/111/221	36	25-Mar	Visit of Turkish foreign minister to the Soviet Union	5
2007/111/221	37	06-Apr	Soviets give new twist to N. Ireland situation	7
2007/111/221	38	13-Apr	Soviet American SALT negotiations	13
2007/111/221	39	13-Apr	Soviet statement on Zaire	5
2007/111/221	40	20-Apr	<i>Pravda</i> scorns Owen's (British foreign minister) peace effort on Rhodesia problem	3
2007/111/221	41	20-Apr	Soviets exploit resumed Strasbourg Court hearing I	5
2007/111/221	42	19-Apr	Soviets continue public diplomacy on SALT	18
2007/111/221	43	27-Apr	Soviets exploit resumed Strasbourg Court hearing - II	5
2007/111/221	44	27-Apr	E.E.C.-COMECON negotiations: Rumanian view	2
2007/111/221	45	27-Apr	Zaire: Soviets express concern over threat to Angola	5
2007/111/221	46	27-Apr	TASS commentary on Belgrade meeting (follow up to Helsinki agreement)	3+4
2007/111/221	47	11-May	<i>Pravda</i> on Prague editorial meeting of <i>Problems of Peace and Socialism</i>	10
2007/111/221	48	11-May	Angola: Soviets publicise Cuban resolve to remain	5
2007/111/221	49	11-May	SALT: Soviets show readiness for compromise?	6
2007/111/221	50/77	13-May	Soviets renege on Berlin conference concessions	9
2007/111/221	51	15-May	<i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> rejects western plea for release of Rudolf Hess	4
2007/111/221	52	17-May	<i>Pravda</i> intervenes in internal affairs of Italian C.P.	7
2008/79/1975	53	20-May	Ethiopian leader's visit to the S.U., 4-8 May 1977	2

Political reports from Moscow, 1977				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2008/79/1975	54	25-May	Institute of Marxism Leninism censures book	7
2008/79/1975	55/77	25-May	<i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> assesses developments in China	5
2008/79/1975	56	25-May	Soviets warn West against China	8
2007/111/221	57	30-May	Belgrade meeting: statement by Brezhnev and Warsaw Pact foreign minister	6
2007/111/221	58	31-May	Helsinki humanitarian provisions rejected as subversive	7
2007/111/221	59	01-Jun	Podgorny's (Soviet president) departure from politburo	4
2007/111/221	60	01-Jun	Keeping the military technocrats in their place	5
2007/111/221	61	08-Jun	Scandal at the Agricultural Institute	2
2007/111/221	62	08-Jun	Capitalism: life in the 'old dog' yet	7
2007/111/221	63	13-Jun	Visit of French foreign minister	4
2007/111/221	64	14-Jun	<i>Pravda</i> denounces Japanese Communist Party (re: territorial claims)	7+7
2007/111/221	65	14-Jun	Soviets close door on Japanese territorial claims	5+21
2007/111/221	66	10-Jun	Australian-Soviet political relations	4
2007/111/221	67	15-Jun	Visit of Egyptian foreign minister to Moscow	5+13
2007/111/221	68	21-Jun	Genscher visit to Moscow	7+11
2007/111/221	69	21-Jun	Un-pardoning of President Podgorny	8
2007/111/221	70	21-Jun	Brezhnev as president	7
2007/111/221	71	22-Jun	Sino-Soviet relations: <i>Pravda</i> acknowledges period of self-restraint	3
2007/111/221	72	28-Jun	Human rights: Soviet dissident, Roy Medvedev, advocates quiet diplomacy by West	8+14
2007/111/221	73	05-Jul	Sino-Soviet relations: commentary by <i>Kommunist</i>	6+5
2007/111/221	74	05-Jul	Soviets charge Carter with new round in arms race	8
2007/111/221	75	12-Jul	President Brezhnev receives diplomatic corps	4+4
2007/111/221	76	13-Jun	Soviet think-tank analyses real motives behind Carter's human rights policy	7
2007/111/221	77	13-Jun	<i>Pravda</i> comment on Carter's decisions on B-1 bomber and Cruise missile	5
2007/111/221	78	20-Jul	Two Soviet tactics in war of nerves with U.S. (re arms control and human rights)	7+2
2007/111/221	79	19-Jul	Dissidents under new constitution	6
2007/111/221	80	19-Jul	Views of the new Portuguese ambassador on the 'Stalinist' Portuguese C.P.	5
2007/111/221	81	20-Jul	K.G.B. official warns against ideological dangers from the West	5
2007/111/221	82	27-Jul	Soviet olive branch to U.S. in weekly international affairs journal, <i>New Times</i>	5
2007/111/221	83	27-Jul	Soviets caution F.R.G. on W. Berlin status	4

Political reports from Moscow, 1977				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2007/111/221	84	02-Aug	<i>Pravda</i> evaluates Soviet preparations for Olympics	4+1
2007/111/221	85	02-Aug	Private agricultural plots: policy differences in Moscow	5+2
2007/111/221	86	03-Aug	Artistic creative work under the new constitution	5
2007/111/221	87	03-Aug	U.S.-Soviet relations: Arbatov article in <i>Pravda</i>	11
2007/111/221	88	08-Aug	Sino-Soviet relations: conciliatory Soviet signal to Peking	8
2007/111/221	89	09-Aug	New Soviet constitution: behind-the-scenes debate on state rights	7
2007/111/221	90	11-Aug	<i>Pravda</i> on direct elections to the European parliament (N.B.: Ambassador Brennan wrote to the editor complaining of its description of Ireland as a NATO member)	
2007/111/221	91	19-Aug	President Brezhnev on U.S.-Soviet relations	3+5
2007/111/221	92	22-Aug	Recent changes in Soviet policy in the Horn of Africa	3+1
2007/111/221	93	23-Aug	Soviet views on the situation between Egypt and Libya (armed border clashes)	5
2007/111/221	94	25-Aug	Visit of president Tito to Moscow	8+8
2007/111/221	95	02-Sep	Soviet view on the path to power for the West European C.P.s	6
2008/79/1975	96	20-Sep	Rehabilitation on the sly: 90th anniversary of P. Postyshev (Stalin victim)	4
2008/79/1975	97	20-Sep	Soviets protest F.R.G. rocket range in Zaire	6+2
2008/79/1975	98	21-Sep	<i>Pravda</i> comment on the Middle East	6+2
2008/79/1975	99	27-Oct	Revolutionary violence: Soviets put French C.P. on the spot	12
2008/79/1975	100	28-Oct	Israel at the Olympics: Soviets give assurance	2+1
2008/79/1975	101	27-Sep	Visit of Icelandic prime minister	7
2008/79/1975	102	05-Oct	French elections: <i>Pravda</i> rejects western speculation	6+2
2008/79/1975	103	04-Oct	Visit of president Neto (Angola) to Moscow	4
2007/111/221	104	05-Oct	Brezhnev presents the new constitution	17
2007/111/221	105	10-Oct	Visit of the French prime minister to the Soviet Union, 28 Sep.-2 Oct. 1977	4
2008/79/1975	106	12-Oct	New Soviet constitution adopted	7
2008/79/1975	107	12-Oct	Problems of Georgian nationalism aired at supreme soviet	5
2008/79/1975	108	18-Oct	Visit of Dr Owen, British foreign minister	10+11
2008/79/1975	109	26-Oct	Visit of French defence minister	4
2008/79/1975	110	25-Oct	Yuri Krasin on revolution I (critique on Eurocommunism)	7+3

Political reports from Moscow, 1977				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2008/79/1975	111	26-Oct	Yuri Krasin on revolution II (Eurocommunism) - the Protean concept of the "majority", with incisive cartoons from <i>Krokodil</i>)	
2009/120/1030	112	26-Oct	ORTAG missile range in Zaire: German briefing	3
2009/120/1030	113	01-Nov	West Berlin - new Soviet statement	4
2009/120/1030	114/7 7	1 Nov. 77	<i>Pravda</i> article violates truce with Santiago Carrillo, the Spanish Eurocommunists C.P. leader	6
2009/120/1030	115	02-Nov	Portuguese C.P. affirms loyalty to Moscow	4
2008/79/1975	116	15-Nov	Ideological conference in Moscow 1: Brezhnev sets the tone	11
2008/79/1975	117	15-Nov	<i>Pravda</i> lauds O'Riordan on his 60th birthday - Ambassador Brennan's critique	5+7
2008/79/1975	118	16-Nov	<i>Pravda</i> taxes Georgian press with ideological laxity	4+2
2008/79/1975	119	16-Nov	Role of Soviet armed forces in elaboration of Soviet domestic and foreign policy	9
2009/120/1030	120 *	23-Nov	Improving the economic mechanism	7
2009/120/1030	121*	22-Nov	Moscow ideological conference (COMECON countries)II: Suslov and Ponomaryov speeches	6
2009/120/1030	122 *	22-Nov	Moscow ideological conference I: disappointing results for the Soviets	5
2009/120/1030	123*	23-Nov	Sadat's journey to Israel: Soviet reaction	5
2009/120/1030	124	missing		
2009/120/1030	125	missing		
2009/120/1030	126	missing		
2009/120/1030	127	missing		
2009/120/1030	128*	06-Dec	Soviets warn Japanese against friendship treaty with China	5
2009/120/1030	129*	06-Dec	Soviets start open criticism of Sadat	7
2009/120/1030	130*	07-Dec	Artists' Congress: policy statement by Ponomaryov	5
			* P.R.s not in correct number sequence in file!	

Political reports from Moscow, 1978				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2009/120/1030	1/78	04-Jan	Ismailia meeting: Soviet evaluation (Israeli-Egyptian talks)	5+2
2009/120/1030	2	11-Jan	Private agricultural plots 1: a plea for an end to harassment	6
2009/120/1030	3	11-Jan	Private agricultural plots 11: ideological objections answered	8
2008/79/1975	4	18-Jan	Private agricultural plots: fodder needs refused by farm heads	5
2008/79/1975	5	18-Jan	Visit of President Roumedienne of Algeria	6
2008/79/1975	6	18-Jan	Somali-Ethiopian conflict: Soviets reject U.S. overtures	10
2008/79/1975	7	24-Jan	Visit of Italian C.P. delegation	4+4
2008/79/1975	8	24-Jan	Long-term economic plan, I: still very much alive	5
2008/79/1975	9	24-Jan	Long-term economic plan, II: technical stage nearing completion	8
2008/79/1975	10	24-Jan	Visit of Japanese foreign minister	8
2008/79/1975	11	25-Jan	Somali-Ethiopian conflict: Soviets and U.S. lines	8
	12	missing		
	13	missing		
2008/79/1975	14	14-Feb	<i>Pravda</i> editorial on SALT negotiations	14+4
2008/79/1975	15	15-Feb	Europe's leftward swing: Soviets puzzled over likely U.S. Reaction	9
2008/79/1975	16	15-Feb	Visit of Austrian chancellor	6+3
2008/79/1975	17	21-Feb	SALT negotiations: further Soviet commentary	5+10
2008/79/1975	18	21-Feb	Soviet-Japanese relations: Soviet comment	6
2009/120/1030	19	22-Feb	Soviet chief of staff expresses views on state of Soviet military science	9
2009/120/1030	20	28-Feb	Soviet-Japanese relations: a new Soviet initiative	5+6
2009/120/1030	21	28-Feb	The Soviet leadership I: Kulakov returns to work	
2009/120/1030	22	01-Mar	The Soviet leadership II: Kulakov moves up	8
2009/120/1030	23	01-Mar	French elections: Tass denies hostility to the left	6+2
	24	missing		

Political reports from Moscow, 1978				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
	25	missing		
	26	missing		
	27	missing		
	28	missing		
2008/79/1975	29	14-Mar	<i>Izvestia</i> warns against creeping Anschluss of Austria	5+3
2009/120/1030	30	14-Mar	Neutron bomb: <i>Tass</i> statement rejects trade off	6+7
2009/120/1030	31	15-Mar	Soviet cultural scene livens up, 1: <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> attacks avant-garde theatre director	6
2009/120/1030	32	15-Mar	Soviet cultural scene livens up, II: revamping of opera in Paris provokes attack by <i>Pravda</i>	7+3
2008/79/1975	33	21-Mar	Expulsion of Soviet intelligence agents from Canada, 1	2+6
2008/79/1975	34	12 Apr. 1978	Expulsion of Soviet intelligence agents from Canada, II	2+10
	35	missing		
2009/120/1030	36	18-Apr	Soviet-British annual consultations, 1978: exchange of information and views	8
2009/120/1030	37	18-Apr	<i>Pravda</i> ponders generation gap	7
2009/120/1030	38	18-Apr	Brezhnev's journey to Siberia (to energise economic development)	5
2009/120/1030	39	19-Apr	<i>New Times</i> interview with Zorin (veteran Soviet foreign minister)	5+8
2009/120/1030	40	19-Apr	Visit by U.S. Congressional committee ('hawks', concerned about Soviet military intentions)	4
2009/120/1030	41	25-Apr	Bahr (F.R.G. politician) visit to Moscow	4
2009/120/1030	42	25-Apr	U.S. Secretary, Vance, visit to Moscow	6
2009/120/1030	43	26-Apr	Africa: current Soviet policy	7+25
2009/120/1030	44	26-Apr	Spanish C.P. breaks with Leninism	6
2009/120/1030	45	26-Apr	Soviets act against de-Leninisation	7
2009/120/1030	46	03-May	U.S. Secretary, Vance, visit to Moscow: a U.S. Evaluation	6
2009/120/1030	47	09-May	Political integration of the Nine: Soviet assessment (N.B. File out of no. sequence!)	14

Political reports from Moscow, 1978				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2009/120/1030	48	18-May	'Rebirth': Brezhnev's political testament	7+3
2009/120/1030	49	16-May	Soviet ambassador's criticism of Pakistani policy	4
2009/120/1030	50	16-May	Incident on Sino-Soviet border	4
2009/120/1030	51	16-May	Brezhnev visit to F.R.G.: Gromyko reassures G.D.R leadership	8
2009/120/1030	52	17-May	Brezhnev on the military balance: 'parity is not full equality'	11
2009/120/1030	53	17-May	'Grey area' weapons: complicating problem of U.S. forward bases	6
2009/120/1030	54	24-May	Brezhnev criticizes <i>Izvestiya</i>	5
	55	missing		
	56	missing		
	57	missing		
	58	missing		
2010/19/601	59	05-Jul	Thirty-second session of COMECON council meeting	10
2010/19/601	60	07-Jul	Visit of Turkish P.M., Ecevit, 21-5 June	10
2010/19/601	61	11-Jul	Soviet agriculture considered by the central committee of the C.P.S.U.	13 + c. 50
2010/19/601	62	12-Jul	COMECON: Pravda rejects western press speculation	3
2010/19/601	63	11-Jul	U.S. technology: Soviets apprehensive of linkage due to curtailments in supply	12
2010/19/601	64	18-Jul	Trials of Shcharansky and Ginsburg, Soviet dissidents	8 + c. 50
2010/19/601	65	19-Jul	Death of Fyodor Kulakov, politburo member	5
2010/19/601	66	19-Jul	Trials of Shcharansky	6
2010/19/601	67	25-Jul	<i>Pravda</i> attacks Brzezinski, U.S. national security advisor	20
2010/19/601	68	26-Jul	Confrontation and peaceful co-existence	8
2010/19/601	69	01-Aug	Afghanistan: domestic problems	4
2010/19/601	70	02-Aug	Helsinki Final Act: Soviets mark third anniversary	9+15

Political reports from Moscow, 1978				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2010/19/601	71	09-Aug	Recent moves in Brezhnev succession stakes	6
2010/19/601	72	08-Aug	Soviet academician says industry exploiting agriculture	5 + 5
2010/19/601	73	16-Aug	Human rights: <i>Pravda</i> acknowledges Soviet vulnerability	4 + 3
2010/19/601	74	11-Oct	COMECON meets in Ulan Bator, Mongolia	4 + 3
2010/19/601	75	18-Oct	Gromyko visit to Bucharest	5
2010/19/601	76	18-Oct	U.S. - Soviet relations: improvement with attacks on U.S. Ambassador	5
2010/19/601	77	25-Oct	Death of Mikoyan (Khrushchev ally)	6 + 2
2010/19/601	78	25-Oct	Soviet retaliation against western journalists	5+3
2010/19/601	79	missing		6 + 6
2010/19/601	80	08-Nov	Election of mayor of West Berlin as president of the Bundestag	5+3
2010/19/601	81	22-Nov	Situation in Iran	8
2010/19/601	82	29-Nov	Changes in Soviet leadership	4
2010/19/601	83	29-Nov	Brezhnev address to the central committee of C.P.S.U. on the economy	8
2010/19/601	84	29-Nov	Brezhnev criticises party propaganda	5+2
2010/19/601	85	01-Dec	Soviets assail OTRAG, the F.R.G. weather rocket firm's missile range in Zaire, again	6
2010/19/601	86	06-Dec	Warsaw Pact meeting, 23 Nov.	5
2010/19/601	87	06-Dec	Warsaw Pact meeting, 23 Nov., II; Rumanian challenge to Soviets	13
2010/19/601	88	12-Dec	Soviet leadership changes (Gorbachev mentioned!)	5
2010/19/601	89	12-Dec	Warning of new ideological danger	5+3
2010/19/601	90	13-Dec	Visit to Moscow of Afghan leader, Taraki	8+5
2010/19/601	91	19-Dec	<i>Pravda</i> answers Rumanians	10
2010/19/601	92	19-Dec	Iran: Soviets woo the opposition	9

Political reports from Moscow, 1979				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2010/19/601	1/79	30-Jan	Visit of Lord Killanin, president of the international olympic committee	6+2
2010/19/601	2/79	31-Jan	Visit of Spanish F.M. (confirmation of Nine's ambassadors meetings in Moscow)	4+7
2010/19/601	3	31-Jan	Northern Ireland: renewed interest by <i>Pravda</i> , includes comment on Madge Davidson's NICRA report	6+2
2010/19/601	4	07-Feb	Gromyko visit to Rome, 22-6 January 1979	7+5
2010/19/601	5	12-Mar	Finnish general elections: <i>Pravda</i> plays down limits	8+1
2010/19/601	6	27-Mar	Finnish general elections: conservative gain	7
2010/19/601	7	28-Mar	Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty: Soviet assessment	11+15
2010/19/601	8	10-Apr	Verification of SALT 2: self-defeating Soviet policy	7+7
2010/19/601	9	18-Apr	Central committee secretary assigned to Gosplan	5
2010/19/601	10	24-Apr	Sino-Soviet friendship treaty to lapse (adds to Soviets' loss of influence in Egypt and Somalia)	8+20
2010/19/601	11	02-May	Visit of President Giscard d'Estaing of France	10+30
2010/19/601	12	missing		
2010/19/601	13	06-Jun	Northern Ireland: <i>Pravda</i> breaks new ground	5+1
2010/19/601	14	07-Jun	Sino-Soviet relations: new negotiations	5+2
2010/19/601	15	08-Jun	Warsaw Pact proposes European disarmament conference	5+10
2010/19/601	16	08-Jun	European disarmament conference: Soviet foreign ministry clarification	3+2
2010/19/601	17	13-Jun	Sino-Soviet relations: <i>Litgazet</i> (Soviet journal) sounds a warning	13
2010/19/601	18	19-Jun	The Vienna summit between Brezhnev and U.S. President, Carter, to sign SALT-2	12
2010/19/601	19	20-Jun	<i>Izvestiya</i> condemns Spanish terrorism	3
2010/19/601	20	26-Jun	Gromyko press conference: he wants U.S. Senate to ratify SALT-2	10
2010/19/601	21	27-Jun	Schmidt meeting with Kosygin and Gromyko, 25 June 1979	3
2010/19/601	22	03-Jul	Soviet-Japanese relations: <i>Pravda</i> examines political relations	6+4
2010/19/601	23	03-Jul	SALT-2: tactless <i>Pravda</i> attack	4

Political reports from Moscow, 1979				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2010/19/601	24	03-Jul	Northern Ireland: <i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i> (Red Army paper) preaches old line, and report in <i>Sovyetskaya Kultura</i> on the I.R.A.'s 'blanket' protest in Long Kesh	4+2
2010/19/601	25	10-Jul	Thirty-third COMECON meeting, 26-8 June 1979	5
2010/19/601	26	11-Jul	Sino-Soviet negotiations: <i>Pravda</i> warns against Chinese preconditions	6
2010/19/601	27	25-Jul	Meeting of E.E.C. Minister-counsellors, 19 July 1979	6
2010/19/601	28/79	08-Aug	New decree to improve Soviet planning system	9
2011/39/1072	29	14-Aug	New economic planning decree: C.P.S.U. meeting at Gosplan: a critique of Soviet planning/economy	8
2011/39/1072	30	16-Aug	Tenth anniversary of British troops in Northern Ireland	4
2011/39/1072	31	03-Oct	Views of first secretary of the Egyptian embassy on Middle East	2
2011/39/1072	32	12-Oct	Visit of Greek P.M., 1-5 Oct. 1979	4
	33	missing		
2011/39/1072	34	30-Oct	'Finlandisation' - the word that will not go away	8
2011/39/1072	35	09-Nov	Soviet resolution on hegemonism at U.N.	10
2011/39/1072	36	30-Oct	Strange Soviet view on Eurocommunism	4
2011/39/1072	37	09-Nov	Soviet view on the situation in Cambodia	11
	38	missing		
2011/39/1072	39	13-Nov	Soviet scientist questions (Soviet) nuclear power programme, after shutdown at Three Mile Island incident in U.S.	7
2011/39/1072	40	21-Nov	Euro strategic missiles: <i>Pravda</i> presents the Soviet case	11
2011/39/1072	41a	28-Nov	Medium-range missiles: Gromyko's visit to Bonn	5
2011/39/1072	41b	28-Nov	Soviet-Chinese talks in Moscow: attempt to resolve border and common socialist principles	1
2011/39/1072	42	06-Dec	Recent Soviet comment on negotiations with E.E.C.	7
2011/39/1072	43	12-Dec	Moscow Olympics: K.G.B. officials warn of ideological subversion	3
2011/39/1072	44	12-Dec	<i>Pravda</i> assesses atheistic work	5

Political reports from Moscow, 1979				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2011/39/1072	45	12-Dec	Warsaw Pact meeting in Berlin: consideration of NATO plan on medium- range missiles	3

Political reports from Moscow, 1980				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2011/39/1072	1/80	16-Jan	Afghanistan: the Soviet decision to invade	12
2011/39/1072	2	23-Jan	Declaration of Nine on Afghanistan	6
2011/39/1072	3	missing		
2011/39/1072	4	30-Jan	Visit of Jacques Chaban-Delmas (president of the French national assembly)	2
2011/39/1072	5	26-Feb	Kabul disorders	2
2011/39/1072	6	05-Mar	Arbatov (foreign policy academician)article in <i>Pravda</i> on U.S. relations	5
2011/39/1072	7	26-Mar	Soviet reaction to Rhodesian election	4
2011/39/1072	8	missing		
2011/39/1072	9	missing		
2011/39/1072	10	31-Mar	Moscow Olympics: Soviet pronouncements	11
2011/39/1072	11	02-Apr	E.E.C. minister/counsellors meeting, 21 Mar. 1980, in Moscow	4
2011/39/1072	12	09-Apr	Frank comments from U.S. journalist on Afghanistan	2
2011/39/1072	13	09-Apr	Afghanistan II - Soviet views	4
2011/39/1072	14	09-Apr	E.E.C. minister/counsellors meeting, 3 Apr. 1980, in Moscow	3
2011/39/1072	15	09-Apr	Northern Ireland at U.N. commission on human rights	7
2011/39/1072	16	16-Apr	Sino-Soviet relations: Soviets make renewed bid for negotiations	6
2011/39/1072	17	23-Apr	French ambassador's meeting with Gromyko	1
2011/39/1072	18	23-Apr	Sino-Soviet relations	2

Political reports from Moscow, 1980				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2011/39/1072	19	23-Apr	Afghanistan government proposal for political settlement	1
2011/39/1072	20	missing		
2011/39/1072	21	30-Apr	Gromyko press conference in Paris	15
2011/39/1072	22	07-May	Gromyko visit to Paris	2
2011/39/1072	23	06-May	Afghanistan: second anniversary of invasion	13
2011/39/1072	24	missing		
2011/39/1072	25	missing		
2011/39/1072	26	20-May	B.B.C. Moscow correspondent edged out	2
2011/39/1072	27	21-May	Warsaw Pact summit	8
2011/39/1072	28	23-May	The truth about Afghanistan, 1	3
2011/39/1072	29	23-May	The truth about Afghanistan, 11	1
2011/39/1072	30	27-May	Franco-Soviet Warsaw summit	9
2011/39/1072	31	missing		
2011/39/1072	32	28-May	Afghanistan: Soviet statements	5
2011/39/1072	33	26-Jun	Greek-Soviet C.S.C.E. consultations	2
2011/39/1072	34/80	11-Jun	Soviet Muslims and nationalities issues	5
2011/39/1072	35	02-Jul	C.P.S.U. Central committee plenum on Soviet foreign policy	5
2011/39/1072	36	04-Jul	Chancellor Schmidt's visit to Moscow	4
2011/39/1072	37	15-Jul	Soviet views on Africa	2
2011/39/1072	38	missing		

Political reports from Moscow, 1980				
N.A.I., D.F.A. file ref.	P.R. No.	Date	Report title	PP (+ encls)
2011/39/1072	39	16-Jul	Chancellor Schmidt's visit to Moscow	2
2011/39/1072	40	23-Jul	Soviet criticism on U.S. human rights	5
2011/39/1072	41	29-Jul	Reagan's nomination: Soviet reaction	7
2011/39/1072	42	12-Sep	F.R.G. reply to Brezhnev letter	1
2011/39/1072	43	missing		
2011/39/1072	44	14-Oct	Soviet-Syrian treaty of friendship and co-operation	2
2011/39/1072	45	15-Oct	Stanislaw Kania (Polish C.P. Leader) speech on Polish situation	2
2011/39/1072	46	missing		
2011/39/1072	47	02-Nov	Resignation speech of Prime Minister Kosygin	6
2011/39/1072	48	05-Nov	Brezhnev speech to C.P.S.U. central committee plenary	7
2011/39/1072	49	19-Nov	Finnish state visit to Soviet Union, 7-12 November	4

APPENDIX 2

A register of the records of Irish involvement in meetings of the Eastern Europe Working Group (E.E.W.G.), 1974-80

**Source: National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign
Affairs, Central Registry files, 2006-2013 releases**

Summary analysis, by subject, of studies (not topics)* undertaken by the E.E.W.G., 1974-80

Year	Soviet Union	Eastern Europe	Relations between Soviet Union and E. Europe	Soviet response to E.E.C. integration	Soviet oil	Communist parties	Studies with military aspects	Visas	E.E.C. - COMECON trade
1974	2	1	2	2		2			
1975	4	2			2	1	1	1	
1976	3	3				1	1	1	1
1977	3	2	1		2		1		
1978	5	7	2	1			1		
1979	5	5	2				1		
1980	8	5	1						1
Totals	30	25	8	3	4	4	5	2	2
Grand total	83								

* Some, but not all topics considered at meetings were agreed worthy of formal studies

N.B. While the group usually considered specific studies over two or more meetings, each study is counted only once in this summary

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G., 1974

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed	Irish delegation
2007/111/889	28 Jan.	Bonn	Study: 'Relations between the Soviet Union and eastern Europe'	Dr Brennan and A.E. Mannix
			Study: 'Countries of the East and E.E.C. construction'	
			Topic: Conference of west European communist parties, Jan 1974	
2007/111/889 and 2007/111/913	15 Feb.	Bonn	Study: 'Relations between the Soviet Union and eastern Europe'	Dr Brennan
			Study: 'Countries of the East and E.E.C. Construction'	
			Study: 'The role of the communist parties of the Nine'	
			Topic: Arrival of Alexander Solzhenitsyn in F.R.G. (human rights issue)	
			Topic: Role of ideology in Soviet policy	
2007/111/889	26 June	Bonn	Final meeting of German presidency. Its thirty-page summary report included: Ideological attitude and political interests of the members states of the Warsaw Pact. Effects of <i>processus européen</i> on the policy of the Warsaw Pact towards the Nine. Effects on <i>processus européen</i> on member states of the Warsaw Pact	A.E. Mannix
			Topic: The special case of Yugoslavia	
			Study: 'The role of the communist parties of the Nine'	
No. of meetings:	3			
N.B. No meetings convened by the French presidency in second half of 1974				

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
2007/111/915-6	26 Mar.	Dublin	Study: 'Peaceful coexistence' (dangers of a Soviet 'monopoly' over this term)
			Study: 'Visas for eastern European countries' (with statistics of visas issued by Ireland to east European citizens, Jan. 1974 to Apr. 1975)
			Study: 'Eastern Europe and the energy crisis'
			Study: 'Situation in Yugoslavia'
2007/111/921-2	28 Apr.	Dublin	Study: 'Peaceful coexistence'
			Study: 'Eastern Europe and the energy crisis'
			Study: 'Visas for eastern European countries'
			Study: 'Situation in Romania'
			Study: 'Conference of European communist parties'
2007/111/923	13 June	Dublin	Study: 'Peaceful coexistence'
			Study: 'Eastern Europe and the energy crisis'
			Study: 'Visas for eastern European countries'
2007/111/924	29 Aug.	Rome	Study: 'Visas for eastern European countries'
			Topic: Mr Georgi Vins, Soviet Baptist minister (human rights issue)
2007/111/925	26 Sept.	Rome	Study: 'Internal situation in the U.S.S.R.'
			Study: 'Soviet strategy after the C.S.C.E.'

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
			Study: 'Report compiled by the embassies of E.E.C. member countries in Moscow on the Soviet oil industry, Apr. 1974.' (Includes: oil reserves, production, transport facilities, domestic consumption, foreign trade, and cooperation projects with the West.)
2007/111/929	11 Dec.	Rome	Study: 'Soviet strategy after the C.S.C.E.'
			Study: 'The politics of détente of the U.S.S.R.' (includes chapters on: the politics of détente, military aspects, the economics of détente, the culture of détente, the ideological struggle)
No. of meetings:	6		

G., 1975
Irish delegation
P. MacKernan
P. MacKernan
P. MacKernan
P. MacKernan

G., 1975

Irish delegation

A.E. Mannix

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G., 1976

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed	Irish delegation
2007/111/933	14 Apr.	Luxembourg	Topic: Political implications of the recent Soviet draft of a COMECON-E.E.C. trade accord	P. MacKernan
2007/111/932	10 May	Luxembourg	Topic: Twenty-fifth C.P.S.U. congress (with details of politburo membership)	(not stated)
			Study: 'Soviet strategy after the C.S.C.E.'	
2007/111/935	1 Sept.	The Hague	Study: 'Soviet policy regarding the Third World'	J.A. Sharkey
2007/111/934	18 Oct.	The Hague	Topic: The role of the Soviet Union and the states of eastern Europe in the world economy	J.A. Sharkey
			Topic: The role of the E.E.W.G. in consideration of the E.E.C.'s visas regime for eastern Europe	
2007/111/936	17 Nov.	The Hague	Topic: The attitude of the Soviet Union and the states of eastern Europe towards developing countries	J.A. Sharkey
			Topic: The conference of European communist parties, held in East Berlin, 29-30 June (List of participants includes Michael O'Riordan, C.P.I.)	
2007/111/937	8 Dec.	The Hague	Topic: The Bucharest declaration issued after the Warsaw Pact summit meeting, Nov.	P. MacKernan
			Study: 'The role of the Soviet Union and the states of eastern Europe in the world economy'	
No. of meetings:	6			

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G., 1977

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed	Irish delegation
2007/111/938	20 Jan.	London	Study: 'Warsaw Pact political consultative committee meeting, Bucharest, Nov.'	P. MacKernan
			Topic: Situation in Poland (popular dissent after price rises) and relations with U.S.S.R.	
2007/111/939	21 Feb.	London	Study: 'Internal situation in the G.D.R.'	J.A. Sharkey
			Study: Political dissent and the human rights movement in eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union	
2007/111/940	21 Mar.	London	Topic: The development of dissent in the Soviet Union	J.A. Sharkey
2007/111/941	4 May	London	Study: Political dissent and human rights movements in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union	P. MacKernan
2007/111/942	9 June	Brussels	Study: 'Soviet policies in Southern Africa'	T.P. Corcoran
2007/111/944	28 Nov.	Brussels	Topic: Brief assessment of the situation in Yugoslavia	Thelma Doran
			Study: 'The situation in Albania'	
			Study: 'The role of the Soviet armed forces in the conduct of Soviet domestic and foreign policy' (Ambassador Brennan asked for an input)	
			Ireland reported that its London embassy had received an information package from the G.D.R. (Indicates the G.D.R. is seeking international recognition - F.R.G. delegation took note)	
No. of meetings:	6		Topic: The internal situation in the U.S.S.R. in the light of the new Soviet constitution	

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G.,

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
2008/79/1477	19 Jan.	Copenhagen	Study: 'Romanian foreign policy'
			Study: 'The situation in Albania'
			Study: 'The role of the Soviet armed forces in the conduct of Soviet domestic and foreign policy'
2008/79/1478	3 Apr.	Copenhagen	Study: 'Romanian foreign policy'
			Study: 'The Situation on Poland'
			Study: 'Centralism and Soviet nationalities policy'
2008/79/1479	31 May	Copenhagen	Finalisation of the study on 'Centralism and Soviet nationalities policy'
			Study: 'Situation in Hungary'
			Radio Liberty study: 'An evaluation of the new (Soviet) republics' constitutions'
2008/79/1480	12 July	Bonn	Topic: Proposed Nine declaration on recent trials of Soviet dissidents'
			Topic: Likely outcome of a possible U.K. withdrawal from the C.S.C.E. Scientific Forum (in response to the Soviet human rights trials)
			Study: 'East European and Soviet motivations re conclusion of bilateral agreements'
2008/79/1480	12 July	Bonn	Study: 'Motives and objectives of the east European countries with regard to C.S.C.E. process'
			U.K. background paper on the Soviet and east European role in the North-South dialogue

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G.,

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
2008/79/1481	11 Sept.	Bonn	Study: 'East European and Soviet motivations re conclusion of bilateral agreements'
			Study: 'East-West relations after the trials of dissidents in the Soviet Union'
			Study: 'Relations between the Soviet Union and China'
			Study: 'Motives and objectives of the east European countries with regard to C.S.C.E. process'
2008/79/1482	30 Oct.	Bonn	Study: 'Motives and objectives of the east European countries with regard to C.S.C.E. process'
			Study: 'Relations between the Soviet Union and China'
			Study: 'East-West relations after the trials of dissidents in the Soviet Union'
2008/79/1483	4 Dec.	Bonn	Finalised study: 'The nature, impact and depth of Soviet concerns on China'
			Topic: Declaration issued after the political committee meeting of the Warsaw Pact, Nov. 1978
			Topic: East European educational aid to the Third World
No. of meetings:	7		

1978	
Irish delegation	
Thelma Doran	
Thelma Doran	
Thelma Doran and Timothy Corcoran	
Thelma Doran	
G. Davidson	

1978	
Irish delegation	
Thelma Doran	
Thelma Doran and Eamon Hickey	
Eamon Hickey	

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.C.

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
2009/120/630	15 Feb.	Paris	Topic: Position regarding Irish scholarships for Third World students
			Study: 'Soviet development aid in Africa'
			Topic: The attitude of the U.S.S.R. and the countries of the East towards developing countries
			Study: 'Various conceptions of détente of the principal protagonists in the C.S.C.E.'
			Topic: Relations between the U.S.S.R. and the countries of the Warsaw Pact
2009/120/631	23 Apr.	Paris	Study: 'Various conceptions of détente of the principal protagonists in the C.S.C.E.'
			Topic: Activities of eastern countries to influence young people in the Third World
			Study: 'Relations between the USSR and other countries of the Warsaw Pact'
			Topic: Possible death of President Brezhnev and the Soviet succession
			Topic: Czechoslovakia and Charter 77 Movement
2009/120/632	29 May	Paris	Study: 'Activities of eastern countries to influence young people in the Third World'
			Study: 'Relations between the U.S.S.R. and other countries of the Warsaw Pact' (Re faltering efforts on COMECON integration)
			Topic: Czechoslovakia and Charter 77 Movement

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.C.

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
			Study on Poland
			Study on Albania (post break with China - how will Albania react to its isolation?)
2009/120/633	21 June	Paris	Study: 'Activities of eastern countries to influence young people in the Third World'
			Study: 'Relations between the U.S.S.R. and other countries of the Warsaw Pact'
			Topic: Czechoslovakia and Charter 77 Movement (discussion on a joint E.E.C. démarche)
			Topic: Pope's visit to Poland
2009/120/634	17 Sept.	Dublin	Study: 'Situation in Poland following the pope's visit' (Focus on economic woes - inflation exceeds growth)
			Topic: Czechoslovakia and Charter 77 Movement
			Study on Albania
2009/120/635	5 Nov.	Dublin	Topic: Situation in Czechoslovakia after a crackdown on Charter 77
			Study on Albania
2009/120/636	13 Dec.	Dublin	Study on Albania
			Study: 'The C.P.S.U. and its development during the fifteen years of the Brezhnev era'
			The results of the twelfth congress of the Romanian Communist Party
			Meeting of the committee of foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact, Berlin, Dec. 1979

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.C

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
			Olympic Games (U.K. objects to sea-based events: it does not recognise Soviet sovereignty over the Baltic states)
No. of meetings:	7		

G., 1979

**Irish
delegation**

A.E. Mannix

A.E. Mannix
and R.H.
O'Toole

A.E. Mannix

G., 1979

**Irish
delegation**

A.E. Mannix
and R.H.
O'Toole

A.E. Mannix

R.H. O'Toole

A.E. Mannix
and R.H.
O'Toole

A.E. Mannix

G., 1979
Irish delegation

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G.

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
2010/19/531	28 Jan.	Rome	Topic: Consequences of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan - Nine's response
			Study: 'The C.P.S.U. and its development during the fifteen years of the Brezhnev era'
			Topic: Olympic Games (Wait-and-see stance adopted, as 'a boycott would need a large number of non-aligned')
			Topic: Soviet attitude to Iran
2010/19/532	3 Mar.	Rome	Afghanistan: (a) U.S.S.R. reaction to Afghanistan neutrality proposal
			Study: 'The C.P.S.U. and its development during the fifteen years of the Brezhnev era'
			Study: 'Relations between the Soviet Union and Iran'
			Topic: Exchange of views on Poland
2010/19/533	31 Mar.	Rome	Study: 'Soviet position with regard to Western reactions to Afghanistan'
			Study: 'The C.P.S.U. and its development during the fifteen years of the Brezhnev era'
			The Soviet Union and Iran (U.K. suggests that Soviets about to invade Iran)

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G.

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
			Topic: Discussion on E.E.C.- COMECON trade relations
			Topic: Soviet attitude to the issue of U.S. hostages held in Teheran
2010/19/534	8 May	Rome	Study: 'Soviet position with regard to Western reactions to Afghanistan' (with details of Soviet casualties)
			Study: 'Relations between the Soviet Union and Iran'
			Soviet attitudes in African countries south of the Sahara (Zimbabwe and Namibia)
2010/19/535	12 June	Rome	Study: 'Soviet attitudes in African countries south of the Sahara'
			Study: 'Soviet position with regard to Western reactions to Afghanistan'
2010/19/536	21 Aug.	Luxembourg	Poland: Italian proposal for Nine declaration
			Bulgarian invitations to E.E.C. member states to attend a conference on 'The role of culture in the development of society', Sofia, Dec. 1980
			Invitation by President of Madagascar to attend a conference on 'The Indian ocean as a zone of peace'

Irish reports of meetings of the E.E.W.G.

N.A.I., D.F.A. file no.	Date	Venue	Studies under review, and other topics discussed
			Study: 'Soviet position with regard to Western reactions to Afghanistan'
2010/19/537	16 Oct.	Luxembourg	Soviet policy in the Gulf area
			Afghanistan: Reports of Mujahidin successes
			Afghanistan protest: E.E.C. ambassadors to boycott some official functions in Moscow
			Discussion on E.E.C. aid for Polish economy
No. of meetings:	7		

, 1980
Irish delegation
Thelma Doran
Anne Anderson
Anne Anderson

, 1980
Irish delegation
Anne Anderson
Anne Anderson
Anne Anderson /Webster

, 1980
Irish delegation
Anne Anderson /Webster