

## Irish Neutrality between Vichy France and de Gaulle, 1940-45

EDWARD ARNOLD

I. Any discussion of Irish neutrality during the Second World War deals with a number of historical narratives and perspectives that have been studied at length by historians.<sup>1</sup> A dominant viewpoint is that Irish neutrality was both symbolic and pragmatic. Symbolically, asserting the state's neutrality represented a statement of sovereignty and independence of action from Britain, which was a fundamental tenet of the ruling **Fianna Fail** party's political project.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, neutrality during the Second World War was seen as 'the ultimate expression of Irish independence'<sup>3</sup> and one of de Valera's greatest achievements.<sup>4</sup> Any other policy, such as joining the war on the side of the Allies, would have undermined this fundamental statement and could have reignited the recent civil war. On a practical level, Ireland was militarily ill equipped and practically defenceless; she would have paid a high price for joining the Allies.<sup>5</sup> So the policy of neutrality was seen by many to maintain the unity of the state in times of great danger.

Conversely, de Valera's visit of condolence on 2 May 1945 to German **Ambassador** Edouard Hempel on the death of Hitler and the Irish refusal to hand over the Treaty Ports<sup>6</sup> epitomise the public façade of Irish neutrality in the dominant British perspective on the '*so-called neutrality of the so-called Éire*', as Churchill angrily remarked in 1939.<sup>7</sup> In his victory speech on 13 May 1945 Churchill spoke of 'the de Valera Government [frolicking] with the Germans and later the Japanese representatives to their heart's content'. Significantly, subsequent research on

intelligence activity in Ireland has shown that neutrality (or non-belligerency for some) was bent in favour of the Allies.<sup>9</sup> Against the backdrop of these complex relationships between Britain, the USA and Ireland during this period euphemistically labeled the 'Emergency', the relationship between Vichy France, the Free French (represented later by the *CFLN* and the *GPRF*)<sup>10</sup> and Neutral Ireland reveals other dynamics and ideological sub-narratives. The period following the Franco-German armistice of 22 June 1940 is significant not so much for the principle of the policy of neutrality but for the use made of this policy in a Europe completely transformed in the space of a summer, and **with** Britain written off as defeated.<sup>11</sup>

This **essay** will examine the way **in which** the Irish policy of neutrality affected diplomatic relationships with the government of Marshal Philippe Pétain - a 'very distinguished French catholic'<sup>12</sup> - and subsequently with other political figures who claimed to be legitimate representatives of France, notably General Charles de Gaulle. A study of both the Irish Legation in Vichy and the French Legation in Dublin reveals the complexity of Irish diplomacy during the war. It throws **into** sharp relief the clash of loyalties and the intensity of passions that were unleashed in France by the debacle of 1940 and the foundation of the collaborationist Vichy Regime. It is significant that Ireland would recognise Vichy as the official government of France from the fall of France in early July 1940 right until the Liberation of Paris in late August 1944.<sup>13</sup> De Valera skillfully sidestepped official recognition of de Gaulle from early September 1943, despite the Department for External Affairs being fully aware of the fact that the Vichy Minister in Dublin, M. de Laforcade, was in reality taking orders from de Gaulle in Algiers.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the Irish representative in Vichy had been officially informed on 27 September 1943 that de Laforcade should not be regarded or treated as a French Minister, given this 'équivoque' which was undiplomatically referred to

as a ‘stupid, almost ... comical situation’.<sup>15</sup> It is tempting to think that de Valera was avoiding giving support to the leader of the Free French and a *protégé* of Churchill in the belief that it could undermine his position. Irish recognition of Pétain would only be withdrawn once it had become clear that he had been taken to Germany on the orders of Hitler to set up court at Sigmaringen and was no longer in a position to govern France.<sup>16</sup> This *jusqu’au-boutiste* diplomacy, as will be seen, would have serious implications for diplomatic relations between Ireland and the *GPRF*, notably the difficulty in obtaining re-accreditation for Seán Murphy<sup>17</sup> as Irish minister in France from August 1944.

A number of questions will be addressed in this **essay**. Were the relationships that Ireland forged with Vichy France during the period 1940-44 merely a strict application of neutrality, or did ideological affinities exist between Pétain’s *France nouvelle* and the political climate of late 1930s Ireland? Catholic social thought, notably theories of corporatism and vocationalism, had been encouraged by the 1931 papal encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. These ideas were seen as a way of ‘taming the harshness of the capitalist system, and so forestalling the threat of socialism and communism’.<sup>18</sup> Under the polarizing effect of the Spanish Civil War from 1936 onwards, anti-communism soon became indissociable with the defence of Catholicism in Ireland. Joseph Walshe,<sup>19</sup> one of the most influential and powerful civil servants of his time, was reflecting a current of thought and a widespread debate that had taken place in Ireland throughout the 1930s when he declared after the Fall of France - with British defeat appearing to be a matter of time and American neutrality an apparent certainty - that the future of Ireland, her ‘destiny henceforth [would] be cast with that of continental Catholic nations’,<sup>20</sup> and specifically with the anti-communist and anti-Semitic Vichy Regime. Ireland was one of six states that remained neutral throughout

the conflict,<sup>21</sup> though Germany had shown that she would run roughshod over the sovereignty of European neutrals if it suited her interests. This was the case in April (Denmark and Norway) and May 1940 (Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland). Did Irish diplomatic relations with France reflect the uncertainties of the autumn of 1940, and the need for Ireland to assert her fragile neutrality in a Europe dominated by Hitler, through diplomatic relations with like-minded Catholic, anti-communist nations? The following statement by Joseph Walshe would seem to suggest that this was the case: ‘The results of front popular [*sic*] regime *which destroyed France* cannot disappear overnight’.<sup>22</sup> Rhetoric such as this also explains Allied (especially American) descriptions of Ireland as being a hotbed of benevolent, Catholic fascism.<sup>23</sup>

II. The evolution of diplomatic relations between Ireland and France, in Dublin as much as Vichy, reflect the confused and bitter divisions within and outside of France during the Occupation and the competing claims of putative leaders. Was the unwillingness of the Irish State to openly and categorically support either Vichy or de Gaulle, especially after 1942, prevarication or good diplomacy? Or was the tacit, *de facto* support given to de Gaulle (despite an identification with the ideology of Pétainism and a *de jure* recognition of Vichy up until August 1944) born of a realisation that Britain, after all, was in all probability not going to lose the war? The reports sent from Vichy by the Irish Legation from late 1942 repeatedly express the discontent of the French population and the level of support for the ‘Anglo-Americans’.<sup>24</sup>

Ireland had established diplomatic relationships with France in 1929, and France set up a legation in Dublin a year later. The diplomats were appointed at Minister Plenipotentiary level but not at ambassadorial level. While the Irish

constitution of 1937 had, to all intents and purposes, transformed Ireland from a dominion to a Republic and had removed all reference to the Crown, it still recognized a strictly limited role of the Monarch in external Affairs. In effect, King George VI was technically Irish Head of State and would sign all letters of credence for Irish diplomatic and consular representatives. Before the war this was not a problem, but after the outbreak of hostilities the king refused to accredit an Irish diplomat to an enemy of his country.<sup>25</sup> The Irish Minister during the war, Seán Murphy, was appointed in 1938 and so had already presented his credentials to the French President, Albert Lebrun. Murphy had the dubious privilege of representing Ireland under four distinct political regimes - the Third Republic (1938-40), Vichy (1940-44), the Provisional Government of the French Republic (1944-46) and the Fourth Republic (1946-50) - and of being the only diplomat in this case.<sup>26</sup> The post Liberation French Foreign Office would hold his tenure in Vichy against him to the point of initially not recognising him as official representative of Ireland in Paris.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, Murphy was treated with disdain at best and icy hostility at worst by the Quai d'Orsay.<sup>28</sup>

Murphy was a very experienced career diplomat who represented his country in France as early as 1920 and then in the Holy See. From 1925 he worked in the Department for External Affairs and was assistant Secretary from 1928 to 1938.<sup>29</sup> This very able diplomat would send insightful, relevant reports back to Dublin and would provide invaluable information to inform the Department and de Valera (who was also Minister for External Affairs) on events in France. Often working in extremely difficult circumstances, Murphy would temper and challenge the overt neo-Pétainism of Secretary Joseph Walshe on many occasions, and deliver pertinent assessments of life in France before and during the Occupation. He prophetically

declared, for example, in May 1939 on the eve of war: ‘It is not impossible that French opinion may be acquiring a sense of security which is not well-founded’.<sup>30</sup>

After the signature of the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact in late August 1939, Con Cremin, the First Secretary of the Paris Legation, warned:

It is thought here that the situation is most critical. France and England will stand firm and will not ask Poland to yield and if Poland does not yield and Germany continues on her course it is (believed) likely that there will be war before Sunday.<sup>31</sup>

### **Neutrality and the Challenge of Total War**

III. The policy of Irish neutrality faced its greatest challenge with the outbreak of war in September 1939, and a summary of the events **helps** us understand the shift from a symbolic neutrality to a pragmatism forced by the vertiginous events of 1940. A year earlier, during the Munich crisis of 1938, de Valera had reaffirmed his resolve to ‘keep our people out of a war’.<sup>32</sup> This policy of neutrality, he continued, was made all the more necessary and inevitable as ‘a part of our country [is] still unjustly severed from us’.<sup>33</sup> Neutrality was thus linked with the struggle for a united 32-county Ireland and national sovereignty.<sup>34</sup> On 3 September 1939, the day of the British and French entry into the war, Irish neutrality moved from the hypothetical to the real. In a demonstration of the pragmatic dimension of Irish neutrality, de Valera had already explained to the German Ambassador Hempel in a meeting on 31 August that Dublin’s neutrality would have to be tempered by existing realities such as total dependency on Britain for trade. The Irish government would thus have to ‘show a certain consideration for Britain’, a courtesy that would be extended to Germany in similar circumstances. He continued that Britain would never let Irish neutrality and independence pose a real threat to her interests and would invade Ireland immediately

should such a risk arise. Any intervention by Germany would provoke an immediate reaction from the British. The survival of Irish neutrality depended on Germany accepting this concession to Britain.<sup>35</sup> In November of the same year, the Taoiseach unambiguously stated: 'should an attack come from a power other than Great Britain, Great Britain, in her own interests, must help us to repel it'.<sup>36</sup>

The Blitzkrieg attack on fellow neutrals Holland and Belgium on 10 May 1940 - which led to the crushing, total and unexpected defeat of the French Army and the British Expeditionary Force in the space of six weeks - was to change radically the situation. As the Germans marched towards Paris, the Irish Legation (at 37 bis rue de Villejust in the 16<sup>e</sup> arrondissement) closed on 11 June and Murphy and Cremin were among the last diplomats to leave the open city. They went to Tours where the French administration lent them offices, then on to Bordeaux on 15 June when the German advance approached. Marshal Philippe Pétain was called on to form a government in Bordeaux by President Lebrun on 16 June, and the next day asked Hitler for an armistice which was signed on 23 June 1940. This led to an open breach between Britain and France as both parties had solemnly agreed not to seek a separate peace with Hitler.<sup>37</sup> Walshe informed de Valera that the British had 'allowed General de Gaulle [*sic*] ... to set himself up in Great Britain as head of a National Committee for France'.<sup>38</sup> Churchill was harbouring a former Under Secretary of State for National Defence and War who had only held his responsibilities for eleven days. He was considered by Pétain to be a deserter and traitor (in August 1940 he would be condemned to death *in absentia*). From Bordeaux the Legation moved to Ascain, five kilometres from St Jean de Luz and ten kilometres from the Spanish border, in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques. Talk of the 'impending downfall'<sup>39</sup> of Britain and the disintegration of the Franco-British military alliance must have given food for thought

in Dublin from late June. On 5 July 1940 de Valera reaffirmed the position of his government in an interview with the *New York Times*:

We are in the unenviable position of being a country which is eyed by two great powers ... We do not wish to become a cockpit in this war. We do not wish to become the base for attack by any power upon any other power. We have not the slightest intention of abandoning our neutrality. We intend to resist any attack thereon from any quarter whatever ... Strict neutrality is our best safeguard. If we let one country in that inevitably would provoke the other to attack. Our only hope is to let none in.<sup>40</sup>

De Valera faced with apparent confidence and resolve the real possibility of a German invasion of Ireland that loomed in the summer of 1940.<sup>41</sup> **In the face of** intense pressure from Britain (which was intensified after the Fall of France) to allow the Royal Navy to use the Treaty Ports or to join the war on the side of the Allies, maintaining neutrality was clearly a symbolic statement of sovereignty and independence that would not recover from bowing to such pressure.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, in a Europe where British defeat seemed inevitable in the summer of 1940, and American neutrality unshakeable, the General Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Walshe, saw in France a model to follow, for the country was now governed by a number of ‘very distinguished French Catholics held in the highest esteem’.<sup>43</sup> Significantly, Walshe’s ostensibly ideological approach lacked the objectivity that one could expect from such a high-ranking diplomat.<sup>44</sup> He assured Murphy in a telegram that Ireland felt ‘greatest sympathy for France in her difficulties’ and added presumptuously that the ‘sympathy of the whole country was with PÉTAIN’ (Walshe’s capitals), as was the sympathy of the Vatican.<sup>45</sup> He urged Murphy to ‘keep in close touch with the Nuncio who is more likely to know real news about French right than other diplomats’.<sup>46</sup> The Secretary believed by late July 1940 that ‘Britain has lost [the] war and ... has no hope of regaining her influence in Europe’.

Admittedly, this perspective was not uncommon or unreasonable at the time. During a meeting on 28 July 1940 Murphy assured the Vichy Foreign Minister Baudouin of Ireland's support and admiration for the Marshal, but also of Éire's determination to stay neutral in the conflict. ('He asked me whether Ireland remains neutral and I replied that was the intention of the government and unanimous wish of the whole people').<sup>47</sup>

On 28 July 1940 Dublin ordered Murphy to take up residence at the new seat of the French Government in Vichy,<sup>48</sup> this 'town of rumours of all kinds'.<sup>49</sup> From October 1940 the Irish Legation settled into the Hôtel Gallia<sup>50</sup> and thus begun four years of arguably the most complicated period in Franco-Irish diplomatic relations. Murphy soon realised that in Vichy '[r]epresentatives of some countries are apparently given favoured treatment. Ireland, however, is not amongst them'.<sup>51</sup>

### **Ireland and the Themes of *Révolution Nationale***

IV. Walshe's admiration for the values of order, Catholicism and anti-communism professed by the new regime in France tapped into a rhetoric that had emerged in 1930s Ireland: vocationalism or corporatism. Indeed, he was not the only voice to welcome Pétain's *Révolution Nationale* of work, family and fatherland, or to believe that France's defeat was a result of 'the corruption of Freemason and pseudo-Democratic Governments, especially that of the Front Populaire'.<sup>52</sup> A headline in *The Standard* of July 1940 hailed the 'Dawn of a New Europe' in which Italy, Portugal and Spain had gone down the path of renewal and palingenesis, and France was seen to be going down the same path.<sup>53</sup> Ireland could break out of her insularity and join this alliance of Catholic nations within this new European Order. This kind of rhetoric

explains the Allied hysteria, especially from the American press, about Ireland being a hotbed of Catholic fascism.<sup>54</sup>

The basis of vocationalism had been laid out in Pius XI's 1931 papal encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (building on Leo XII's *Rerum Novarum* of 1890). Society and politics would be reorganized in a system called papal corporatism, commonly known as vocationalism or social Catholicism. This prompted Catholics worldwide, including in Ireland, to take the Pope's pronouncement as a mandate for involvement in economic and social reform. In the 1930s these ideas, which also implied the minimum involvement of the state in socio-economic life,<sup>55</sup> had become increasingly popular in Ireland in some serious, but other less serious, circles. Corporatism was an important feature of the Irish Christian Front<sup>56</sup> and a key ideological feature of Catholic Action.<sup>57</sup> A number of right-wing catholic academics and Jesuit scholars advocated applying corporatism to the Irish case while distancing their support for corporatism from fascism.<sup>58</sup>

On the insistence of Eoin O'Duffy (who was to organize the Irish Brigade to fight for Franco), Fine Gael included corporatism into the party's economic policy in 1933 until the Blueshirts were expelled from the party. From 1935 Eoin O'Duffy called for a united Irish Corporate state to protect liberty against communism, capitalism and dictatorship.<sup>59</sup> In his case the lines clearly became blurred between the corporate vision of Pius XI and the antiparliamentary fascist corporate state of Mussolini. The considerable impact of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 with its stories of anti-clerical violence led, in the words of Fearghal McGarry, to a 'groundswell' of anti-communism in Ireland.<sup>60</sup> In this conflict anti-communism went hand in hand with the defence of Catholicism. A report sent back from the Paris Legation reveals the influence that such views had within the Department of External Affairs, and how

these views shaped the interpretation of events in France after the election of the Popular Front in 1936:

There is, in general, very little reason to doubt that there is at the moment in France a powerful organization of the Komintern whose ultimate object is the Sovietisation of France ... This organization, working with the French Communist Party, is undoubtedly, a grave danger ... Communism, in this country, has spread very largely and is continuing to spread ... In general, Communism is rampant and powerful in France. It is growing in influence and in numbers, and from every indication, it would seem that it can and will exercise great influence on the present and future policy of the government.<sup>61</sup>

The Constitution of 1937 was manifestly influenced by Catholic social teaching and had allowed for the possibility for vocationalist representation of social and economic forces in Ireland. The ultimate failure of voluntarism and the Catholic corporatist movement in Ireland by the end of the war does not alter the fact that there was a real current of interest for corporatism in Ireland on the eve of the Second World War. As Clair Wills convincingly shows,<sup>62</sup> there was a widespread belief in and debate on the moral superiority of Ireland - linked to catholic spirituality - which permeated the perception of state neutrality. Catholic Ireland had escaped the forces that had been the downfall of mainland Europe and had not compromised herself in the series of diplomatic failures of the late 1930s. Geographically isolated, Ireland had preserved those values of Christian civilization that had disappeared from Europe and had been restored and promoted by Mussolini, Franco, especially Salazar and recently Pétain in France. This admiration would be reciprocated in France. A prominent French theoretician of the *Révolution Nationale*, William Garcin, stated in 1942:

The Family is a natural social unit. The political order must respect it as a social entity. In that capacity the Family must be defined in the Constitution. The Constitution must recognize and organize forces within society. We hope that our Constitution will be inspired by that of Éire.<sup>63</sup>

Despite this conviction not lasting very long, especially when it became clear that Pétain was not in control of French destinies, the perceived need for National Revolution to combat lax morality, capitalism and communism was a real strain of thought in Ireland. The editorial support of Catholic newspapers in Ireland testifies to this initial enthusiasm for Pétain. *The Standard* hailed the new eighty-four-year-old leader of the French State as ‘a true patriot and man of integrity’.<sup>64</sup> For the *Catholic Herald* Pétain embodied the hopes of the Papacy and was part of a ‘very real Christian continental movement’ against the tyranny and aggression of Hitler and the USSR.<sup>65</sup> This undoubtedly explains initial support for the policies of Vichy and rejection of Gaullist dissidence. Ominously, as early as August 1940, Murphy in a rare burst of **uncritical Vichy rhetoric**, would point to the anti-Semitic dimension the Vichy government was taking:

The latent tendency towards anti-Semitism in France is clearly enhanced both by the present circumstances and the fact that the Popular Front Government which is almost universally represented as the beginning of the end for the country, was very largely composed of Jews and seems to have favoured their appointment to important positions.<sup>66</sup>

It became progressively difficult for Ireland to have neutral relations with Vichy France when it became evident that Germany was in control and Britain refused to submit to Hitler. As the disenchantment grew with Pétain and the attraction of de Gaulle became stronger, Ireland entered into a somewhat contradictory if not duplicitous configuration of diplomatic relations with Vichy and the Free French, within the context of the French Legation in Dublin. As British defeat became less inevitable and German defeat more probable with the entry into the war of the USSR in late June 1941 and then the USA in December 1941, Irish neutrality became more friendly and benevolent to the Allies from 1942.

The differences of approach within Irish diplomacy can be observed in the tension running through the exchange in correspondence between Dublin and Vichy. Seán Murphy was a highly able diplomat who compensated for the narrow, partisan perspective of Joseph Walshe towards the new regime in France, giving de Valera a more accurate and lucid vision of the situation in wartime France. As such, Murphy can be considered an important influence on Irish foreign policy during this period. Walshe, **as a fluent French speaker**, undoubtedly read the *Nouvelles de France* published by the French Legation in Dublin (first issue 23 October 1940) to inform French expatriates of events in France.<sup>67</sup> This publication gave over most of its column space to uncritically reprinting Pétain's radio and press *Messages*. This six-page newsheet (on average) escaped the attentions of the Censor given its moralistic content that evoked trips of Irish priests to France<sup>68</sup> and spiritual rejuvenation of France.<sup>69</sup> This document was unashamedly Pétainist, which may well have reinforced Walshe's convictions.<sup>70</sup> We even learn from the issue of 24 February 1943 that the French Legation in Dublin was applying Vichy's anti-Semitic laws in consular activities: 'No visas will be issued to persons of Israelite race, even with French Nationality.'<sup>71</sup>

Indeed, Murphy did not hesitate to express his views candidly, on Pétain, on Laval, on the French ('very egotistical')<sup>72</sup> or on Walshe, when the Secretary clearly was not taking his views seriously and believed that he had a clearer view of the events from Dublin than Murphy had on the ground.<sup>73</sup> The reports Murphy sent back were at variance with the preconceptions that Walshe had on the situation in France. For example, in December 1940 when Walshe requested information on the Vatican perspective of events in France to cross check reports Murphy was sending back, we see how accurate the assessments of the Irish representative were:

Had a talk with Nuncio yesterday. He thinks public opinion in Free Zone has hardened against policy of collaboration ... He thinks Marshal's prestige is very high and that internal policy is gaining ground, but that there is still considerable opposition. The majority in occupied territory very opposed to collaboration and strongly pro-British. The Government can, of course, carry out its policy without popular support as it is all-powerful. Laval has not disclosed any plans. The Nuncio has not heard of any.<sup>74</sup>

This picture is in stark contrast to the telegrams Walshe was sending to Murphy only four or five months previously in which he announced the defeat of Britain and the birth of a new social and political order in France. Murphy's judgment of Laval was categorical, and he pointed out that the Prime Minister was universally disliked and distrusted by a cross section of French society because he was viewed as opportunistic and wanted to go '100 per cent in collaboration with Germany'.<sup>75</sup> As early as the winter of 1940-1941 it was apparent in the highly detailed reports sent to Dublin from Vichy that the majority of the French population not only did not accept collaboration as inevitable but also hoped for the defeat of Germany. Murphy noted that de Gaulle had little personal support within France whereas what he represented had considerable support in **the Occupied Zone**.<sup>76</sup> These elements were clearly essential in informing Irish foreign policy of the period.

Murphy's patience grew thin with Walshe in the closing months of 1940. On 3 December 1940 the Irish minister snapped:

I gather from your telegrams Nos 98 and 391 that you have formed a definite opinion on the situation with which the views expressed in my reports are not in harmony. I have always endeavoured to give you the facts of the situation as I see it objectively and without prejudice and it is consequently disheartening to receive telegrams ... which seem to suggest that I am drawing on my imagination.<sup>77</sup>

He proceeded in the same telegram to spell out the situation as he saw it in France:

In order to properly appreciate the situation here one has to remember that France has received a knock out blow and has only recently recovered consciousness. At first the only desire of the French people was to find someone to blame for their defeat other than themselves. They very naturally came to the conclusion that it was due to lack of British support. In this view they were greatly assisted in the official statements made and by the incident of Mers El Kebir ... However, as the war went on and the end had no appearance of arriving they began to look on other reasons for their defeat. They gradually came to the conclusion that they were mainly responsible themselves. With the growth of this point of view they became less and less anti-British until now the majority even in this zone are hoping for a British victory.<sup>78</sup>

Walshe's reply to Murphy a month later was apologetic and complimentary in its tone. He assured the Minister in Vichy that no 'criticism of the objectivity of your reports' was intended and thanked him for his '[m]ost interesting and useful' report. For Walshe, it was of 'utmost importance ... to know Vatican views at all stages of situation especially owing to character of Pétain government'.<sup>79</sup> Murphy, however, clearly had little admiration for Pétain, this 'vain, self-opinionated and stubborn' man<sup>80</sup> who is very susceptible to flattery.<sup>81</sup> He continues mercilessly:

[Pétain] suffers from the faults of an old man who has had a very successful career ... He does not like disagreement with his views, and is apparently a bad judge of persons. He is inclined to treat the members of his government as he would treat the members of his own 'Etat Major'. If they don't agree with his views, he ceases to consult them and finally gets rid of them with little or no explanation. He is impetuous and takes decisions very quickly, but he has no hesitation in rescinding these decisions with equal rapidity.<sup>82</sup>

More serious for Murphy were Pétain's dictatorial tendencies that explained lack of support for the regime: 'the Marshal is, of course, a dictator in the fullest sense of the word. All powers are invested in him personally'.<sup>83</sup> Pétain had dismantled the parliamentary system with his constitutional acts, dismissed prefects and sub-prefects, removed primary and secondary schoolteachers and dissolved town councils. He also

pointed to the anti-Semitic *Statut des Juifs*<sup>84</sup> and the outlawing of freemasonry as reasons for a crisis of legitimacy for the regime. Contrary to Walshe's conviction, Murphy insisted that the policy of the Pétain government was not 'positive Catholicism', it was 'non-anticlericalism'.<sup>85</sup> The *Révolution Nationale* that Walshe seemed so keen on in 1940 had failed to change French society, as it did not 'go very deep'. Murphy did not doubt that Pétain was sincere in his intentions and ideas; he observed, however, that the application of his ideas was not widespread.<sup>86</sup> Laval was so unpopular that he would not be accepted as Pétain's successor should he die, and **that** the 'present regime will last as long as the Marshal lasts'.<sup>87</sup> Murphy prophetically recognises that Laval had 'the courage which few, if any, have here at the moment to follow his point of view to the bitter end and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that his point of view may cost him his life'.<sup>88</sup>

Over the next few years Murphy would continue to send back reports talking of French hopes of an Anglo-American victory and a German defeat. He would also allude to severe shortages of food and resources, changes in government and attacks on the occupation forces. The 'very severe reprisals' that followed were 'regarded as excessive and even inhuman [and] cruel in the extreme'<sup>89</sup> and have 'greatly accentuated this feeling of hostility towards the Germans'.<sup>90</sup> For the benefit of Joseph Walshe, he was often careful to add 'and the Nuncio shares this view...' or 'this opinion has been confirmed by a French Monsignor'. He traces the 'lukewarm' reception given to the policy of state collaboration between Germany and France and the gulf that was getting wider between larger sections of the French population and the Pétain government, leading to a state of 'great depression and of hopelessness'.<sup>91</sup>

V. The course of the war changed dramatically in the last half of 1941. The launching of Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941 (a year day-for-day after the Armistice between France and Germany) brought Stalin into the war against his former ally and six months later, on 7 December 1941, the United States entered the conflict. The likelihood of an Allied victory was real, and the **possibility** of Axis defeat **inevitable**, especially after the Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942. The need for friendly, benevolent neutrality **in Ireland** was all the more pressing, especially in the face of mounting media hostility **across** the Atlantic. From early 1942 US public opinion, once the prop of Irish neutrality and favorably disposed to an end to partition, put pressure on de Valera to **rally to** the Allied cause. Irish fears of being embroiled in the war became stronger on 26 January 1942 with the landing of US troops in Northern Ireland (Operation Magnet). For many in Ireland the presence of these troops not only represented a threat of invasion but, more importantly, a *de facto* recognition of partition.

We learn from a report of 17 February 1942 that the relations between France and the US were ‘probably the question in which the Marshal interests himself the most’.<sup>92</sup> He was anxious to maintain good relationships with a power outside the Axis block to avoid being ‘completely at their mercy’.<sup>93</sup> To this effect he nurtured his apparently cordial personal relationship with the American Ambassador (Admiral Leahy since December 1941).<sup>94</sup> He had also noted and approved the Taoiseach’s protest at the presence of US troops in the North.<sup>95</sup> This point was again broached during an audience with the newly reappointed French Prime Minister Laval on 9 May **1942**. Laval sought clarifications on the Irish reaction to the stationing of US troops in Northern Ireland. Murphy tells us that ‘[Laval] then referred to Ireland, and said that he sincerely hoped we could remain neutral in spite of American troops in

Northern Ireland'. The Irish minister replied by reiterating Ireland's position on neutrality.<sup>96</sup> This report tells us that 'Laval fully understood the position and hoped Mr de Valera would be successful to the end'.<sup>97</sup>

**The year** 1942 was also the year when State Collaboration was at its most intense and **when** the deportation of Jews from France by the French and German authorities began. In this one year alone, forty-two thousand five hundred Jews would be deported to concentration camps; the vast majority would go through the Drancy transit camp in the outskirts of Paris.<sup>98</sup> Murphy made frequent references to the *Relève* (which became compulsory with the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* in 1943),<sup>99</sup> to military collaboration with the *LVF*<sup>100</sup> and the *Légion tricolore*,<sup>101</sup> and to the continuing unpopularity of the government and discontent of the population. For the Irish minister in Vichy, the show trials at Riom of former leaders and politicians of the Third Republic, notably Daladier and Léon Blum who both had been Prime **Ministers** during the 3rd Republic and General Gamelin, 'will result in a lot of dirty linen being washed which will not be in the best interests of the country'.<sup>102</sup> A month after the round up of thirteen thousand one hundred and fifty-two Jews in Paris during the *Rafle du Vel' d'Hiv* on 16 and 17 July 1942 (code named Operation Spring Breeze), Murphy mentions the discontent in France at the deportation of the Jews to concentration camps.<sup>103</sup> It is interesting to note that in the context of the **polemic surrounding** the failure of Ireland to accept more Jewish refugees during the war, Walshe sought confirmation of Reuters reports that the French Government had refused an appeal from the Pope not to take measures against the Jews.<sup>104</sup> Murphy was swift to respond :

French bishops have recently made appeal without success as French government powerless (stop). The French government is even handing over to Germans foreign Jews in Unoccupied zone.<sup>105</sup>

By August 1942 it is certain from these reports that Walshe and de Valera were clearly informed of the deportation of Jews on racial grounds from France, with the complicity of Vichy, to concentration camps in Eastern Europe. In his annual report for 1942 Murphy euphemistically observes that it 'is certain that the Jews in the Free Zone are having a bad time' and 'nobody knows what is happening to them'.<sup>106</sup> A year later he will leave Dublin in no doubt as to the fate of the Jews in France:

The persecution of Jews by the occupying authority continues apace. Foreign Jews are arrested wholesale and are never heard of again. French Jews and French people, with even remote Jewish forebears, are put through very severe enquiries. In the case of full French Jews, the Gestapo can generally arrange some charge to bring against them. They can have them denounced as having Communist leanings and that is sufficient to have them condemned as dangerous and imprisoned. In such cases the French Government are powerless to do anything. In case of Jewish ancestry there are continual administrative enquiries which make life intolerable and which finally result in the person concerned giving up his or her particular employment or profession. This is precisely what the German authorities are after. They want to make life intolerable for any person with even remote Jewish connection. They are succeeding while the French Government has to look on helplessly.<sup>107</sup>

Towards the end of 1942 Murphy underlines the high level of discontent and instability within France. 'Even very law-abiding citizens are beginning to take the law into their own hands'.<sup>108</sup> He maintains that :

In the case of 80% at least of the French, they are waiting impatiently for an invasion by the Anglo-Americans. They are quite convinced that Germany is beaten and with typical French shrewdness they think it is a good thing to get in early and well with the opponents. It is the reverse of the coin this time as compared with July 1940.<sup>109</sup>

The invasion would not be of France but of North Africa on 11 November 1942.

This further undermined the likelihood of Axis victory and complicated matters for the Vichy government. Eisenhower appointed former Vichy prime minister and

Pétain's appointed successor Darlan as civil and military chief of French North Africa when the opposing Vichy forces in North Africa capitulated, and General Giraud rallied to the Allied cause. The Germans launched Operation Anton and occupied the Free Zone, ostensibly to prevent any landings in the South of France.<sup>110</sup> To the relief of the Allies, the French Navy scuttled the fleet in Toulon before the Germans could reach the coast. Murphy tells us that Laval was given full powers by Pétain because the Germans no longer trusted or wanted to deal with the Marshal as a result of the defection of Darlan and Giraud.<sup>111</sup> By December we learn that the French population were 'overjoyed' by the recent British and American successes,<sup>112</sup> whereas the regime bitterly criticized the 'illegal masters' of North Africa.<sup>113</sup> The influence of Pétain declined as that of Laval increased:

[The Marshal] is every day being pushed more and more in the background, though, wherever necessary, the powers that be play on whatever prestige remains. Nearly everyone is agreed that his prestige is a quickly diminishing asset.<sup>114</sup>

In late 1943, in a context where 'the only well organised services in France at the [time were] the Black Market and the Resistance Movement',<sup>115</sup> Murphy relates a candid discussion he had with the Head of the French Foreign Office, Bressy, that gives a damning assessment of the Vichy regime and the Head of State. We see how accurate Murphy had been in his assessments over the previous three years:

The old man [Pétain] is so attached to the idea of being **chef d'état** and is so fond of the Hôtel du Parc that there is no chance of his resigning either ... The French people thought in 1940 that with a French state and a French government, however restricted, they would be spared the difficulties of a Gauleiter. They now find that they have suffered in exactly the same way except that all the measures of deportations and forced labour were taken with the consent of the French Government. Only something like the resignation of the

Marshal as the result of German pressure, or owing to difficulties with the Germans, could possibly re-establish his prestige.<sup>116</sup>

Seán Murphy was an indispensable counterbalance to the overt, often blind support of Joseph Walshe for the Vichy Regime. Even after his Minister in Vichy had sent back reports detailing the extent of economic, political and military State collaboration, including complicity of the regime in the rounding up and deportation of the Jews, Walshe - a key influence on Irish neutrality - still naively believed Pétain to be 'a distinguished soldier' who would not be regarded as a war criminal by the French people. He even personally thought - and stated it openly to the French representative in Dublin, M. François-Xavier de Laforcade - that his country could give asylum to Pétain should it be requested, and took the precaution of asking the UK representative in Ireland, Sir John Maffey, whether such a move would receive the full support of His Majesty's government. A handwritten annotation to the letter reveals that the response five days later was positive.<sup>117</sup> This *faux pas* towards the essentially Gaullist head of the French Legation in Dublin was typical of Walshe's lack of awareness, and would not help matters when it came to obtain diplomatic recognition for Murphy in August 1944.

**Neutrality and the French Legation in Dublin, or How to Avoid 'Quarrels between Frenchmen in Ireland'.<sup>118</sup>**

VI. The attitude of de Valera and Walshe to the French legation was also ambiguous and contradictory, and its avowed aim was to avoid 'quarrels between Frenchmen in Ireland'.<sup>119</sup> As Walshe himself stated in June 1944 to Roger Lalouette, an emissary of de Gaulle: 'We had no quarrel with any group of Frenchmen and our one desire with regard to France was to see her whole people united under one government'.<sup>120</sup>

Nevertheless, in late 1943, Walshe told de Laforcade (who openly said that he both

represented the North African Committee – *CFLN* - and ‘took his instructions from Vichy’) that as this Committee was not recognized as a government by any country, ‘it could not conceivably be represented by a Minister’.<sup>121</sup> The rapid succession of events - the Fall of France, the nomination of Pétain and the subsequent armistice with the Germans, de Gaulle’s call for resistance on 18 June 1940 - forced the French Legation, like all legations in neutral countries, to face choices that led to conflicting loyalties. The legalistic approach, initially favoured by the Dublin legation and its Irish hosts, was to support the legally constituted Vichy regime and its Head of State. When the London Embassy was closed after diplomatic relations were severed with Britain, a number of prominent diplomats formerly posted to London were transferred to Dublin.<sup>122</sup> De Laforcade was initially loyal to Vichy and as spokesman of the French government made a number of statements and *communiqués* through the Irish press.<sup>123</sup> He explained the French perspective on the Fall of France against the backdrop of deteriorating Franco-British relations. In the aftermath of the attack on the French Fleet by the Royal Navy at Mers-el-Kébir on 3 July 1940, de Laforcade would exchange fire with the British Admiralty through the columns of the Irish press.<sup>124</sup> The anti-English rhetoric of Vichy might well have initially not fallen on deaf ears in Ireland. The French and Spanish legations in Dublin were almost considered as German auxiliaries up until 1943.<sup>125</sup>

Events in the war dictated the situation in Dublin, especially after the landings in North Africa. Loyalties were potentially split between the official, legal Vichy government, de Gaulle (a *protégé* of Churchill), Darlan (Pétain’s former **Prime Minister** turned favorite of the Americans) and Giraud (a rival of de Gaulle for leadership of the Algiers government after Darlan’s assassination on 24 December 1942). De Laforcade’s First Secretary, Benjamin Cauvet-Duhamel, was also initially a

Pétainist from 1940, but like his Minister had no strong affinities with Laval or for his policy of collaboration. By 1943 both were covertly supporting Giraud, then de Gaulle, in the North African Committee (*CFLN*). De Laforcade paid lip service to Vichy to avoid the Legation falling into the hands of the committed Pétainist Naval Attaché, Captain H. Albertas,<sup>126</sup> who was described by Walshe as a ‘source of infinite trouble’ who ‘might cause a little disturbance in the Allied dovecot in Dublin’.<sup>127</sup> Albertas was one of the rare diplomats in neutral postings to stay faithful to Pétain during the troubled months after the landings in North Africa. He broke off relations with de Laforcade in spring 1943.<sup>128</sup>

Eugène Lestoquay, the commercial attaché of the Embassy, met with the approval of Walshe who saw him as the ‘most logical and honorable member of the French officials in this country’.<sup>129</sup> They both shared a dislike of de Gaulle. ‘From the outset [Lestoquay] regarded de Gaulle as a subversive force in France’.<sup>130</sup> He became a loyal supporter of Giraud in late 1942. After the landings in North Africa, and the scuttling of the French Fleet at Toulon on 27 November **1942**, we learn from a Walshe memo that Darlan had sent de Laforcade a telegram from Algiers on 21 November asking him to choose between Vichy and Algiers.<sup>131</sup> To avoid any diplomatic incident de Laforcade sought the position of the Irish government on the possibility that he might rally de Gaulle’s rival, Darlan, in North Africa. He even suggested that the Irish Legation leave Vichy for Algiers. Walshe astutely refused, and predictably advised against such a move, urging caution and patience in such a confused and unstable situation. Walshe’s response to the French Minister in Dublin was transmitted to Darlan. De Laforcade was spared the need for further action when Darlan was assassinated on the 24 December 1942 by a young twenty-year-old Gaullist, Fernand Bonnier de La Chapelle, who was conveniently judged and

executed by military tribunal within less than 36 hours.<sup>132</sup> This was a mixed blessing for de Gaulle, as Darlan was far more of a threat than the mediocre Giraud was to be.

Incredibly, despite official recognition being openly given to Vichy, the desire of the Department of External Affairs was that the ‘change of representation [between Vichy and the *GPRF*] should take place imperceptibly, step by step with events on the continent’.<sup>133</sup> For the previous two years Walshe had discreetly analysed the approach of other neutral governments to the delicate question of recognizing the French Committee in Algiers.<sup>134</sup> On 3 September 1943 the Department of External Affairs sent a telegram to the Irish legations in Berne, Lisbon and Madrid to ascertain the attitude of other neutrals to the recently formed *CFLN*.<sup>135</sup> The Committee had already been recognized by the UK and the USSR and, with certain limitations, by the USA. The Swiss did not recognize the *CFLN* but maintained limited contacts. The Spanish recognized the Committee and gave diplomatic privileges to representatives in North Africa. According to the Irish Minister in Portugal, semi-official recognition was given to the *CFLN* by Salazar’s government.<sup>136</sup> By 1943 it had become evident to Walshe that de Gaulle (and Giraud initially) was part of the Allied equation and as such should be covertly tolerated. In September 1943 **even** the German legation was enquiring whether the Irish government **was intending to** give **even tacit** recognition to the *CFLN*.<sup>137</sup> This undoubtedly explains why the Irish government allowed an embarrassing ‘equivocal situation’ and a *modus vivendi* (to quote Walshe) to persist.<sup>138</sup> The External Affairs Secretary even conspired with de Laforcade to ensure that the *maréchaliste* Albertas would not get into a position to ‘injure in any way the British or Allied cause’ when there was a serious possibility of the Naval Attaché becoming Chargé d’Affaires. Murphy had officially informed Walshe that de Laforcade was no longer considered by Vichy as French Minister after 27 September

1943 (Cauvet-Duhamel had been appointed Chargé d’Affaires to replace him), and consequently the Irish Government would no longer recognize him as such.<sup>139</sup> Given his *CFLN* allegiances, Cauvet-Duhamel initially refused this Vichy appointment, but after consultation with Maffey and Gray, the UK and US representatives, and with the support of Eugène Lestoquay, the Commercial Attaché, he agreed to take up the post to block Albertas and ‘avoid a local scandal’.<sup>140</sup>

This ‘stupid, almost [...] comical’ situation whereby de Laforcade was the *de facto CFLN* representative with full diplomatic privileges and Cauvet-Duhamel the official, *de jure* head of the Vichy French Legation and loyal Gaullist, continued until the morning of 12 June 1944 when de Gaulle’s emissary, Roger Lalouette, appeared unannounced at the French Legation.<sup>141</sup> He had undiplomatically travelled directly from Port Lyauty on a British diplomatic visa issued to him by the British Consul at Rabat and had informed neither the French Legation nor the Irish Government of his visit. When Walshe met both de Laforcade and Lalouette on 15 June 1944 he remonstrated with Lalouette and the newly-proclaimed *GPRF*<sup>142</sup> for failing to respect normal diplomatic procedures and for thinking that travelling on a British diplomatic visa was an acceptable way of gaining access to Ireland in an official capacity.<sup>143</sup> As officially Ireland only recognized Vichy as the legitimate government in France, Walshe asked Lalouette to be discreet about his arrival to avoid ‘a French scandal in Dublin’ and ‘nasty repercussions’.<sup>144</sup> He informed the new French representative that the Irish Government would consider him as ‘*de facto* Representative of the French Committee and would accordingly give him the usual diplomatic immunities’.<sup>145</sup> Walshe added that Ireland ‘had no quarrel with any group of Frenchmen and [the State’s] one desire with regard to France was to see her people united under one government’.<sup>146</sup> But as long as the Vichy government continued to exist Walshe

insisted that there be no publicity around the arrival of Lalouette or the departure of Cauvet-Duhamel. Failure to respect this discretion would incur the ‘grave displeasure of the Irish Government’.<sup>147</sup>

The day that Paris was liberated (**25 August 1944**) de Gaulle made a triumphant speech at the Hôtel de Ville, thus re-affirming republican legality and consolidating his position as the legitimate leader of the Provisional Government. **During this speech** he resisted pressure to proclaim the Republic ~~during this speech~~, as he believed (and this was backed up constitutionally by the Decree of 9 August 1944 which effectively outlawed Vichy and invalidated all its laws) that the Republic had never ceased to exist.<sup>148</sup> This raised an interesting legal point, as previous diplomatic relationships with Vichy were retrospectively invalidated by the new French administration.<sup>149</sup> This would evidently have ramifications for the policy of Irish neutrality. As Pétain had already been forcibly taken to Germany by Hitler in the preceding days and was no longer in a position to govern, the Department of External Affairs decided to withdraw their recognition of the Vichy Regime. As Ireland did not want to ‘play politics’, de Laforcade was accepted ‘in the fullest sense as Minister of France [and] his Government as the Government of France’.<sup>150</sup> During this meeting Walshe’s suspicions were confirmed that it would be more than just a mere formality to get accreditation for Murphy from the *GPRF*. The policy of the new French administration was that Ministers of neutral states who had represented their country at Vichy would have to be replaced.<sup>151</sup> Walshe reiterated to de Laforcade during this meeting the Irish government’s position towards other states in general and France in particular:

Our sole interest was to remain on friendly terms with his country, and we did not feel called upon to make any special declaration or recognition, our

assumption being that, when a government was established in France, it was exclusively the business of the French people.<sup>152</sup>

The Secretary of the Department of External Affairs had hoped that Murphy's role as Minister for Ireland could continue without the need to present new credentials, as these had already been presented in 1938 and the Irish government saw itself as having been in 'continuing relations with France'.<sup>153</sup> As only George VI could sign such accreditation, it would be highly embarrassing for both the French and the Irish to force Murphy to seek new letters of credence from the British, especially in the context of strained Anglo-Irish relations. Walshe made it clear that if the *GPRF* did not accept Murphy, this refusal would be taken as 'an admonition of our government for having remained neutral', and neutrality was 'our own exclusive business'.<sup>154</sup> He made it very clear that recognition for the French Minister in Dublin had as a corollary the acceptance of Murphy in Paris. The Quai d'Orsay was unmoved by these words and was clearly not ready to forgive Ireland's four-year recognition of Vichy. It refused to recognize Murphy when he arrived in the capital on 27 September 1944 with other neutral diplomats. Harold King, the Reuters correspondent, related the problems faced by the Irish Minister who was treated like a private citizen:

The **diplomats** accredited to the defunct French Government have arrived in Paris. They are headed by the Papal Nuncio and include the diplomatic representatives of the Irish Free State, Spain, Hungary and of the former Rumanian government presided over by Antonescu who is now a prisoner in Soviet Russia.

All enquiries at the French Foreign office today were met by blank looks and astonishment. 'We do not know any of these people', one official stated. 'No such persons are accredited to the French Republic.'

The diplomats in question reached Paris from Vichy by their own means of transport.

Since the French Foreign Office does not recognize their existence they are virtually in Paris as private persons and foreigners and it would appear to be a

matter for the French Minister of the interior to grant or refuse them the right to reside here.<sup>155</sup>

In a telegram sent through Berne (as he had no other means of communication) Murphy relates the difficult meeting he had with the General Secretary of the Quai d'Orsay:

I was very coldly received and rudely received by Secretary General who stated they wanted no heads of missions who served in Vichy. The same attitude was adopted towards Nuncio and other colleagues. Nuncio extremely annoyed. The foreign office had received your proposal of de Facto recognition, but this did not appear to satisfy Secretary General who became irritable at mention of word 'de facto'.<sup>156</sup>

He described the French Foreign Office as 'excitable truculent' and the administration in immediate post-liberation Paris as 'chaotic'.<sup>157</sup> Murphy even suggested that the newly formed central government was not accepted in many regions where a 'quasi Soviet regime is in operation'. He also considered that the Americans might soon be obliged to intervene to maintain order'.<sup>158</sup> The standoff with the Quai d'Orsay had begun. Walshe demanded an apology (through the intermediary of René Massigli in the London Embassy) from de Gaulle's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs. 'Rudeness to our representative was rudeness to Government'.<sup>159</sup> He pointed out that Dublin had given the fullest recognition to de Laforcade, except the title of Minister, once he had rallied to the *CFLN*, and had treated the French Legation in Dublin with 'the greatest consideration'. Walshe reminded Massigli that the moment Pétain left Vichy the Irish government fully recognized de Laforcade, and thus the *GPRF*.<sup>160</sup> His conclusion was uncompromising:

We [expect] immediate apology and complete acceptance of our representative... Failing that we should feel obliged to withdraw our recognition from the French Legation here. Such a step would be very painful for us, as we

had always had very friendly relations with France to whom we were linked by history and natural sympathy.<sup>161</sup>

It was quite simply impossible for the Irish government to '[sacrifice] its sovereign right, allow its representative to be so treated or its right to neutrality so impugned. End of protest'.<sup>162</sup> Walshe suggested that Murphy try approaching the Quai d'Orsay again since, despite the strength of the Irish protest, '[i]f at all possible, we must put things right with France. No doubt, your treatment, like that of [the] Nuncio, [was] due to [a] frayed temper and inevitable annoyance with Vichy'.<sup>163</sup>

On 11 November 1944 de Laforcade sent a letter to de Valera confirming that he was 'now in a position to inform his Excellency that the French Provisional Government ... will give the same treatment to the Irish representative in France as the French mission receives in Ireland'.<sup>164</sup> At this juncture it would appear that the Irish resolve in the matter had succeeded and an exception had been made in the case of Murphy. We learn from a letter dated 17 November 1944 that an arrangement had been made through Massigli whereby Murphy could fulfill his functions as Irish minister without **the immediate and pressing need** to present letters of credence **in the immediate**.<sup>165</sup> However, the question had still not been resolved, since Murphy could not discharge properly his functions as Irish Minister without having first had an audience with de Gaulle, as diplomatic protocol required. He explained to Roger Gaucheron of the Political Section of the Quai d'Orsay that he could not meet fellow diplomats or members of the government, as it would cause embarrassment for himself if he had to admit that de Gaulle had declined to meet him.<sup>166</sup> Conversely, a visit of courtesy to de Gaulle was seen as problematic for the French, since it could have been used as a precedent by other neutral countries in the same situation as Ireland. **These countries** were also seeking recognition **for their Vichy diplomats**

that the *GPRF* was determined not to give. Murphy relates how a solution was found to this problem:

I said I was hoping to return to Ireland, if possible at the beginning of December, but that naturally my departure would be governed by whether or not I had been able to complete with the French Government and especially with General de Gaulle, which my government were anxious should be made as soon as possible. M. Dejean [the political director of the Quai d'Orsay] then said that he thought my departure for Ireland offered an excellent solution to the existing difficulty because on my return from leave the situation could be completely cleared and I could be received by General de Gaulle immediately.<sup>167</sup>

On 24 March 1945, on his return from well-deserved leave in Ireland, Seán Murphy had a private audience with de Gaulle at the Hôtel de la Résidence in Paris.<sup>168</sup> Murphy reported that 'on the whole ... the interview was cordial'. The General openly commented on the fact that Murphy had been in France since 1938, and added that he 'should be able to form a better opinion on things in France than most people'.<sup>169</sup> Murphy passed on de Valera's best wishes and ~~the Taoiseach's~~ 'hopes that France would retake her place amongst the great nations of the world'. De Gaulle, reports Murphy, was 'very touched' by ~~the Taoiseach's~~ messages and expressed the hope that the two countries, that had always been friendly, would strengthen their economic and cultural relations after the war and become closer. In total contradiction with the position of his government's diplomats, de Gaulle expressed his 'great personal admiration for the Taoiseach and the manner in which he had kept his country neutral'.<sup>170</sup> At the end of the meeting, Murphy was happy to note that de Gaulle had added an official touch to what was essentially a private audience, by giving instructions to have the guard turned out to present arms in his honour.<sup>171</sup> It would be interesting to know whether de Gaulle would have given such an audience

to an Irish representative after de Valera's visit to the German Embassy on 2 May 1945.

It is tempting to see this apparent victory for Irish neutrality as pyrrhic, given the toll it would take on the relations between France and Ireland up until the 1960s. It would take two long decades before relations would improve noticeably between the two states. The determination of Ireland to be unwaveringly legalistic in the case of its recognition of Vichy was largely the result of the policy of state neutrality conceived by de Valera as a statement of sovereignty, and the political convictions and considerable influence of one man, Joseph Walshe. Ireland was indeed fortunate to have such a skilled diplomat in the person of Seán Murphy to counteract the rash *neo-pétainism* of his General Secretary and to steer an even course through one of the most difficult periods of Franco-Irish relations. However, despite the 'Irish exception' that was begrudgingly granted, the remainder of Murphy's twelve-year career in France would not be a particularly easy one. De Gaulle, the friend of Ireland, would leave office less than ten months after their meeting and not return to power for another twelve years. The Quai d'Orsay would continue reproaching the Irish Minister his wartime presence at Vichy until he left, probably not without relief, for Ottawa in 1950.<sup>172</sup>

Murphy's assessment of the French after four years of Occupation was bleak indeed, and gives an insight, albeit highly subjective, into the difficult conditions of the immediate post-liberation period in France:

The year 1945 has left France, in my opinion, poorer morally and materially. Whatever moral sense existed before is daily disappearing. There is no civic sense and no honesty in business dealings. The administration whether Municipal or Governmental is corrupt in nearly all branches. There is no desire to work or to try to pull things together. The spirit of *laissez-aller* is everywhere and everyone seems out for their own personal advantage at any cost ... The

general impression one has is that there is no sense of self-respect left. They are ready to blame everything on their defeat and occupation. They expect the rest of the world to be quite willing to pull them together because France is necessary to civilisation.<sup>173</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years, 1939-1945* (New York: David and Charles Newton, 1975); Ronan Fanning, 'Irish Neutrality – an Historical Overview', *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 1 (1982), pp.27-38; Robert Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45* (London: Deutsch, 1983); Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts (eds), *Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000); Michael Kennedy and Joseph M. Skelly (eds), *Irish Foreign Policy, 1919-1996: From Independence to Internationalism* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000); Dermot Keogh and Mervyn O'Driscoll (eds), *Ireland in World War Two: Neutrality and Survival* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), and Clair Wills, *That Neutral Island: A History of Ireland During the Second World War* (London: Faber, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Brian Girvin, "Politics in wartime: governing, neutrality and elections", in Brian Girvin & Geoffrey Roberts (ed) *Ireland and the Second World War*, pp.24-46. See also Patrick Keatinge, *The Formulation of the Irish Foreign Policy*, Dublin, Institute of Public Administration, 1978, p. 25 and Ronan Fanning, *Independent Ireland*, Dublin, Helicon, 1983, pp.120-121.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.

<sup>4</sup> Tim-Pat Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, London, Hutchinson, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> The army was small, the navy non-existent, the air force limited and defences were improvised. Cf Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, pp.223-227. The bombing of Belfast on the night of 15-16 April 1941 and the North Strand in Dublin on 30 May 1941 would later show how potentially vulnerable the State was.

<sup>6</sup> The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938, which involved the withdrawal of British garrisons from the Treaty ports of Queenstown (Cobh), Berehaven in Cork and Lough Swilly in Donegal, made Irish wartime neutrality a practical possibility. The refusal to hand them back was a constant source of tension between the British, the Americans and the Irish throughout the war. Cf. Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years*, pp.24-38, and Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, pp. 120-26.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Eunan O'Halpin, *Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality During the Second World War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p1.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Hull, *Irish Secrets: German Espionage in Wartime Ireland, 1939-1945*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2003; *MI5 and Ireland, 1939-1945: The Official History*, ed. and introduced by Eunan O'Halpin, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2003. In a secret note to de Valera on 12 September 1943, Joseph Walshe, the General Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, spoke of "benevolent neutrality" (p.3) that was "an essential basis for the friendly attitude" (p.2) towards Britain and the US (National Archives, Dept of Taoiseach Private Office 98/8/66).

<sup>10</sup> *Le Comité Français de la Libération Nationale* (French Committee of National Liberation, *CFLN*, often called the North African Committee in correspondence: formed 3 June 1943) *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française* (Provisional Government of the French Republic, *GPRF*, formed 3 June 1944)

<sup>11</sup> National Archives of Ireland (NA), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Secretary's Office Files (SOF), A2, Memo Walshe to Taoiseach "Weekend Developments in the War Situation", p.1, undated but presumably 24 June 1940; Ibid, SOF, P.12, Telegram from Murphy to Walshe 15 July 1940; Ibid, 19/34A, telegram Walshe to Murphy "Clear text of telegram received from the Department on 23 July 1940.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, SOF, A2, Memo Walshe to Taoiseach, "Weekend Developments in the War Situation", p.6.

<sup>13</sup> On 29 August 1944, the French Minister in Dublin was informed that "since the Pétain government had ceased to exist and the de Gaulle Government was being set up in Paris, we [Dublin] now accepted

him in the fullest sense as Minister of France”. Memo Walshe, 29 August 1944, *Ibid*, SOF, P.97: “Recognition of Monsieur de Laforcade as Minister of the new French Government in Dublin”. It would not be until the 23 October 1944 that the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union formally recognized the Provisional Government of the French Republic (GPRF), headed by de Gaulle, as the legitimate government of France.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, SOF, 205/124, Memo Walshe 5 November 1943, “Termination of M. Laforcade’s Tenure of Office”. During a meeting with the German Ambassador Hempel on 15 September, who was protesting at possible Irish recognition of the French Committee of National Liberation, Walshe informed the ambassador that his “anxiety was to avoid rows in this country between different groups of Frenchmen”: *Ibid*, A.2, Memo Walshe to Taoiseach 15 Sept. 1943.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, and *Ibid* A.2, Memo Walshe to Taoiseach “Position of the French Legation in Dublin – Arrival of de Gaulle’s Emissary”, 22 June 1944.

<sup>16</sup> Diplomatic activity would be very limited in this last city-state enclave of the Vichy government in exile in Bade-Wurtemberg. Only Germany, Japan and the Republic of Salo would send representatives. Cf Henry Rousso, *Pétain et la fin de la collaboration: Sigmaringen, 1944-1945*, Brussels, Ed. Complexe, 1984, p.118. It would not be until the 23 October 1944 that the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union formally recognized the Provisional Government of the French Republic (GPRF), headed by de Gaulle, as the legitimate government of France.

<sup>17</sup> Seán Murphy (1896-1964), from a well-known nationalist family in Waterford, was a secretary of the Irish Legation in Paris in 1920 where he represented the Free State from 1923. He moved back to the Department of External Affairs in 1925. In 1928 he became Assistant Secretary of the Department, a post he occupied until 1938 when he took up the Head of Legation in Paris.

<sup>18</sup> Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, p.346.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Patrick Walshe (1886-1956) was secretary of the Dept of External Affairs in Dublin from 1922 to 1946. His lack of experience of service in the field is an explanation for his periodic poor judgment and lack of awareness of the conditions in which Murphy discharged his responsibilities. His affinities with Vichy are believed to stem from his experience as a Jesuit from 1903 to 1915/16. While studying Philosophy in Holland from 1905, he came into contact with French Priests forced to leave France after the anti-clerical laws of 1905. This exposure to anticlericalism affected his political outlook and influenced him to become a staunch supporter of the Extreme Right in France, and subsequently an admirer of Pétain. Cf. p.62, Dermot Keogh, “Profile of Joseph Walshe, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 1922-46, *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1990, pp. 59-80. He was, according to Keogh, a “firm believer in a most restrictive form of closed government. [...] He was convinced that all major foreign policy decisions should be most properly made by the minister [de Valera] in exclusive consultation with the secretary [himself]” (p.59). In 1946 he became the first Irish envoy to serve with rank of Ambassador to the Holy See. He retired in 1954 after a long career which had started in 1919. Significantly, according to Conor Cruise O’Brien, Walshe had an admiration for Mussolini that survived the death of the *Duce* in 1945, *Ibid*, p.69.

<sup>20</sup> NA, DFA 19/34A, telegram Walshe to Murphy “Clear text of telegram received from the Department on 23 July 1940.

<sup>21</sup> The others were Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Vatican City.

<sup>22</sup> (My italics) *Ibid*, 19/34A, telegram Walshe to Murphy “Clear text of telegram received from the Department on 23 July 1940.

<sup>23</sup> Cf Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, p.354.

<sup>24</sup> For example, on the 16 December 1942, Murphy tells Walshe the following: “There is, I think, very little doubt that the French Population are overjoyed by the recent British and American successes and are beginning to feel that the moment of deliverance is not far off”, NA, DFA, 2/204. Or on 23 August 1943. “In the case of 80% at least of the French, they are waiting impatiently for an invasion by the Anglo-Americans. They are quite convinced that Germany is beaten [...] The occupying authorities fear invasion. The vast majority of the French population, as far as I can gather, eagerly await it”. *Ibid*, 2/204. If we presume these shrewdly-written reports were taken on face value, Dublin was quite aware of the true state of play in Occupied France.

<sup>25</sup> This often led to the promotion by Dublin of young, relatively inexperienced diplomats to discharge the responsibilities of senior diplomats. This was the case in Germany where a young First Secretary, William Warnock was promoted *Chargé d’affaires* when the King refused to sign the proposed Irish Minister’s diplomatic credentials. Warnock stayed in Germany right until the closing stages of the war. Cf Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years*, p.31.

<sup>26</sup> Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Vatican would all be forced to change their representatives by the GPRF in 1944.

<sup>27</sup> NA, DFA, SOF, P.97, Memo Walshe, 29 August 1944: "Recognition of Monsieur de Laforcade as Minister of the new French Government in Dublin"; Ibid, Telegram no 103, 9 Oct. 1944, Estero (Walshe) to Hibernia (Berne, for Murphy).

<sup>28</sup> Dermot Keogh, "Ireland, De Gaulle and World War II", in Pierre Joannon, *De Gaulle and Ireland*, Dublin, Institute of Public Administration, 1991, p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> Dermot Keogh, *Ireland and Europe, 1919-1948: a Diplomatic and Political History*, Cork, Hibernian University Press, 1993, p. 26.

<sup>30</sup> NA, DFA, Paris Embassy Files, P19/34. Seán Murphy to Department of External Affairs. Paris, 27 May 1939.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, P19/34. Con Cremin to Department of External Affairs. Paris, 24 August 1939.

<sup>32</sup> Broadcast address to the Nation, 3 September 1939, in "Taoiseach's Message", *Sgéala Éireann*, 4 Sept. 1939.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> In 1948, de Valera hinted that Ireland might have joined the allied war effort had there not been partition. Quoted in Geoffrey Roberts, "Historians and Ireland's War" in Brian Girvin & Geoffrey Roberts (ed.), *Ireland and the Second World War*, p.175. Joseph T. Carroll relates a conversation between the British Representative to Ireland, Maffey, and de Valera on 10 May 1940, the day the Blitzkrieg against the West was launched and the first German bombs of the war fall on England. During this meeting the Taoiseach confirmed that had the partition question been solved, Ireland "would probably" have been "the active Ally" of Britain; cf. *Ireland in the War Years*, p.40.

<sup>35</sup> Cf Ibid, pp.12-13; Trevor Salmon, *Unneutral Ireland*, p.118.

<sup>36</sup> *Sgéala Éireann*, 20 November 1939.

<sup>37</sup> The attack on the French Fleet in the Algerian port of Mers-el-Kébir on the 3 July would deepen the rift between the former allies. This would spill over into exchanges through the columns of Irish newspapers between the French Legation and the British Admiralty justifying their respective positions. Cf. NA, DFA 227/88, *Irish Independent*, 15 July 1940 and *Irish Press*, 16 July 1940.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, "Most secret" memo from Walshe to Taoiseach, "Weekend Developments in the War Situation", undated, probably 24 June 1940. As late as 1944, Walshe would refer to de Gaulle as a "dictator"; cf Ibid, 205/124, "Position of the French Legation in Dublin – Arrival of de Gaulle's Emissary", 22 June 1944, p.2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 227/88, "Most secret" memo from Walshe to Taoiseach, "Weekend Developments in the War Situation", undated, probably 24 June 1940, p.2.

<sup>40</sup> *Sgéala Éireann*, 9 July 1940.

<sup>41</sup> "An Taoiseach's Interview with Representative of 'Christian Science Monitor', 10 August, 1940"; NA, DFA 227/88, "Most secret" memo from Walshe to Taoiseach, "Weekend Developments in the War Situation", undated, probably 24 June 1940. For details on negotiations on British assistance in the case of German invasion of Ireland, cf. Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years, 1939-1945*, pp. 39-50. Cf also Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, pp. 85-87.

<sup>42</sup> "An Taoiseach's Interview with Representative of 'Christian Science Monitor', 10 August, 1940", pp.2-3.

<sup>43</sup> NA, DFA 227/88, "Most secret" memo from Walshe to Taoiseach, "Weekend Developments in the War Situation", undated, probably 24 June 1940, p.6.

<sup>44</sup> See note 19 above.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 19/34A, telegram Walshe to Murphy "Clear text of telegram received from the Department on 23 July 1940". Walshe took pains to forward to Murphy confirmation of this point from the Holy See Legation: "As regards Pétain, attitude of responsible Vatican circles is favorable from two points of view (1) goodness of man (2) goodness of programme", Ibid, SOF, P.12. Telegram from Holy See Legation, 24 July 1940.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 19/34A, telegram Walshe to Murphy "Clear text of telegram received from the Department on 23 July 1940".

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, SOF, P.12. Telegram from Vichy Legation, 28 July 1940.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 19/34A Telegram 28 July 1940.

- <sup>49</sup> Ibid, SOF, P.12, p.2, “Decode of personal Telegram from Vichy Legation” 18 November 1940.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid, 219/69. Telegram n°299. October 29, 1940.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid, SOF, P.12, Telegram from Vichy Legation, 21 November 1940
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid, 227/88, “Most secret” memo from Walshe to Taoiseach, “Weekend Developments in the War Situation”, undated, probably 24 June 1940, p.6.
- <sup>53</sup> Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, p.355.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.354.
- <sup>55</sup> Political and personal objections from individual members of the Civil Service, that is to say, those most directly affected by the scaling down of state bureaucracy, would be one compelling explanation for the failure of vocationalism in Ireland. Cf. Don O’Leary, *Vocationalism and Social Catholicism in Twentieth-Century Ireland: The Search for a Christian Social Order*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2000.
- <sup>56</sup> Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, Cork, CUP, 1999, pp. 116-134.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid, pp. 113-116.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 113.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 23.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 24.
- <sup>61</sup> NA, DFA, P.19/34, 6 July 1936 “Political report”.
- <sup>62</sup> Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, pp.344-362.
- <sup>63</sup> “La famille est une unité sociale naturelle. L’ordre politique doit la respecter en tant qu’entité sociale. A ce titre, la famille doit être définie dans la Constitution. Car une bonne constitution doit reconnaître et organiser toutes les forces sociales. Nous souhaitons que notre constitution s’inspire de celle de l’Eire”. William Garcin, *Révolution sociale par la famille*, Vichy, 1942, Fédération française des associations de famille, p.4.
- <sup>64</sup> *The Standard*, 24 September 1940.
- <sup>65</sup> *The Catholic Herald*, 8 November 1940. See also *The Irish Times*, 16 November 1940.
- <sup>66</sup> NA, DFA 19/34A, telegram Walshe to Murphy, 29 August 1940.
- <sup>67</sup> Walshe learned French during his time as a Jesuit in Gemert, Holland (cf. Dermot Keogh, “Profile of Joseph Walshe, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 1922-46”, *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1990, p. 62). Cf Ibid, 233/121, *Nouvelles de France* 1940-41, and Ibid, 233/121A, *Nouvelles de France* 1942-43.
- <sup>68</sup> *Nouvelles de France*, No 34 12 June 1941. “Ces jeunes prêtres se vouent à une tâche difficile, mais féconde, et maintiennent les liens spirituels qui ont existé depuis les temps immémoriaux entre la France et l’Irlande”.
- <sup>69</sup> Cf. a letter to Walshe in the file NA, DFA, 233/121 dated 12 February 1941, from T.J. Coyne, Assistant controller of censorship states :“I am returning the specimen of “Nouvelles de France” which was enclosed with your letter of the 6 February. The French Legation supplies us regularly with copies of this bulletin. So far there has never been anything in them to which objection could be raised on the grounds of our neutrality”.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid, *Nouvelles de France* , no 39, 16 July 1941: “ Restons donc uni autour de notre gouvernement, car l’union fait la force. Quoi qu’il arrive, quelles que soient les épreuves qui nous sont encore réservés, gardons notre foi dans un avenir meilleur, dans le relèvement final de notre patrie bien-aimée. Le Dieu de Charles Martel, de Saint Louis et de la Sainte Jeanne d’Arc est toujours le Dieu de notre France. Il ne nous abandonnera pas, pourvu que nous sachions nous aider nous-mêmes. Puisse la France meurtre, mais encore vivante, retrouver bientôt, sous la haute direction du Maréchal Pétain et avec la constitution qu’il est en train d’élaborer, cette intelligente compréhension des devoirs d’union et de sacrifice qui lui assurera, en dépit de toutes les entraves, une prospérité nouvelle avec le sentiment de sa force spirituelle toujours intacte”.
- <sup>71</sup> “Aucun visa ne peut être délivré aux personnes de race Israélite, meme de nationalité française”. The French administration distinguished between “israélite” (assimilated, native-born French Jews) and “juifs” (foreign-born Jews, even naturalized).
- <sup>72</sup> NA, DFA SOF, P.12, p.1, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 3 December 1940.
- <sup>73</sup> Murphy churlishly remarked, though not without irony, in a personal telegram (no 336) on the 18 November 1940: “I would have sent telegraphic reports of my impressions of the situation here were it

not for the fact that I understood from your telegram 98 that you only wanted reports which could be supported by some authoritative source and that you were generally better informed on situation here from elsewhere that (*sic*) I could inform you, which is correct. If, however, you desire me to give you my impression of the situation here, I shall do so as often as there is anything of importance to report". Ibid, P.12, p.2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, P.12, p.1, Telegram Murphy to Walshe, 1 December 1940.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, P.12, Murphy to Walshe, 18 November 1940.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, P.12, p.1, Telegram Murphy to Walshe, 1 December 1940.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, P.12, p.1, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 3 December 1940.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, P.12, "Copy telegram sent to Vichy 7.1.1941".

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, P.12, Telegram Murphy to Walshe, 1 March 1941.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, P.12, Telegram Murphy to Walshe 204, 16 December 1942.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, P.12, Murphy to Walshe, 1 March 1941.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, P.12, p.2, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 3 December 1940.

<sup>84</sup> The *statut* voted 3 October 1940, was the first step towards active participation of the Vichy regime in the *Shoah*.

<sup>85</sup> NA, DFA, SOF, P.12, p.3, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 3 December 1940.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, P.12, Murphy to Walshe, 1 March 1941.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, P.12/1, Murphy to Walshe, 20 November 1942. Laval would be executed by firing squad on the morning of 15 October 1945 at Fresnes Prison, after attempting unsuccessfully to poison himself beforehand. He was revived and promptly shot.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 25 October 1941, p.1.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p.3.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 17 February 1942, p.2.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 24 December 1941.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 17 February 1942, p.2.

<sup>96</sup> A week after Pearl Harbor, de Valera clarified the position of the state during a speech in Cork: "From the moment this war began there was for this state only one policy possible – Neutrality. Our circumstances, our history, the incompleteness of our national freedom, through the partition of our country, made any other policy impracticable. Any other policy would have divided our people, and for a divided nation to fling itself into this war would be to commit suicide". Quoted in Clair Wills, *That neutral island*, p. 228. See also Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years*, p.113.

<sup>97</sup> NA, DFA, P.12, report 10 May 1942.

<sup>98</sup> Ian Ousby, *Occupation. The Ordeal of France 1940-1944*, London, Pimlico, p.188. By the time the last train had left France for Auschwitz on the 17 August 1944 during the Liberation of Paris, 76,000 Jews had been deported with the active complicity of the French authorities. Only 2,500 survived.

<sup>99</sup> The *Relève* was a scheme whereby for every three workers who volunteered to go to work in Germany, the Germans would release one French prisoner. Murphy tells us in a report (NA, DFA, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 9 May 1942) that there were 1,256,671 French POWs (of which 24,000 were officers) held in German POW camps. Up to 650,000 workers volunteered or were sent to work in Germany between 1942 and 1944.

<sup>100</sup> *Légion des Volontaires Français contre le Bolchévisme* was a unit of the Wehrmacht (*Französischer Infanterie-Regiment 638*) made up of French volunteers who fought on the Russian Front against the Red Army.

<sup>101</sup> *Légion Tricolore* was a short-lived attempt (July-December 1942) to create a French unit to fight in French uniforms (unlike the *LVF*) alongside the Germans.

<sup>102</sup> NA, DFA, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 17 February 1942, p.2. See also Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 23 February 1942.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 18 August 1942.

- <sup>104</sup> Ibid, P.12, Telegram Walshe to Murphy, 28 August 1942.
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid, Telegram Murphy to Walshe, 31 August 1942.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid, Paris Embassy Files, 113/9. Annual Report, 1942.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid, Annual Report, 1943. This report is in stark contrast with the statement, redolent of Vichy, made by Gerald Boland, Minister for Justice, in Dublin on 24 September 1945, and shows the gulf between the experience of diplomats on the ground and their civil service colleagues in Dublin. “The immigration of Jews is generally discouraged. The weal and influence of the Jewish community in this country appear to have increased considerably in recent years and there is some danger of exciting opposition and controversy if this tendency continues. As Jews do not become assimilated with the native population, like other immigrants, any big increase in their numbers might create a social problem”. Quoted by Dermot Keogh, *Ireland and Europe, 1919-1948*, p. 206. The information that Murphy provides confirms other reports detailing the deportation and mass execution of more than two million Jews in Eastern Europe. The Chief Rabbi in Palestine informed de Valera of these events by telegram on 30 January 1943. Cf. NA, DFA, 419/44, quoted in Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Antisemitism and the Holocaust*, Cork, Cork University Press, 1998, p. 174.
- <sup>108</sup> NA, DFA, SOF, 219/1. Murphy to Walshe, 24 October 1942.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid, 2/204 23 August 1943.
- <sup>110</sup> In reality this action was to prevent a secret deal that Darlan had made with the Allies promising him control of the fleet if he joined the Allied side.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 20 November 1942, p.2.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid, 2/204, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 16 December 1942.
- <sup>113</sup> Ibid, 219/1D, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 22 January 1943.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid, 2/204, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 16 December 1942.
- <sup>115</sup> Ibid, P.12/1, Letter Murphy to Walshe, 26 November 1943.
- <sup>116</sup> *Ibidem*.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid, 4 October 1944.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid, A.2, Walshe to de Valera, “Position of the French Legation in Dublin”, p.1, 22 June 1944.
- <sup>119</sup> *Ibidem*
- <sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid 205/124, Memo Walshe, 5 November 1943, “Termination of M. Laforcade’s Tenure of Office”, p.1.
- <sup>122</sup> The *Daily Mail* of 7 July (in Ibid, 227/88) reported that Pierre Alfred Saffroy former assistant consul general in London replaced Benjamin Cauvet-Duhamel as first secretary; Louis Rochat became second secretary. From September 1940, two military attachés, Lieutenants Lionel Bedin and Marcel Kergoat would be appointed. In early 1941, Bedin would be replaced by Captain Albertas, and Major Jacques Lachèvre would become Military Attaché. Rochat and Saffroy would be the first to rally de Gaulle in October 1941. Cf. NA, DFA, P.75, “French Legation – Political Attitude”, G2 Memo, 25 October 1943.
- <sup>123</sup> *Irish Independent*, “Why France Capitulated”, 8 July 1940, in NA, DFA, 227/88.
- <sup>124</sup> *Irish Independent*, “The French Fleet. Statement by Dublin Legation”, 15 July 1940, and the *Irish Press*, “French Fleet: British Statement”, 16 July 1940, in NA, DFA, 227/88.
- <sup>125</sup> Eunan O’Halpin, “Hitler’s Irish hideout; A case study of SOE’s black propaganda battles”, pp.201-216, in Mark Seaman (ed.), *Special Operations Executive: a new instrument of war*, London, Routledge, 2005, p.208.
- <sup>126</sup> NA, DFA, P.75. Memorandum prepared by G2, “French Legation – Political Attitude”. Dublin, 25 October 1943. A ‘whispers’ campaign orchestrated in 1941 by the Special Operations Executive was aimed specifically at Albertas in the hopes that this misinformation would eventually reach Admiral Darlan. Cf. Eunan O’Halpin, “Hitler’s Irish hideout”, pp.201-216.
- <sup>127</sup> NA, DFA 205/124, Memo Walshe 5 November 1943, “Termination of M. Laforcade’s Tenure of Office”, pp.2 and 3.
- <sup>128</sup> Ibid, P.75. Memorandum prepared by G2, “French Legation – Political Attitude”. Dublin, 25 October 1943.
- <sup>129</sup> Ibid, 205/124, Memo Walshe 5 November 1943, “Termination of M. Laforcade’s Tenure of Office”,

- <sup>130</sup> Ibid, 205/124, Memo Walshe 5 November 1943, “Termination of M. Laforcade’s Tenure of Office”,
- <sup>131</sup> Ibid, P.75. Memorandum prepared by Walshe. Dublin, 28 November 1943.
- <sup>132</sup> Julian Jackson, *France the Dark Years, 1940-1944*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.447.
- <sup>133</sup> NA, DFA, SOF, A.2, Walshe to de Valera, “Position of the French Legation in Dublin”, p.2, 22 June 1944.
- <sup>134</sup> See Ibid, 205/124, “Attitude of Neutral European Governments to the French Committee in Algiers and Provincial Government Established in Paris”, 1943-45.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid, 205/124, Telegram from Walshe to Berne/Lisbon/Madrid.
- <sup>136</sup> Ibid, 205/124, O’Donovan. Lisbon, 15 October 1943.
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid, 205/124, Secret Memo Walshe “German Minister: recognition of French Committee”, 15 September 1943.
- <sup>138</sup> Ibid, 205/124, Memo Walshe, “Termination of M. Laforcade’s Tenure of Office”, p.3, 5 November 1943.
- <sup>139</sup> Ibid, p.1.
- <sup>140</sup> Ibid, p.2.
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid, 205/124, “Position of the French Legation in Dublin – Arrival of de Gaulle’s Emissary”, 22 June 1944.
- <sup>142</sup> Proclaimed on the 3 June.
- <sup>143</sup> Ibid, 205/124, “Position of the French Legation in Dublin – Arrival of de Gaulle’s Emissary”, 22 June 1944, p.1.
- <sup>144</sup> Ibidem, p.2.
- <sup>145</sup> Ibidem, p.3. The American Minister Gray would also extend the same courtesy to Lalouette. Cf. Ibidem, p.4.
- <sup>146</sup> Ibidem, p.1.
- <sup>147</sup> Ibidem, pp.2-3.
- <sup>148</sup> “The Republic has never ceased to exist. The *France libre* and *France combattante* movements, and the *Comité français de libération nationale* have always embodied it. Vichy was always nul and void and remains so. I myself am president of the government of the Republic. Why would I go and proclaim it?” Quoted in Jean Lacouture, *Charles de Gaulle, vol. I. Le rebelle 1890-1944*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1984, p.834.
- <sup>149</sup> From a legalistic, constitutional law point of view, Murphy should have been accepted by the GPRF as he had presented his credentials before the beginning of the Vichy regime.
- <sup>150</sup> NA, DFA, SOF, P.97, “Recognition of Monsieur de Laforcade as Minister of the new French Government in Dublin”, p.1.
- <sup>151</sup> Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Vatican had to replace their representatives.
- <sup>152</sup> NA, DFA, SOF, P.97, “Recognition of Monsieur de Laforcade as Minister of the new French Government in Dublin”, p.1.
- <sup>153</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>154</sup> Ibid, p.2.
- <sup>155</sup> Ibid, “Harold King, Reuter’s special correspondent. Paris 27 Sept 1944”.
- <sup>156</sup> Ibid, Hibernia (Paris) to Estero (Dublin) “Personal code telegram from Berne sent 4 Oct 1944 at 19h47”.
- <sup>157</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>158</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid, “Dearg Code Telegram sent on 9 October, 1944 at 20.15 hours - For Murphy”, Estero (Dublin) to Hibernia (Berne), telegram no. 103.
- <sup>160</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>161</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>162</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>163</sup> Ibid, p.2.
- <sup>164</sup> Ibid, “Letter from de Laforcade to de Valera”, 11 November 1944.

---

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, P.97, Murphy to Walsh, 17 November 1944, p.1.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, pp.1-2.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, Murphy to Walsh, 26 March 1944, p.1.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, pp.3-4

<sup>172</sup> When de Laforcade retired in late 1944, his successor Jean Rivière experienced what may have been tit-for-tat diplomacy, and was certainly not appreciated by Walshe. He was described as having “an immaturity of judgment and outlook” and putting “the attractions of snobbery and flattery before [his] country’s interests” by inviting to a tea party at the French Legation (reported in the *Irish Times* on 2 June 1945) “the most anti-Irish and the most collaborationist elements in the ascendancy class”. His wife had “already got the ascendancy bug so badly that that her opinions of the ordinary Irish have become assimilated to theirs”. Ibid, P.12, letter Walshe to Murphy, 7 June 1945. Relations would improve markedly when the first Ambassador to Ireland, Count Marie Joseph Antoine Stanislas Ostrorog, replaced Rivière in 1946. The Irish Legation in Paris also became an Embassy in 1950 (and Con Cremin its Ambassador) after the departure of Murphy.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 313/4. Confidential Reports Series. Murphy. Paris, 11 January 1946.