

9/11, Politics and International Relations in the (Fictional) Public Sphere

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Résumé: *Au-delà de l'emploi d'un réalisme historique et contextuel, souvent décrit comme la fin du postmodernisme, la littérature contemporaine favorise la construction des personnages ordinaires comme des représentations de la société civile. Dans une Europe politiquement unie et, en même temps, divisée par des notions redéfinies d'identité nationale et nationalisme, la littérature britannique prend d'opinions exprimées dans la sphère publique et les enrobe dans une couche extérieure de fictionnalité, contribuant ainsi à un véritable débat public dans lequel les écrivains contemporains considèrent qu'il est de leur devoir de participer. Ainsi, le présent article se propose d'analyser la façon dont la fiction devient une voix efficace dans la sphère publique, en mettant l'accent sur 9/11, un sujet d'intérêt dans le XXI^e siècle, et sur les réactions que cet événement a déclenché chez les personnes ordinaires. À cet effet, l'article compare les opinions exprimées dans les commentaires affichés sur les forums avec leurs homologues fictifs dans le roman «Dead Air» par Iain Banks (2002).*

Mots-clés: *société civile, sphère publique, les médias, politique, fiction*

The public sphere in the information age

The public sphere is, in democratic societies, more than a simple theoretical concept – it represents a polyphonic range of voices and identities expressing themselves on societal and political matters, and aiming at influencing the decision-makers and politics in general. The concept was defined by Jürgen Habermas in the 1960s, although its roots may be traced way back, to Aristotle's *Politics* and to his definition of the political community under the rule of the law, and to that of man (citizen) as *zoon politikon* [1999: 5]. The German contemporary philosopher asserts that the public sphere, whilst it should not be confused or equated with “the public” (with the individuals who make it up), represents “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is granted to all citizens” [1964/1974: 49]. Of course, the existence of a political-societal body which guarantees freedom of speech,

freedom of assembly, and the freedom to access and share opinions, no matter how violent or subversive they may turn out is *sine qua non*.

According to Habermas, the public sphere requires an effective communication vehicle, which, during the 1960s and the 1970s, was best represented, in his view, by the mass-media: "Today, newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere" [*Idem*]. In his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962), Habermas had already pointed out the practical aims of the original paradigm of the public sphere – the understanding of the social world, with a final goal in acquiring social change. Back in the eighteenth century, the point from where he sets out his analysis, the spaces of the public sphere were the cafés, the literary salons and the literary journals, all – fora for public debates on equal footing, not essentially different from the ancient agorae, and definitely very similar to the optimal space of the public sphere in the twenty-first century, that is the internet. It is clear, despite adverse opinions expressed at the beginning of the worldwide expansion of the internet (see Sparks 2001), that the new domain of the public space is nowadays, in the information age, the internet, which allows for a dialogical connexion between the participants in the public sphere.

The traditional media – newspapers, magazines, television and radio – still occupy a significant position as carriers of information to and from the public sphere, although, in the last few years, many of them have opted for publishing or broadcasting online, which provides them immediate feedback from all the societal ranks making up their audience. It is also true that their need for feedback is as old as the media – one should consider, for example, the letters to the editor.

Last but not least, literature still holds relevance in shaping (and in so doing, sometimes manipulating) the opinions of many, in outlining collective (and individual as part of the collective) identities and their voices, and in preserving the cultural memory by resorting, in many instances, to oppositions and to intertextual relations (the term *text* should be understood as a set of signs, as communication system, as whatever may be 'read'). It should not come as a surprise if a literary text establishes intertextual relations outside literature – neither is that so new a concept, anyway. Nonetheless, at the end of postmodernism, or beyond postmodernism (obviously, the demarcation cannot be clearly made, the opinions are divergent, but this is not the place for a debate on the continuation or the end of postmodernism), contemporary literature

favours ordinary characters as representations of the civil society, apart from forwarding a historical-contextual realism which places these characters in easily recognizable settings, and from facing questions of interest in the twenty-first century. A good case in point is the so-called post-9/11 fiction, a very recent category of fiction which features, to a smaller or greater extent, the events that took place on September 11, 2001 – the attacks on the World Trade Center.

9/11 in the eyes of Europe: a globalized identity against the menacing other

The present paper focuses on the reception of the 9/11 events at a European level, and on the way in which this reception is transposed into fiction. In a Europe politically united and yet, at the same time, divided by redefined notions of national identity and nationalism, British literature takes up opinions expressed in the public sphere and coats them in an outer layer of fictionality, only to contribute, this way, to a public debate in which contemporary writers feel that it is their duty to participate. The interest stirred by the American tragedy on the other side of the Atlantic is, in Habermas's view, also a consequence of globalization and the impact of the media:

The presence of cameras and of the media was also new, transforming the local event simultaneously into a global one and the whole world population into a benumbed witness. Perhaps September 11 could be called the first historic world event in the strictest sense: the impact, the explosion, the slow collapse—everything that was not Hollywood anymore but, rather, a gruesome reality, literally took place in front of the “universal eyewitness” of a global public. [Habermas in Borradori 2003: 31]

Of course, the discussion is much more complicated than this: it involves political decisions that have affected the world geopolitics starting with 2001. Europe's (and especially the United Kingdom's) direct involvement in the War on Terror against Afghanistan and then Iraq, the terrorist attacks that targeted European capitals (Madrid, in 2004, and London, in 2005) and, more recently, the expansion and constant threat of ISIS (The Islamic Front of Iraq and Syria), but also the consciousness of a shared identity and selfhood as Westerners (opposing the Muslim other) can never allow for the detachment specific to watching tragedies on television. In truth, the

attacks on the World Trade Center greatly affected the United States, but the whole Western world felt (and actually was) threatened. In the case of other disasters featured on television, people felt sorry and sympathized with the victims only to forget about them in minutes (or days, depending on the news coverage). For the sake of comparison, the 2011 earthquake in Japan produced 15,889 deaths, according to the National Police Agency of Japan (available online), whereas the attacks on the World Trade Center, in New York amounted to 2,973 deaths [*The 9/11 Commission Report*, 2004]. And yet, WTC triggered the most ardent reactions among people of all ranks, as well as the birth of a literary genre proven appealing to many important voices of contemporary literature. Thus, the attacks have remained inscribed in the Western cultural memory, in a collective unconscious that unifies the two sides of the Atlantic as powerfully as the internet and the fast transfer of information have already unified them.

9/11 on the internet: the fark.com forum – a case study

At the moment of the attacks on the World Trade Center, in 2001, the online forums and the e-mails were the most frequent ways of communication on the internet, which is the reason why the present analysis deals, in the new historicist spirit, with the non-literary to the same extent as it does with the literary; more precisely, it focuses on a forum attached to *Fark.com*, a news aggregator and an edited social networking news site. The forum provides 789 messages, posted in two threads, from 9:01 A.M. (roughly 15 minutes after the first crash into the Northern Tower) to 3:29 P.M. The number of messages may be considered representative for evaluating the opinions of the public sphere in the heat of the moment, and for constituting a starting point in our analysis of their fictional counterparts.

When dealing with information or opinions posted on the internet, mention should be made from the very beginning that a significant aspect is that of identity, which may be either hidden or forged. As the text samples below will show, the real identities of the posters are masked behind pseudonyms, which, indeed, may be regarded as annulling or reducing their accuracy and credibility. On the other hand, one could also consider this concealment of one's identity as contributing to the high degree of fictionalization which characterises the media, despite their claims of providing the truth.

At 9:01 A.M. EDT, forum user *sgamer*, claiming to hail from Arizona, opens a new thread, posting a link to a media story. The link is no longer valid, but, according to the next posters, it seems to have been to CNN.com, the website of the first news television to break the news about the attacks. Soon, an eye-witness with the username *Mme Meursault* intervenes: *"I've been in there. Holy living sh*t! Another one has flown into the other tower"*. The following few posts contain only exclamations of shock and awe, and a picture of the two towers covered in smoke. A British user provides a link to BBC, claiming that they have more information than CNN. The public debate seems to get constructed with the users not paying attention to the previous entries: more and more people appear only to give identical information over and over again. What is interesting is that they all refer to the media (television, mostly, at this point) as a source of information, as it appears that the news websites were down because of an internet hub placed exactly on one of the two towers.

People do not have a hard time realising what the two crashes represent. *Arcaist*, from Germany, who claims to be a student in politics and sociology, is the first to remark: *"*Two* planes crashes in *both* of the buildings? What's that, a terrorist attack??"* As soon as President Bush makes his first statement, announcing that the crashes seem to be an "apparent terrorist attack", and that he is "going to conduct a full-scale investigation, and hunt down and find those folks who committed this act", the participants in the debate find resources to make jokes on the matter: *"This just in. Terrorists now to be referred as folks"*. Soon, the people expressing their views on the internet start asking for revenge. Chris Bailey, from Atlanta, GA, who posts under the username *Grumman*, makes the assumption, later confirmed, that Osama Bin Laden was behind the terrorist operation: *"Bin Laden... again... I would guess. I am infuriated"*, while Jae from Philadelphia (*'bloodypulp'*) anticipates the solution eventually adopted, only at the price of years and years of war: *"can't we just find and kill that bastard?"*, and Charlie Brown makes a reference to another dramatic event in the recent history of the United States: *"This is our Pearl Harbour. Gloves are off now"*. The explicit threat that the Americans would retaliate the way they did back in 1945, with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, brings forth new discussions about getting all the facts together before acting. Another user refers intertextually to Roosevelt's speech after Pearl Harbour, *"a day that will live in infamy"*. All these references to this tragic moment in the history of the United States indicate the amount of shock that shook America on September 11, 2001. However, every now and

then, a foreign user intervenes to suggest that the Americans have their share of guilt in the occurrence of such unfortunate events. For example, K. from West Jerusalem, Israel, states that a terrorist act may have a positive side as long as it reduces the violence in a world in which thirty million people die every year of starvation, slavery and war, *"all funded by the dark side of globalism"*. While his statements are not denied, the Americans only want to rant at this point; this is the reason why the only answer he gets is: *"K - back off for now - Let us be pissed for a while. We'll get more rational later. You live in a different world than most of us. The problem I think is extremists/ fundamentalists/ fanatics of whatever political persuasion. If your country could control your extremists and have some respect for other peoples basic rights, I think we would all be better off. The same for Ireland, Bosnia, Uganda, and here..."*

Chris from Ohio (Wally the Cat) is the only American to observe, lucidly and realistically, that people are usually indifferent to other peoples' tragedies: *"Why is anyone surprised? We can go off and bomb whoever we want but when someone has the nerve to attack us.... It's all-out WAR! No one seems to mind that there hasn't been a war on American soil since the civil war, yet all the other wars in all the other countries just gets a shrug and are dismissed entirely.... Innocent people are killed all the time. It's just happening to us this time. Get over it"*. It seems sooner an opinion of a European than that of an American, but, since this is his assumed identity and there is no way to verify the truth of his statement, one can end up accepting that the attacks might not have been as infuriating as advertised, even on the territory of the United States.

As already mentioned, there are more than 700 posts on this forum, and very little actual dialogue among the users, which points in the direction of the alienation actually imposed by the new communication forms, in the social(izing) online media. The American public sphere just needs, at this point, to express their rage, whereas the incidental inputs coming from users of other nationalities show interest in the matter, but not so much sympathy for the American people. This shows, on the one hand, that the debate stirred in the public sphere is not exactly of the conversationalist or argumentative type, and, on the other hand, that, whilst acknowledging the terrorists as *the other* for the Westerner self, America has positioned itself as the (superior) Other in its relation to other nations. In what follows, the paper will attempt to trace the way in which the fictional representations of ordinary people react to the same event, on both sides of the Atlantic, using Iain Banks's novel *Dead Air* as a representative case study.

British 9/11 fiction: a mediated, distant approach to tragedy

As already stated, the new literary genre risen from “a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night”, as Don De Lillo beautifully puts it [2007: 3], has attracted many important figures of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries literature, who felt an urge to incorporate the events of 9/11 into their fiction. If the American writers employ a great amount of subjectivity, trauma and painful imagery, both in the case of famous figures, like Pynchon, Roth, Updike or De Lillo, and in that of younger novelists, like Jonathan Safran Foer, with his touching and depressing *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, with a nine-year boy who lost his father in the attacks as narrator, or Alicia Torres’s graphic novel in black and white, *American Widow* (2008), the British cultural stage adopts a much more detached stance, aiming sooner to encompass the political bigger picture than to represent traumatised individuals in the aftermath of September 11. Much emphasis is also laid on the role of the media in providing information regarding the attacks and the wars that followed.

One of the earliest attempts to catch the exact moments of the attacks on the World Trade Center in fiction belongs to Scottish novelist Iain Banks. Published in 2002 with the title *Dead Air*, the novel sets out in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, when the news of the attacks in America comes via SMS, then on television. The events in New York are only partly dealt with in the novel, which mainly focuses on unrelated issues. 9/11 is just a turning point in the world politics paradigm – it is “the talk of the town” for some time, for sure, but it soon remains in the background, as a reminder that things have changed. The protagonist, Ken Nott (~ cannot), a controversial figure of London’s mass-media, is constructed as a realistic representation of the European who, having access to information, is less ready to mourn alongside with the Americans for the death of the 3,000 people at the World Trade Center, Pentagon and on the plane crashed in Pennsylvania. He feels entitled, as a political journalist, to comment upon political decisions made at the highest level, to cast the blame on the American administration for the tragedy that hit their country, and even to openly oppose Great Britain’s involvement in the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. The latter was just emerging as a political issue in the years 2001-2, and it needed a politically engaged novelist like Banks to bring it to the fore so early. A much more detailed fictional account of the matter will be found later, in *Saturday*, a novel

published in 2005 by a much more famous British (of Scottish origin) novelist, namely Ian McEwan.

Dead Air has not received much attention from literary criticism – neither has the entire catalogue of Banks’s works, with a few notable exceptions concerning especially his science-fiction series *Culture*, or his astonishing debut, the horror novel *The Wasp Factory* (1984). Perhaps the most problematic issue in critically approaching *Dead Air* is to ponder whether one should consider it flawed, hasted, unbalanced in points of plot, character construction and flow of ideas – a failed literary enterprise, in just a few words, or regard it as an inquiry into the changes in the political paradigm after 9/11, against the background of an unconvincing thriller, changes that have not actually effected any radical transformations at the identitary level. The narrative construction, which places the events in New York in the incipit, only to abandon them for the most part of the development of the plot, seems to suggest a simple philosophy of the “life goes on” type, in keeping with the initial assumption that British literature tends to treat the 9/11 events more lightly and in a more detached manner than their American confreres.

Banks’s novel, as many other pieces of contemporary literature, “processes the cultural reality of today [and] carries the traces of identity/ politics, high technology, economy of reproduction, media capitalism [...], being a powerful medium of communication, much like the other consecrated media” [Praisler 2007: 463], in a metaliterary rapport with the nature of the world “as one made of story-tellers and their story-telling” [*Idem* 462]. Perhaps this is the reason why the protagonist of the novel is a journalist, more precisely, a “shock jock” – one “paid to be controversial or just plain rude” [Banks 2002: 88], who is capable of discussing sensitive political issues, chief among, of course, the attacks on the World Trade Center, and who is likely to trigger reactions, with his sarcastic commentaries. One may actually assert that Ken Nott, beyond its insufferable character and his never-ending sexual and alcoholic engagements, is constructed as a perfect embodiment of a public sphere representative.

In the same spirit of cultural realism, the language at work in *Dead Air* is “oriented towards successfully reproducing verbal spontaneity” [*idem*: 457], that is to say, it is as banal, informal, and unsophisticated as one could hear ordinary people speak at any given moments in the street or on virtual forums, like the one described in the preceding section. Having thus forewarned the reader with regard to the occurrence of informal language

and even of some profanities in the samples quoted further, it would be high time one looked into what the fictional British public sphere had to say about the events on 9/11.

The novel sets out at a wedding party held in an exquisite apartment, expensively minimalist, Manhattan style, whose just married owners are to spend their honeymoon in New York, starting with the following day. This seems to be a subtle critique at the Americanization at the heart of England, apparently, only as a result of the electoral fraud that helped George W. Bush win the elections and accede to the White House. Jo, Ken's official girlfriend ('official' because there are other women in his life), complains that he is not willing to visit America:

I shrugged. 'I was thinking I might wait until democracy had been restored.' Kulwinder snorted. 'You really don't like Dubya, do you?'
'No, I don't, but that's not the point. I have this old-fashioned belief that if you lose the race you shouldn't be given the prize. Getting it handed to you because of electoral roll manipulation, the police in your brother's state stopping the black folks from voting, a right-wing mob storming a counting station and the Supreme Court being stuffed with Republican fucks is called... gosh, what's the technical term? Oh, yeah, a **coup d'état**.' [Banks 2002: 7]

The statement above summarizes accurately the controversial moments in the United States elections at the end of the year 2000, and makes use of a particularly blunt, undiplomatic term, *coup d'état*, which is rather in use either after the dust of history has laid in thick layers on the event, or in reference to some remote dictators of less developed countries. The argument that the President of the United States, the most powerful man on Earth and the champion of democracy, as American propaganda runs, came in power by resorting to dishonest measures, with the support and approval of the Supreme Court, is one that governs all the political remarks that the character – whose construction does not even try to divert from the opinions expressed by the author in the media – will make each and every time in reference to America. Later in the novel, in a cross-cultural dialogue with an American visiting London, Ken Nott further emphasises that he has a problem with "anybody who voted for the man claiming to be [their] president" [70], and openly asserts that the attacks on the World Trade Center were triggered by the mingling of the American and Israeli administrations in the Middle East affairs:

...to them it's every corrupt, undemocratic regime the United States has poured money and arms into since the last war, propping up dictators because they're sitting on a desert full of oil and helping them crush dissent; it's the infidel occupying their holy places and it's the unending oppression of the Palestinians by **America's fifty-first state**. That's the way they see it.' [71]

To return to the initial moment of the attacks, the news of which ends the first chapter, and most probably the party, the time and date is artfully introduced together with a hint at the communication breakdown which the tools for fast communication actually bring with them. Everyone's mobile phone starts ringing, as if "for some bizarre reason everybody [...] had set alarms for a little after two o'clock on a Tuesday in September" [23]. The fragments of conversation give the now-aware reader a glimpse of what the characters had just found out, but, in the economy of the text, they seem to be intended to show confusion, much in the way it actually happened after the attacks, as the samples selected from the online forum have already shown:

'Yo, Phil,' I said. Amy answered her call too.
'What?'
'What?'
'New York?'
'The what?'
'Where?'
'The World Trade Center? Isn't that -?'
'A plane? What, a big plane, like a Jumbo or something?'
'You mean, like, the two big, um, skyscrapers?' [23]

Just like in the real world – which points once again in the direction of an assumed realism – the actual information comes from that one-directional means of communication that is television, as the closing sentence in the chapter is: "Yeah, yeah, I'll put the TV on..." [*ibid.*]. The next chapter is set some days after the event, in full force of rage against the terrorist perpetrators. Once again, let us compare the rhetorical question of the forum user bloodypulp "*can't we just find and kill that bastard?*" (fark.com) with the more elaborated advice Ken Nott gives on air to the "American cousins": "If you do find and kill Bin Laden, assuming that he is the piece of scum behind this, or even if you just find his body... wrap him in pigskin and bury it under Fort Knox. I can even tell you how deep: thirteen

hundred and fifty feet. That's one hundred and ten storeys" [30]. It is obvious that the depth proposed for burying the Al-Qaida leader is approximately equal to the height of the two collapsed twin towers. However, despite his overt disapproval of the act, Ken Nott is not ready to accept the syntagm "an attack on democracy". He clearly sees American democracy only as long as Democrats are in power: "what happened last week wasn't an attack on democracy; if it was they'd had crashed a plane into Al Gore's house" [*ibid.*].

One may extract more of Ken Nott's statements to make a point, but this would be unnecessary, as they all point in the same direction, in what 9/11 is concerned: the terrorists should be punished, yet not by resorting to a war against the entire region from where they came, but America is almost as guilty as the perpetrators themselves of the death of the three thousand innocent people. His fellow characters are not endowed with much 'character' of their own, and seem to have been constructed just to ensure the barely disguised authorial voice plenty of conversation partners for his political rants. However, one may note Phil's (Ken's colleague at the radio) opinion on the matter, which has since proven perfectly accurate: "Major rethink on format after the events of September the eleventh." [...] 'What a brilliant excuse that's turned out to be, for so many things!'" [*Idem*: 128]. Whilst the character refers in the first sentence only to the media, it is clear, judging by the second sentence (and by looking around, but this goes without saying), that 9/11 had such an impact on the entire western world, that, despite the little empathy the Europeans felt for the Americans, their collective identity was also altered by the changes effected by the violent process of 'reinstating democracy in the Middle East', also known as the 'War on Terror'.

To conclude, this paper has attempted to bridge reality with one of its many fictional counterparts, by making reference to the opinions expressed in the public sphere with regard to the most famous historical event of the twenty-first century (up to date), the attacks on the World Trade Center, in New York, on September 11, 2001, and also to the way in which an alternative public sphere, this time, a fictional one, understood and commented on the same real event, under the major influence of the media (whether fictionalized or not). The events of 9/11 entered the realm of simulacra and representation as soon as the first piece of information on them reached the media and have remained there for an indefinite period of time, but, at the same time, they effected changes in the reality plan,

which may be felt at the level of cultural, collective identity and memory of the two parties involved: the former Eastern aggressors (and later victims of the devastating wars on terror) and the former Western victims (and later aggressors).

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The refreshment of the international peace myth: the Pact of Paris

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Abstract: *In 1928, in Paris, it will be signed a pact of prohibition of war as a solution to solve all conflicts between different states, known in history as the Briand Kellogg Pact. Thought by the French Foreign Affairs Minister, Aristide Briand, as a bilateral French-American pact, the trait became multilateral as a consequence of American Secretary of State's position, Frank Kellogg, who did not want to connect USA to the French problem concerning border security after the First World War. This pact is infringed for the first time after only three years and proved it's inefficiency due to the lack of juridical instruments in order to be applicable.*

Keywords: *war, pact, Briand-Kellog, security, disarmament*

At the end of World War I, the system of peace treaties failed to solve the big problems the contemporary world was facing. The Covenant of the League of Nations was formulated in the Preamble to the Peace Treaty of Versailles, whose aim was to ensure world peace. Under Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, members of this body recognize that peace-keeping requires downsizing army to a minimum consistent with national security and to the international obligations imposed by joint action¹.

Fierce battles on diplomatic realm during the peace negotiations were fought for the chapter on "arrangements to ensure the safety of France". During the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, the chair of Marshal Foch remained empty. The old soldier has not agreed to the treaty, as: "it does not give to France its guarantees of security". Moreover, Marshall said categorically: "This is not a peace. It is an armistice for 20 years!"²

For French people, the idea about the formation of a security system in Europe was very important. The politicians from Hexagon, along with the efforts of obtaining the greatest possible benefit from the defeat of Germany, have consistently followed a close cooperation with the United States and Britain. Winning in Europe the dispute with its eternal rival, France was out of dependence on Germany, but the dependence on "German problem" still remained in place³.

As the Conference held in Cannes from 1921-1922, the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, adopted in 1924 by Geneva forum, or the Locarno Pacts failed to provide more certainties to Paris policy for security increasing, it became clear that the Hexagon had to change its policy.

On 6 April 1927, the French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, appealed to the American people proposing the conclusion of an agreement between France and the United States to outlaw war. Briand continued his attempts to ensure security for France. He counted on a reality getting more and more obvious over the Ocean: the tendencies of U.S.A. to abandon the isolationism and promote a global policy. The leaders of this movement were James Shotwell and Nicholas Murray Butler.

During 1926, both Butler and Shotwell had discussions with Briand, advising him to apply directly to the American people, with the proposal to remove the conclusion of the pact outlawing war. Briand accepted this suggestion, wanting to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, to strengthen the French position with the "American Shield" on the other hand, to reduce the frictions between the two countries.

Dissatisfied with Briand's attitude, since he appealed to the American people and not to officials in Washington, President Coolidge and Secretary of State Kellogg initially did not consider the French proposal. American political leaders believed that Paris gesture lacked of fair play. Briand's message was received coldly by the White House and American newspapers did not give any importance to the French proposal⁴.

Only on April 25th, New York Times published a letter of Nicholas Murray Butler, representing the starting point in the campaign which will lead to the signing of the treaty. Butler said in the New Yorker paper: "Briand's reasoning is perfectly practical, he is only asking if the U.S. Government intends to adhere to the League of Nations, and did not ask us if we intend to adhere to the Treaty of Locarno or if we agree to the Statute of the International Court of Justice. All we are asked is whether the American people express their desire that, in no case to resort to war in political relations with France"⁵.

Taking advantage of the moment, the French Foreign Ministry put forward his proposal to U.S. Government for a "Treaty of Eternal Friendship". But the Secretary of State Kellogg was however of the opinion that Briand's proposal would embarrass the American mentality if a war fought by France. The State Department was put in a delicate situation: if the treaty would not accepted, the American public opinion favorable to

pacifism would be discontented, while the approval of the treaty would imply the risk of U.S. involvement in European conflicts. If Kellogg and U.S. Chief Executive were reticent at first against the French message, in June 1927, U.S. Government's vision began to change.

On December 28, 1927, the Secretary of State Kellogg proposed the conclusion of a multilateral, not one bilateral for war outlawing, with the participation of other countries. On January 5th, 1928, the French government sent a note to the U.S. Secretary of State, comprising the consent of Paris for Briand's project to undergo accession by all States willing, considering, however, that the pact would have a greater importance if France and the U.S. would sign it first. Briand's Note alerted the U.S. State Department. There was the concern that, through this project, France would link the United States to the League of Nations and Locarno.

On January 21th, 1928, Washington received another French telegram. Briand reminded Kellogg of the existence of the Covenant of the League of Nations and its resolution, prohibiting wars of aggression. The French Minister said that France, as a member of the League of Nations could not absolutely renounce of war, provided by League status as sanction in certain cases. Consequently, Briand proposed the U.S. government a Treaty meant to condemn war, according to the resolution adopted by the League of Nations

A new American answer was sent to Paris on February 27th, 1928. In this letter, the Secretary of State Kellogg insists again on the idea of unconditional abolition of all wars, and at the end of the note, he returned to the previous proposal by which France and U.S. pledged to inform the British, Italian, German and Japanese governments about the original text proposed by Briand, as well as the correspondence between France and the U.S., as a preliminary basis for discussion. Kellogg pointed out that, after the multilateral treaty, the United States could enter into a bilateral treaty with France.

Cavalcade of diplomatic notes continued. On March 31st, 1928, Kellogg received a new message from Paris. In the note, after specifying again the reasons for which the U.S. proposals could not be accepted unreservedly, the recognition of the legitimacy of defensive war is called again.

On April 13th, 1928 U.S. treaty draft was publicly released and sent to the governments of Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Japan. U.S. draft treaty contains three articles and a preamble. The first two articles repeated the formula proposed by Briand Pact. The Article 3, introduced by Kellogg,

sought to make the ratification by each State in accordance with its Constitution. In turn, France proposed a draft treaty which contained six articles. The difference between the two parties gravitated around the Statute League of Nations.

Meanwhile, the idea of a pact prohibiting war catches on. In a speech in Houston, Texas, U.S. President Coolidge said: "If this pact would exist in 1914, the war would not occurred!"⁶. On April 28th, 1928, Kellogg declared that the United States believes that the right of self-defense is inalienable. But this principle was highly interpretable. Thus, under the protection of a "Monroe Doctrine" acclimatized in Europe, Britain could make war against regions of the world where its interests were endangered. In turn, the United States could wage war on the American continent, and its intervention should not be considered as coming from an aggressor country under the protection of "Monroe doctrine". Proving that "Monroe doctrine" was on the top of principles of American foreign policy, during the negotiations of last details of the pact, the Marines occupied Nicaragua, while retaliatory actions took place in Honduras⁷.

On August 18th, 1928, the U.S. Secretary of State embarked from the port of New York for Cherbourg, to participate at anti-war pact signing. Frank Kellogg went to Europe on board of "Ille de France". A note published in the "New York Times" generated curiosity. For the first time after Wilson, a leading American political walks in Europe. Destination: Paris. Purpose: signing the Pact Outlawing War. It is understandable why the public was waiting with baited breath news from this unusual event. And the long-awaited day has come...

Versailles Clock Hall...

"In front of the famous clock, the Vergennes's desk, where all negotiations were signed since more than two centuries, was replaced with a small yellow wooden desk and on this desk was a virgin parchment. Three shots were heard and Briand went in, preceded by two halberdiers, like at a wedding. Behind him, there was an impressive procession of plenipotentiaries in black jackets"⁸.

The table was covered with a garnet cloth and was arranged in a horseshoe shape. Inside the table was the inkpot of Vergennes, the Foreign Minister of Louis XVI, serving for signing of the treaty between France and the U.S. represented by Benjamin Franklin, as well as the golden pen offered by the city of La Havre to Kellogg. Briand opened the meeting and read out the only speech that was delivered. At the beginning, the French

Minister referred to the importance of the pact, which was, he said, "once in the human history."

Briand made a harsh indictment of war, adding: "The peace proclaimed is good, very good. But it should be organized. The solutions of force should be substituted by legal solutions. This is the work of tomorrow"⁹.

The treaty has a preamble and three articles and remains in history as the Pact of Paris or the Kellogg-Briand Pact, stipulating that that:

The President of the German Reich, the President of the United States of America, His Majesty - the King of Belgium, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Overseas Territories and Emperor of India, His Majesty - the King of Poland, the President of the Czechoslovak Republic.

Deeply sensible of their solemn duty to promote the welfare of mankind;

Persuaded that the time has come when a frank renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy should be made to the end that the peaceful and friendly relations now existing between their peoples may be perpetuated;

Convinced that all changes in their relations with one another should be sought only by pacific means and be the result of a peaceful and orderly process, and that any signatory Power which shall hereafter seek to promote its national interests by resort to war should be denied the benefits furnished by this Treaty;

Hopeful that, encouraged by their example, all the other nations of the world will join in this humane endeavor and by adhering to the present Treaty as soon as it comes into force bring their peoples within the scope of its beneficent provisions, thus uniting the civilized nations of the world in a common renunciation of war as an instrument of their national policy;

Have decided to conclude a treaty and for that purpose have appointed as their respective plenipotentiaries (following their names) who, who, having communicated to one another their full powers found in good and due form have agreed upon the following articles:

Article I

The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.

Article II

The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.

Article III

The present Treaty shall be ratified by the High Contracting Parties named in the Preamble in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements, and shall take effect as between them as soon as all their several instruments of ratification shall have been deposited at Washington.

This Treaty shall, when it has come into effect as prescribed in the preceding paragraph, remain open as long as may be necessary for adherence by all the other Powers of the world. Every instrument evidencing the adherence of a Power shall be deposited at Washington and the Treaty shall immediately upon such deposit become effective as between the Power thus adhering and the other Powers parties hereto.

It shall be the duty of the Government of the United States to furnish each Government named in the Preamble and every Government subsequently adhering to this Treaty with a certified copy of the Treaty and of every instrument of ratification or adherence. It shall also be the duty of the Government of the United States telegraphically to notify such Governments immediately upon the deposit with it of each instrument of ratification or adherence.

The respective plenipotentiaries have signed this Treaty in the French and English languages both texts having equal force, and hereunto affix their seals. Done at Paris, August 27th, 1928. The pact was finally signed by:

I. States related to the stipulations of Pact of Paris,

a) Member states of the League of Nations: South Africa, Albania, Germany, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Spain, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Panama, the Netherlands, Peru, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Siam, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Venezuela, Yugoslavia. Total 48.

b) Non-member states the League of Nations: Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Free City of Danzig, Egypt, USA, Iceland, Mexico, Turkey, USSR. Total 9.

II. States not-related to the stipulations of Pact of Paris

a) Member states of the League of Nations: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay, Salvador, Uruguay

b) Non-member states the League of Nations: Brazil¹⁰.

Lucid analysts of the treaty limits spoke critically about Kellogg's electoral capital, economic interests of the United States, since investing huge amounts in various parts of the world, had the interest in not disturbing the peace, maintaining "Monroe Doctrine" as cornerstone foreign policy of Washington's and London. The most important gap in the Pact of Paris was the fact that it contained no provision for punishment of the aggressor, of those countries that violate the Treaty articles. Despite the solemn commitment to renounce the war, there were three cases in which war could be possible: self-defense, violation of the treaty by one of the parties in conflict and insufficient authority of the provisions relating to penalties.

The signing of Briand - Kellogg Pact must be ratified by the signatory countries. Article III of the Compact stated that the treaty will enter into force once all ratification instruments were to be submitted to Washington. At December 29th, 1928, the Commissioner for External Affairs of the people of the USSR government, Maksim Litvinov, handed to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, Patek, a note of the Soviet government proposing the implementation of the Pact of Paris before the ratification of the document by the two parliaments. In this protocol, known in history as the Moscow Protocol, several states joined.

The Assembly of the League of Nations adopted on September 24th, 1929, a resolution tending to review the Pact of this organization for putting it in line with the Pact of Paris. Quite fast, the Pact has proven to be a simple sheet of paper for the revisionist states. In 1931, Japan attacked and conquered Manchuria, a province located in northeastern China, and three other Chinese regions.

In early October 1935, the Italians occupied Ethiopia. In 1938, Germany annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia. The war against Poland represents the starting point of the Second World War. On September 17th, 1939, the Soviet Union also had broken the Briand-Kellogg Pact. The Red Army, according to a secret additional protocol concluded with Germany, crossed the Polish border for "ensuring the security of Ukrainian and Belarusian brothers." The violation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact continued. On November 30th, 1939, the Soviets attacked Finland and, after a hard

war, obtained the Karelian Isthmus and East Karelia according to the Peace of 12 March 1940.

The year 1940 is the year when the Briand-Kellogg Pact will be abolished in practical terms. USSR annexed the Baltic States, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, while Germany started raging at conquering Europe, and Italy tried to do the same in Greece. Kellogg-Briand Pact was dead, killed by its own weaknesses. The failure to be equipped with the tools necessary for the defense of peace made the pact to be extremely sensitive to manifestations of power in countries that do not accept the system of Versailles. Briand-Kellogg Pact, proclaiming general principles, without any legal, political, material support, could not be an effective instrument for consolidating peace. The revisionist states found that the doors for achieving their own interests were not closed. They had nothing against signing the Kellogg-Briand Pact, this fact representing a moral gesture that meant nothing in a world with very harsh realities.

Notes

- [1] M. N. Popa, *Primul război mondial*, Ed. Stiintifica si Enciclopedica, București, 1979, p. 456.
- [2] W. Churchill, *Al doilea război mondial*, vol.I, Saeculum I.O., București, 1996, p. 17.
- [3] J. Bainville, *Les conséquences politiques de la Paix*, Arthème Fayard et C-ie, Paris, 1920, p.56.
- [4] J. T. Shotwell, *Le Pacte de Paris*, Firmin-Didot et C-ie, Paris, 1930, p. 45.
- [5] Ibidem.
- [6] *Dimineața*, 18th of August 1928.
- [7] C. Balbareu, *Le pacte de Paris*, J. Gamber, Paris, 1929, p. 87.
- [8] G. Tabouis, *20 de ani de tensiune diplomatică*, Ed. Politică, București, 1965, p. 67.
- [9] A. Aubert, *Briand*, Etienne Chiron, Paris, 1928, p. 255.
- [10] *Monitorul Oficial al României*, no. 30/7th of February 1929.

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