

Call for Canada to Recognize Palestinian Statehood Is Both Ridiculous and Wrongheaded

By Conrad Black

The stampede in many Western countries to champion the Palestinian cause has been a thoroughly nauseating spectacle of misdirected righteousness, faddishness, and racist bigotry.

This past week, following the announcement that Ireland, Norway, and Spain proposed to recognize a yet-to-exist Palestinian state, Canada's New Democratic Party [proposed that this country do the same](#). This was just reflexive political opportunism by the NDP. It is a new variant on the cowardly Western practice of purporting to support both sides in a war of life and death that only one side can win.



The flags of Spain, Ireland, and Norway are displayed on the City Hall building in the West Bank city of Ramallah, after the three countries announced this week that they would recognize a Palestinian statehood, on May 24, 2024. (Mahmoud Illean/AP Photo)

Hamas, which governs Gaza by terror, and the now rather disabused but still oppressive Palestinian Authority that governs in the West Bank, could have had their Palestinian state any time in the last 25 years. But that would have required them to accept Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, which the Palestinian leadership promised to do [at Oslo in 1993](#) but has never done. It also would have required the reduction of the Palestinian leaders from among the most important political personalities in the world because of the strategic importance of the Middle East, to being merely leaders of another dusty little Middle Eastern country. The Palestinian leadership is divided and largely discredited, and even if they were disposed to have substantive discussions towards peace through a two-state solution, there is no serious party Palestinians could put forward at this time as a respectable interlocutor with the Israeli government.

There is no question that the motivation of the NDP is just to get on board with the demonstrative and energetic left: the vapid, belligerent sophomores cluttering our universities and stirred up by the hooligans who come up out of the sewers in times of public strife to amplify racism, violence, and chaos. Since the government of Canada—relaxed though its standards of integrity and responsible foreign policy are—cannot get under the covers with the authors of the gruesome Oct. 7 massacres, this is a method for the NDP to distinguish itself opposite the Liberals in the eyes of the depressingly large number of useful idiots who believe that this country should be supporting Hamas at this time.

For some reason, Ireland, a small and officially neutral country that has utilized its tax system to transform itself in 40 years from a backward nation to one enjoying one of the highest standards of living in the world, is very pro-Palestinian. The evolution of dynamically developing cities such as Toronto has often been breathtaking, but the metamorphosis of Dublin in the last 40 years is utterly astonishing. It is not a high-rise city, but it has become an elegant, stylish, modern, as well as a very prosperous city. To those who remember the grinding poverty of [Eamon De](#)

[Valera](#)'s Ireland (he was the only survivor of the leaders of the Easter Rebellion in 1916 and was prime minister, leader of the opposition, or president of Ireland from 1932 to 1973), to see the Republic now clean, modern, and rich, with a profusion of expensive cars on fine motorways, is an uplifting experience.

It is almost inexplicable that that country would become, as it has, one where polls indicate [approximately 80 percent](#) of the population of the Irish Republic believe that the Israelis are committing genocide. When Ireland was herself seeking independence, and then seeking to sever Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom and absorb it in the Republic, it frequently identified with the Jews fighting for the creation and the protection of their homeland in Israel. Now that Ireland is rich, it can afford the intellectual luxury of purporting to discern its own struggle for independence in the activities of any dissatisfied people. Ireland suffered a diminution of its population by 50 percent in the decade of the 1840s because of the potato famine, which was, to some extent, exacerbated by official British policy. It is reasonable that the Irish remember Cromwell's massacre of Irish independentists [at Drogheda in 1649](#) (almost 3,000 people killed) and other sanguinary encounters with British authority.

But by any reasonable comparison of the histories of the Irish, the Jewish, and the rather ambiguous and unorganized nationality of the Palestinians, the greatest similarity is between the struggles of the Irish and the Jews to have a country of their own, and now the very great success and prosperity of both countries, Israel's gained through constant combat with hostile and much larger neighbours. Of course, the current war in Gaza is entirely the result of an invasion and massacre of over 1,000 Israelis, most of them civilians and many small children, women, and the elderly. These were killings of the most savage and inhuman kind and might have been expected to appall the Irish, sentimental Christians as they are, and accustomed historically as they have been to a heavy-handed occupation, though nothing on quite the scale of barbarism as was inflicted on Israel on Oct. 7.

On the same day that Ireland declared that it recognized a Palestinian state, the same decision was taken by Norway and by Spain. Norway was, from time to time in its history, essentially a part of Denmark and of Sweden but has declared its independence quite peacefully at intervals, the last occasion being in 1905. It is now a sumptuously rich northern petro-state enjoying a standard of living comparable to Ireland, and it is not obvious what virtue it detects in Hamas. Norway endured Nazi occupation for five years and has no record of anti-Semitism. Its gesture is inexplicable, unless it simply supports all separatists because of its own experiences.

Spain has a history of frequently monstrous violence and oppression, having really only become a democracy in the last 50 years. It is grappling with a serious threat of secession from the state of Catalonia, adjacent to the southern end of its border with France. There is, again, no obvious link between Spain and Palestine. Even the fascistic government of [Gen. Franco](#) (1936–1975) had an excellent record of receiving Jewish fugitives from the Nazis, and it had many years of bitter warfare with the Arabs. It can only be assumed that for it to join Ireland and Norway in recognizing an uninformed and amorphous state of Palestine, is just a local pitch for the votes of the left and possibly an attempt to muddy the waters with the Catalonian separatists.

The Canadian NDP is fishing in deep waters. No one could accuse it of anti-Semitism; it has been popular in many Jewish districts and has had a number of distinguished Jewish leaders, particularly David and Stephen Lewis and Bob Rae (now a Liberal). In joining this fad of recognizing a Palestinian government—with no idea of who this government might be, where it might be located, or what borders Palestine might eventually aspire to occupy—is a ridiculous, meaningless, and irritating gesture. They aren't really recognizing anyone or anything, and they are enabling their opponents to colour them with the brush of the monstrous atrocities of Hamas. They may even succeed in giving some comfort to the Quebec separatists,

with whom they have played footsie many times before.

Considering everything that is involved, the NDP are children playing with high explosives, mindless of the fate that may await them or the damage they could do to this country. Fortunately, no one in the rest of the world will pay any attention to them.

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