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5/ Catholicism and anti-communism: the reactions of Irish intellectuals to revolutionary changes in Hungary (1918-1939)

Lili ZÁCH

Although far from the centres of conflict on the Continent, interwar Ireland was also exposed to the influence of extreme left and right-wing political movements. Overall, most Irish nationalists adopted an uncompromisingly anti-Communist stance and used the lack of political stability in East-Central Europe to emphasise the significance of Catholic values following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. The present paper examines the attitude of Irish intellectuals to extreme political changes in post-war Hungary. It also aims to highlight the complexity of the “red scare” and its legacy in relation to anti-Semitism and even the border question throughout the 1930s.

1. Introduction

In the early twentieth century, Ireland was in the process of becoming an independent small state which was inseparable from defining her relationship with the wider world. The successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, balancing between revolutionary turmoil and democracy, attracted considerable attention from Irish revolutionaries, scholars and journalists following the transformation of political order across Europe. This paper focuses on the evolutionary nature of Irish interest in Hungarian revolutionary activities throughout the interwar years in order to shed light on a lesser known impact of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, namely, the wider international impact of East-European events that transcended national borders. After providing insights into the theoretical background of Irish anti-Communism, this paper investigates Irish perceptions of the political transformation of post-war Hungary and highlights the central importance of the “red menace” in Irish political discourse. It then proceeds to discuss how the uncompromisingly anti-Communist stance of the Irish intelligentsia remained visible throughout the interwar years, and traces how the references to Hungarian revolutionary changes transformed in the 1930s, mirroring the Irish political context. The discussion also assesses the significance of Catholic ideas and it is emphasised that Catholicism was not merely the subject of Irish investigations.

2. Theoretical framework: Irish anti-Communism

As Emmet O'Connor (2014) has argued, the early days of independence have not been thoroughly researched with regards the extent of anti-Communism in Ireland. O'Connor emphasised the significance of the international climate, adding that scares primarily served the interests of the Catholic Church¹. Before O'Connor, it was Enda Delaney's «Anti-Communism in Mid-Twentieth-Century Ireland» (2011) that focused on the history of “red-scares”, concentrating on the campaigns of 1940s-1950s Catholic organisations². As far as interwar Ireland was concerned, although comments, actions and policies were not associated exclusively with the Catholic Church, admittedly, anti-Communism had an overwhelmingly religious character. Nevertheless, whether it was primarily a religious issue, a political issue, or a social issue, depended on the circumstances as it was associated with a variety of events, groups and parties.

Notably, there was a tendency among Irish authors not to differentiate between Socialism, Communism or Bolshevism and Labour. According to cultural historian Bryan Fanning, this may be explained by the fact that in independent Ireland «debates about socialism often remained abstract or theoretical» without touching on the Irish conditions³. However, more progressive members of the clergy such as Jesuit scholar and Catholic social thinker Father Lambert McKenna, for instance, deserve attention for distinguishing between extreme and moderate socialists as opposed to the majority of the clergy⁴. Furthermore, Fathers Finlay, Coffey, and MacCaffrey also stood out because of the impact of their European experience⁵. Since the policies of the Catholic Church in Ireland, including their stance on socialism and Communism, reflected international trends, Irish anti-Communism should be investigated within a wider the international context⁶. According to Joseph A. MacMahon (1981), in the early twentieth century, socialism was not perceived as a threat since Irish society was «too conservative and traditional for such change»⁷. Treating the problem of social inequality and labour issues appeared to be a concern only for the

¹ O'CONNOR, Emmet, «Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century Ireland», in *Twentieth Century Communism*, 6, 1/2014, pp. 59-81, pp. 59-60.

² DELANEY, Enda, «Anti-Communism in Mid-Twentieth-Century Ireland», in *English Historical Review*, CXXVI, 521, 4/2011, pp. 878-903.

³ FANNING, Bryan, *The Quest for Modern Ireland: The Battle of Ideas 1912-1986*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2008, p. 76.

⁴ MORLEY, Vincent, «McKenna, Lambert (Mac Cionnaith, Laimhbheartach)», in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (henceforth: DIB), URL: < <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5725> > [accessed on 10 December 2014]; MACMAHON, Joseph A., «The Catholic Clergy and the Social Question in Ireland, 1891-1916», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, LXX, 280, 4/1981, pp. 263-288, p. 275.

⁵ MACMAHON, Joseph A., *op. cit.*, p. 282.

⁶ O'CONNOR, Emmet, «Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century Ireland», *cit.*, p. 60.

⁷ MACMAHON, Joseph A., *op. cit.*, p. 284.

Irish left and initially they had initially no rival in the Catholic Church since the clergy rather focused their efforts in the field of charity⁸.

In independent Ireland, Catholicism came to symbolise more than the everyday religion of the majority of the population; it was a crucial element in the formulation of Irish self-identity. The idea that «Irishness became almost synonymous with catholicity [sic]» also manifested itself in Irish perceptions of revolutionary changes elsewhere in the wider world, including in the successors of Austria-Hungary⁹. Therefore, Irish commentators considered it to be important to highlight the fate of Catholics, the changes in church-state relations and most importantly, the impact of the Catholic faith on the national spirit of the successor states of Austria-Hungary. Catholicism in Central Europe was not merely the subject of Irish investigations; it was a lens through which Irish authors analysed the controversial questions of ethnicity and nationhood. Within the Irish discourse on nationalism and Catholicism, these were consistently compared with other small states in Central Europe, sharing the same struggles for independence and self-determination. Thus, the role of the Catholic Church in the formulation of «national character and identity» was unquestionable in independent Ireland¹⁰.

Within the Irish discourse on nationalism, Catholicism, and anti-Communism, questions of nationhood and the threats it faced were consistently compared with other small states in East-Central Europe, sharing the same struggles for independence and self-determination. The articles in the «Irish Independent», the «Irish Press», the «Cork Examiner», and the «Irish Times» did not greatly differ in their choices of topics about the successor states; the only contrast in the daily reports they received from Reuter or the Press Association was mostly the chosen headline for the articles. Given the ethos of the «Freeman's Journal» and «Irish Independent» (the latter, especially given its founder William Martin Murphy's attitude during the 1913 Lockout, the 1916 Easter Rising and the Irish War of independence, conservative nationalist Catholic interests were in the forefront of their reports, attacking workers organisations and republican interests alike¹¹. On the other hand, the «Irish Times» (after 1934 under Robert M. Smyllie's editorship) was characterised by an unequivocally anti-Fascist stance. Consequently, it was the target of anti-communist propaganda, especially during the Spanish Civil War as a result of reporter Lionel Fleming's "infuriating", anti-Franco coverage¹².

Similarly to the «Irish Independent», journals like «Studies» or the «Irish Monthly» presented Catholicism as the champion against both extreme right- and left-wing threats. Other periodicals

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 264, 277.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 279.

¹⁰ KEOGH, Dermot, «The Role of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland 1922-1995», in FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION, *Building Trust in Ireland*, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1996, pp. 105, 118.

¹¹ KEOGH, Dermot, «Clash of Titans: James Larkin and William Martin Murphy», in NEVIN, Donal (ed.), *James Larkin: Lion of the Fold*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, pp. 47-55, p. 55.

¹² COONEY, John, *John Charles McQuaid: ruler of Catholic Ireland*, Dublin, The O'Brien Press, 1999, p. 91.

associated with Catholic populism, such as the «Catholic Bulletin» or the «Irish Rosary» were even more extreme; their fears of the conspiracy of Communists, freemasons and Jews became a recurring theme in the 1930s and remained uncritical of their praise for fascism, especially Italian leader Benito Mussolini¹³. The «Irish Rosary», produced by Irish Dominicans focused on popular Catholic issues and claimed that the destruction of religion was the main aim of communists¹⁴. Even though the journal devoted significant attention to the communist threat throughout the 1930s, Hungary did not feature often and only came up in connection with cultural and religious-historical topics without actual political significance¹⁵. The “luridly anti-Protestant and anti-Semitic” «Catholic Bulletin», on the other hand, consistently addressed issues related to extreme political changes in Central Europe. Even though this outspoken monthly covered a great variety of topics including literature, history, religion, and social questions, and it declared that it was not primarily concerned with politics, it consistently published editorials and articles on communists, freemasons and Jews, especially in the 1930s¹⁶.

The Jesuit «Studies: an Irish Quarterly Review», in particular, illustrates accurately the role intellectual politics played in post-Independence and these scholars contributed to the shaping of modern Ireland¹⁷. Even though these were clearly directed towards a Catholic readership, their scope was remarkably wide, and their contributors represented a considerable part of the Irish intelligentsia in the interwar era. Without investigating them, it is not possible to gauge the impact of East-Central European events and ideas on Irish intellectual life. Due to the overt Catholic profile of such journals, contributors naturally included priests and well-known Catholic academics. Most of the articles mentioning the successor states of Austria-Hungary were written by Irish authors, but contributions from foreign authors were also included. We can still consider those important in constructing a unique image of East-Central Europe as seen by Irish intellectuals, as their articles were selected by Irish editors and presented to an Irish audience.

Most importantly, «Studies» was involved in discussing a wide range of issues that were inseparable from «nation-building projects in post-independence Ireland»¹⁸. Under the editorship of Timothy Corcoran (1912-1914) and then Patrick Connolly (1914-1950), the journal sought to

¹³ KEOGH, Dermot, «The Role of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland 1922-1995», cit., p. 119; PHELAN, Mark, *Irish Responses to Fascist Italy, 1919-1932*, PhD Thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2012, p. 76.

¹⁴ TREACY, Matt, *The Communist Party of Ireland 1921-2011*, Vol 1, 1921-1969, Dublin, Brocaire Books, 2012, p. 52.

¹⁵ WILLIAMSON, Robert T., «St. Stephen, King of Hungary», in the *Irish Rosary*, XXXV, 9, 1931, pp. 709-712; CLEARY, Michael P., «Our Lady of Győr», in *Irish Rosary*, XXXVII, 3, 1933, pp. 195-197; ANONYM, «Petoefi, National Poet of Hungary» in *Irish Rosary*, XLII, 5-6, 1938, pp. 459-464; «A Dominicaness in Headington», «The Lost of the Arpads'» in the *Irish Rosary*, XLIII, 11, 1939, pp. 865-866.

¹⁶ MURPHY, Brian, *The Catholic Bulletin and Republican Ireland with Special Reference to J. J. O'Kelly ('Sceilg')*, Belfast, Athol Books, 2005, p. 167.

¹⁷ FANNING, Bryan, *The Quest for Modern Ireland: The Battle of Ideas 1912-1986*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2008, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

educate readers on issues of the wider world as well. As for its authors, «Studies» «attracted contributors from the pinnacle of Irish Catholic academia», many of whom had connections with the Continent; therefore, they were well-informed regarding matters abroad¹⁹. Examining their analysis of revolutionary events in East-Central Europe reveals how complex the Irish perception of other small states was in the first half of the twentieth century.

3. Irish politics and revolutionary changes in Hungary, 1918-1919

In the immediate post-war period that was characterised by political changes, independence and the right to self-determination became common points of reference both in East-Central Europe and Ireland. In the light of Sinn Féin's election campaign for the General Election of December 1918, Irish awareness of the political changes of the wider world and the transformation of Habsburg Europe could not be questioned. Following the meeting of the First Dáil Éireann in January 1919, the leaders of the Irish Republic were in a difficult position since the great powers at Versailles refused to hear out Irish claims. Nevertheless, the Irish political leadership had an overall outward-looking attitude, illustrated by the early attempts at making contacts with other states, great and small. The leaders of the Irish Republic recognised the necessity of gaining external recognition of Irish sovereignty which «remained the goal by which true independence would be measured»²⁰. The President of the Executive Council, Éamon de Valera, was reported to seeking help, among others, from Soviet Russia as well, despite the British intelligence campaign to depict Sinn Féin as «bolshevist»²¹. Therefore, with the outbreak of the Irish War of Independence and the opening of the First Dáil Éireann in January 1919, the relationship between Ireland and Britain further deteriorated. When the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in December 1921, this marked the birth of the Irish Free State²². Afterwards, a split occurred in the Irish republican movement, which also had a far-reaching impact on the Irish left and how they were perceived in Ireland throughout the interwar years²³. Republican leader Frank

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 217.

²⁰ WALSH, Maurice, *The News from Ireland: Foreign Correspondents and the Irish Revolution*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2008, pp. 107-108.

²¹ O'CONNOR, Emmet, «Reds and the Green: Problems of the History and Historiography of Communism in Ireland», in *Science & Society*, LXI, 1, 1997, pp. 113-118, p. 116; O'CONNOR, Emmet, «Communists, Russia, and the IRA, 1920-1923», in *The Historical Journal*, XLVI, 1, 2003, pp. 115-131, p. 116; TREACY, Matt, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 7.

²² The Irish Free State, separate from Northern Ireland (established by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920), became a dominion within the British Empire, with legislative independence. The Treaty only provided a partial achievement and a full Republic was only declared decades later, gaining full formal sovereignty for twenty-six counties in 1949. See HOWE, Stephen, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 41; LYNCH, Robert, *Revolutionary Ireland, 1912-25*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, p. 1.

²³ Donal Ó Drisceoil has argued that for instance, in Peadar O'Donnell's politics, during the years 1918-1921,

Ryan, later «compared the Church's stance on the Spanish Civil War with its support for the Treatyites during the Irish Civil War»²⁴. It is noteworthy that certain left-wing personalities such as Peadar O'Donnell «played a central role in forging links between Republicans and the revolutionary left (both in Ireland and internationally)»²⁵. Labour and the Communist Party of Ireland took different stands with regards the Anglo-Irish Treaty that created the Irish Free State; Labour was «de facto backing» it, while the Communist Party openly rejected the Treaty. Therefore, the two left-wing parties became more divided upon political republican issues and not on social questions²⁶.

While Sinn Féin politicians put their efforts into gaining recognition for the independent Irish state after 1919, Irish nationalist intellectuals expressed a keen interest in the transformation of political order on the continent from a different angle. Regarding Central Europe, for instance, the main points of concern were the following: the revolutionary turmoil in the newly independent successor states of the Dual Monarchy; the controversial nature of the border settlements and territorial changes; and the impact of Catholicism on Irish perceptions. Importantly, it was the combination of these issues that characterised Catholic Irish nationalist opinion of Central Europe. While inseparable from the border question, the present paper focuses on the perceived communist threat in Hungary in order to illustrate the impact of Catholicism on Irish perceptions.

The last few months of 1918 saw the complete transformation of the multi-cultural Habsburg Central Europe, from a Dual Monarchy into a number of independent small states. Stephen Howe has argued that the struggle for Irish independence was comparable to Czechoslovakia and Hungary «attaining independence from alien rule»²⁷. Furthermore, he has claimed that comparing «experiences of conflict, secession and redrawing of boundaries across Europe and beyond» was worth investigating²⁸. From the end of October 1918, the Irish press provided much coverage of how the Austrian empire was broken up. The Irish dailies were aware of the fact that the now powerless Austrian Government could not stand in the way of Polish, Hungarian, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav independence²⁹. By 2 November 1918, the «Irish Independent»

«the energies and hopes of Irish republicanism and international communism co-existed». See Ó DRISCEOIL, Donal, *Peadar O'Donnell*, Cork, Cork University Press, 2001, p. 2.

²⁴ MCGARRY, Fearghal, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, Cork, Cork University Press, 1999, p. 94.

²⁵ O'CONNOR, Emmet, *A Labour History of Ireland, 1824-1960*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1992, p. 127; MCGARRY, Fearghal, «O'Donnell, Peadar», in *DIB*, URL:

< <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a6700> > [accessed on 9 February 2015]; KEOGH, Dermot, «The Role of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland 1922-1995», cit., p. 101.

²⁶ Ó DRISCEOIL, Donal, *Peadar O'Donnell*, cit., p. 23; MILOTTE, Mike, *Communism in Modern Ireland: The Pursuit of the Workers' Republic since 1916*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1984.

²⁷ HOWE, Stephen, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 232.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 237.

²⁹ «Austrian Empire Broken Up. Emperor's Manifesto. Four Separate States Decreed», in *Irish Independent*, 18

announced: «the disintegration of the Austrian Empire [might] be said to be complete»³⁰. Granting the independence of northern and southern Slavic people was a touchy subject for Irish nationalists, as their pleas for the same goal were rejected by the great powers late 1918/early 1919. The political turmoil in independent Hungary in the aftermath of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution was in the centre of Irish attention at the time. Reports, diplomatic accounts and journal articles focused on the revolutionary changes that were associated with events unfolding in the successor states of Austria-Hungary. When it came to socialist and Communist agitation in independent Hungary, in addition to the daily reports of the Irish press, the reflections of confessional Irish journals such as «Studies», the «Irish Monthly», the «Irish Ecclesiastical Record» and the «Catholic Bulletin», provided detailed analyses of political happenings in East-Central Europe.

Irish responses to the political transformation of Hungary reveal the complexity of political, ethnic and religious changes in the successor states. Overall, both the democratic Aster Revolution 28-31 October 1918 and the Communist takeover on 21 March 1919 gained the most publicity in Ireland. The reason given for this, in moderate and radical Catholic organs equally, was the increased threat of Communism, in the aftermath of the series of Russian revolutions in 1917. Even though Irish interest in this transformation was not limited to discussing the perceived threat of left-wing revolutionaries, still, Social Democrats and Communists were at the centre of Irish reports. Comparisons between how the Allies betrayed Ireland and Hungary regarding their promises for granting self-determination for all small nations, for instance, was a common point of reference. The aforementioned Lambert McKenna was one of the best-informed about the literature of revolutionary changes in Hungary³¹. He was a frequent contributor to «Studies» and the «Irish Monthly» (the latter he edited from 1922 until 1931) and an expert on left-wing developments and revolutions in Russia, Hungary, Bavaria and Mexico. When hoping for a fair post-war settlement, he was openly critical of Hungarians' trust for the Allies:

They fancied that, if they organised themselves as a thoroughly democratic state on a basis of universal secret suffrage and gave a due measure of autonomy to the Slav races within their borders, the Entente would believe that they had been dragged into the war by Austria and Germany; they expected that in accordance with Wilson's Fourteen Points their realm would be saved from mutilation³².

October 1918; «Break-Up of Austria», in *Freeman's Journal*, 18 October 1918.

³⁰ «Austria's Complete Break Up. Vienna-Budapest Revolutions. Count Tisza Killed. Bosnia Joins Serbia: New Austro-German State. Fleet Given to Jugo-Slavs», in *Irish Independent*, 2 November 1918.

³¹ McKenna's sources included Hungarian, German and French authors (Karl Huszár, Hans Eisele, Armand Lebrun, and Jerome Tharau).

³² MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XI, 44, 4/1922, pp. 541-558, p. 546.

In his article entitled «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», published in «Studies», McKenna provided further insights into a Catholic Irish interpretation of left-wing movements in East-Central Europe³³. It was visible from McKenna's remark that after October 1918, independent democratic Hungary's perception of itself differed greatly from that of the Entente's. Hungarian revolutionaries led by Mihály Károlyi considered themselves as a formerly oppressed, newly liberated nation, while the internationally accepted image of Hungary was that of the oppressor of non-Magyar nationalities due to the influence of British historian Robert William Seton-Watson³⁴. The new Hungarian administration's official manifesto, «To the peoples of the world», declared that the pacific and victorious Aster revolution in Hungary broke «the yoke by which it has been oppressed for centuries» and had transformed into a democratic and completely independent State³⁵. The new democratic Hungarian Government ultimately hoped that the territorial integrity of Hungary would be guaranteed by the great powers and later the League of Nations. This remained a central claim of Hungary throughout the interwar years³⁶.

Károlyi was a controversial character: progressive in terms of his ideas on land reform and democratic principles, however, at the same time, was also labelled the “Red Count”, interpreting his intentions as downright communist attempts³⁷. In spite of this, the Social Democratic government under his rule between October 1918 and March 1919 was not associated with Bolsheviks until 21 March 1919 when the Social Democrats announced on 21 March 1919 that they would unite with the Hungarian Communist Party, forming the United Workers' Party of Hungary (*Magyarországi Szocialista Párt*) and to form a new government known as the Revolutionary

³³ MORLEY, Vincent, «McKenna, Lambert (Mac Cionnaith, Laimhbheartach)», in *DIB*, URL: < <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5725> > [accessed on 10 December 2014]; MCKENNA, Lambert, «Character and Development of Post-War Socialism», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, IX, 34, 2/1920, pp. 177-194; MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolsheviks», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, X, 38, 2/1921, pp. 218-238; MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Munich», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XII, 47, 3/1923, pp. 361-377; MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Mexican Imbroglia», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XVII, 68, 4/1928, pp. 621-636.

³⁴ In articles published during the war years (1914-1918), there was generally a strong anti-Hungarian sentiment due the Irish writers' personal experience or the influence of pro-Slav British writers, such as historian Robert William Seton-Watson. Seton-Watson had an international reputation, 'widely recognised as a champion of the rights of Central and Eastern Europe's small nations'. Irish readers had access to his ideas and were influenced by his opinion on Habsburg Central Europe, which proved to have a lasting impact in the interwar years as well. See STEED, Henry Wickham, EVANS, R. J. W., «Watson, Robert William Seton- (1879-1951)», *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [henceforth: ODNB], URL: < <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36024> > [accessed on 4 June 2015]; PÉTER, László, «R. W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question of the Habsburg Monarchy and the European Balance of Power», in *Slavonic and East European Review*, LXXXII, 3/2004, pp. 655-679, p. 655.

³⁵ «Disintegration of Austria. Hungarian Statement to the World», in *Irish Independent*, 5 November 1918.

³⁶ WHITE, George W., *Nationalism and Territory: Constructing Group Identity in southeastern Europe*, Lanham (MD), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000, p. 77; «Disintegration of Austria. Hungarian Statement to the World», *Irish Independent*, 5 November 1918.

³⁷ MCKENNA, Lambert, «An Outlaw's Diary. Part I: The Revolution; Part II: The Commune by Cécile Tormay», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XII, 48, 4/1923, pp. 673-675.

Governing Council.³⁸ Contemporary Irish commentators did not seem to have paid close attention to the complexity of left-wing politics in Hungary; Károlyi's government in the end was considered to be a prelude to Béla Kun's reign of terror.

When the Bolsheviks overtook Károlyi's Hungarian Democratic Republic in March 1919, Irish newspapers and journals had been closely following the events in Budapest and formulated several theories as to why and how Communism managed to gain ground in the country. The rise of Bolshevism in Russia and in Hungary puzzled contemporary scholars across Europe, including McKenna. He noted that the population of Hungary was very conservative and religious in character, stressing that the agitation of the Social-Democrats caused less stir in the country than the nationality question³⁹. McKenna was among the few Irish commentators who made a distinction between the Social Democrats and the Bolsheviks. One of his contemporary Hungarian sources deserves attention in its own right; conservative right-wing Hungarian feminist Cécile Tormay's *An outlaw's diary* (1923), which provided a first-hand account of the Aster Revolution and the Bolshevik takeover in Hungary. Tormay, an acclaimed, Nobel-prize nominated author under Admiral Horthy's regime after 1920, was known for her liberal activism for women's rights, and has been an extremely controversial figure since the Second World War due to her openly anti-Semitic and Fascist views. Noticeably, McKenna was more fascinated by the subject of the diary rather than its writer. Possibly her Conservative and Catholic morals did not seem out of place for the Jesuit reviewer; or, McKenna's information on Tormay may have been limited to these volumes. Ultimately, it was Tormay's analysis of the "Hundred Days" of red terror that attracted McKenna's attention since it turned out to be «of the most terrible episodes in history»⁴⁰. McKenna was most impressed by *An Outlaw's Diary*, stressing that it was the «most enthralling form of history, a moving-picture which, without any philosophic explanations or discussions, tells its story and its lesson»⁴¹.

Irish newspaper editorials and journal articles often compared Kun's regime to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia⁴². McKenna claimed that «the drama of Budapest Bolshevism, though acted on a smaller stage, [was] darker than that of the Russian revolution»⁴³. Naturally, Catholic Irish commentators focused on the Bolshevik regime's anti-religious measures. According to the «Irish Independent», by May 1919 Béla Kun had begun

³⁸ HOENSCH, Jörg K., *A History of Modern Hungary 1867-1994*, London, Longman, 1996, p. 92.

³⁹ MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 541.

⁴⁰ MCKENNA, Lambert, «An Outlaw's Diary. Part I: The Revolution; Part II: The Commune by Cécile Tormay», cit.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 675.

⁴² MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 549; «Doctrinaires' Schemes», in *Freeman's Journal*, 9 August 1919.

⁴³ «Matters of Moment. Situation in Hungary», *Irish Independent*, 12 December 1922, p. 4; MCKENNA, Lambert, «An Outlaw's Diary. Part I: The Revolution; Part II: The Commune by Cécile Tormay», cit., p. 675.

a bitter persecution of the Religious Orders; 800 Red Guards are quartered in the Convent of the Sacred Heart. All prayers and religious institutions have been stopped in the schools and the Sisters of Mercy have been expelled from the hospitals. No priests or ministers of any denomination are pencilled to enter hospitals⁴⁴.

In the early 1920s, Irish partition coincided with the birth of new states in East-Central Europe as a result of the Versailles Peace Treaties after 1918. Although the Paris Peace Treaties were theoretically based on the principles of democracy and national self-determination, the transformation of the political system across Europe did not proceed without complications⁴⁵. After 1918, Irish commentators focused heavily on these newly drawn borders in East-Central Europe, including the redistribution of nationalities, which was considered to be a significant factor in the formulation of identities in the newly independent “nation-states”. The Communist threat and the antagonism between nationalities appeared inseparable; in other words, the newly independent and formerly oppressed neighbours of Hungary feared the spread of Bolshevism as well as the restoration of previous Hungarian control over their territories.

In Hungary, the insistence of Béla Kun’s Bolshevik Government on defending the borders of the historical Hungarian nation was very uncharacteristic of a Communist regime that was normally associated with internationalism. According to a *Reuters* telegram from Budapest, the Bolshevik Government declared that they were «determined to resist to the last drop of their blood all attempts by the Czecho-Slovak bourgeois and Rumanian clauses and annexationists to overthrow the Hungarian Workers’ Revolution»⁴⁶. Months before the Bolshevik takeover in March 1919, a military threat had already been visibly posed by the Czechoslovaks and Romanians. Therefore, explaining their attack with Communist headway in Hungary was not valid. Undoubtedly, both the neighbouring small states and the Entente viewed Kun’s regime with suspicion; in the summer of 1919, all Irish dailies recognised that there was only a faint possibility for fair peace terms.

By August 1919, the fall of the Kun administration and the general confusion that followed the pressure of the White Army and the advancement of Romanian troops, often featured in reports from Hungary. McKenna also produced a confused account of the Romanian advance on Budapest in August 1919. He emphasised - without naming his source, which made the validity of his claim look questionable - that Romanians were «welcomed by the populace of the capital with the wildest enthusiasm», despite his remark that, admittedly, «every Magyar, even the simplest

⁴⁴ «Fate of Budapest. Slaughter in Munich», in *Irish Independent*, 3 May 1919.

⁴⁵ SHARP, Alan, «Reflections on the Remaking of Europe 1815, 1919, 1945, post-1989: Some Comparative Reflections», in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, VIII, 1997, pp. 5-20, p. 18.

⁴⁶ «Bolshevist Peril Growing. Hungary now in the Throes», in *Irish Independent*, 25 March 1919.

peasant, had always conceived his country as an indivisible whole [...]»⁴⁷. Accounts of this kind of enthusiasm were contradicted by, among others, an anonymous author in the outspoken «Catholic Bulletin», who compared the actions of Romanians in Hungary to those of the communists, denouncing them for the aggression and deportations⁴⁸.

While the Irish press and Catholic intelligentsia tended to emphasise the significance of the “red threat”, the question of borders, was inseparable from these issues, as illustrated above. National boundaries turned out to be extremely controversial, especially after signing the treaties of St Germain and Trianon⁴⁹. Among Irish intellectuals, again, Lambert McKenna presented the most in-depth opinion of the Treaty of Trianon (although only using the generic term “Peace of Versailles”).

On the whole, the Trianon Peace Treaty, signed on 4 June 1920, went almost unnoticed in Irish journals. This reflects the difference in priorities in the transformed Hungarian state and in Ireland, the latter of which was in the middle of the Irish War of Independence at the time. The Irish papers reported that the Hungarian delegation, led by Count Albert Apponyi, turned down the terms handed to them on 15 January 1920⁵⁰. On 10 May, the «Irish Independent» published that the Hungarian Government refused to sign the Treaty. However, when another Hungarian delegation (led by Ágost Bernárd and Alfréd Drasche-Lázár) did eventually sign the final document of the Treaty on 4 June 1920, this was not covered in the Irish daily press⁵¹.

That being said, in the months running up to the Treaty of Trianon, a couple of reports about Hungarian insistence on restoring the historical borders of Hungary were indeed reported in Irish papers. The Hungarian Minister of War (former Prime Minister) István Friedrich, for instance, was reported to have declared, «I will not yield a single square kilometre of Hungary’s former territory»⁵². This mind-set remained present in the whole spectrum of Hungarian politics in the interwar period and was frequently referenced by Irish politicians, academics and journalists, within the context of the League of Nations and the Irish border question⁵³.

In comparison with the “red menace”, the white terror in Hungary aimed to serve justice on the former Bolshevik leaders. Moreover, as Robert Gerwarth pointed out, the white terror also

⁴⁷ MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 553.

⁴⁸ «Untitled», in *Catholic Bulletin*, IX, 1919, p. 635.

⁴⁹ For in-depth historical analyses of the Hungarian delegation at Trianon, see DEÁK, Ferenc, *Hungary at the Paris Peace Conference: The Diplomatic History of the Treaty of Trianon*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1942; ROMSICS, Ignác, *Dismantling of Hungary: The Peace Treaty of Trianon, 1920*, Boulder, Social Science Monographs, 2002.

⁵⁰ «News in Brief. Terms for Hungary», in *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 January 1920.

⁵¹ «Hungary’s Alternative», in *Freeman’s Journal*, 21 January 1920, and «Hungary Won’t Sign it», *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1920.

⁵² «Hungarian Ministers’ Militant Speech», in *Irish Independent*, 15 January 1920.

⁵³ ZÁCH, Lili, «Central European border settlements and interwar Ireland: a transnational study of the North-Eastern Boundary Bureau and the Boundary Commission», in *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino [Contributions to Contemporary History]*, LVII, 3, 2017, pp. 12-25.

«revealed much of the later chauvinist and racist mood» in Hungary, which was revived in the 1930s with the introduction of anti-Jewish measures⁵⁴.

Contemporary Irish sources differed in their interpretation of the news about the white terror, which received considerably less coverage than the communists. The «Freeman's Journal» argued, based on the information of Austrian socialists, that «nearly all persons of any importance to the Socialist movement in Hungary are being either murdered or imprisoned by "White" Terrorists»⁵⁵. However, in comparison with reports on the red scare, these articles were in a significant minority, as noted above. One of the few parallels between Hungary and Ireland in this regard was noticed by «Irish Times» journalist (editor after 1934) Robert M. Smyllie. He highlighted the threat the white terror on the Continent, adding that there was «a white terror nearer home. There is a white terror in Ireland, and I am amazed to find from statistics the enormous number of outrages which have been committed against the Irish people during the past few years», referring to the atrocities during the War of Independence⁵⁶. In contrast, although McKenna closely investigated the revolutionary years in Hungary, he did not go into details of the white terror, nor did he provide in-depth comparison with the red terror in post-independence Hungary. He was convinced that «the undeniable and indefensible severity» of the white terror was, «of course, wildly exaggerated in the International Jewish press» and claimed that Communists were still occupying prominent positions in Budapest⁵⁷.

Despite historian J. J. Lee's claim that in interwar Ireland there was no Jewish question, the writings of the Catholic Irish intelligentsia demonstrate that the controversial status of the Jewry on the Continent had featured in political and cultural discussions in Ireland well before anti-Semitism in National Socialist Germany became embedded in the political discourse of the interwar period⁵⁸. And even though anti-communism was more vital to right-wing politics in Ireland than anti-Semitism, as Terence Brown suggested, the latter still «formed part of a broader xenophobia characteristic of an extreme Irish Ireland mentality»⁵⁹.

As far as anti-Semitism in Central Europe was concerned, historian István Deák emphasised that «the ultimate victims of the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy have undoubtedly been the Jews»⁶⁰. The position of Jews in the successor states of Austria-Hungary was debated more in

⁵⁴ GERWARTH, Robert, «Fighting the Red Beast: Counter-Revolutionary Violence in the Defeated States of Central Europe», in GERWARTH, Robert, HORNE, John (eds.), *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 68.

⁵⁵ «"White" Terror's Work», in *Freeman's Journal*, 19 January 1920.

⁵⁶ «The People's Will», in *Freeman's Journal*, 14 July, 1920.

⁵⁷ MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XI, 44, 4/1922, p. 555.

⁵⁸ LEE, Joseph J., *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 78.

⁵⁹ BROWN, Terence, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922 to the Present*, Ithaca - London, Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 252.

⁶⁰ DEÁK, István, *The Habsburg Empire*, in BARKEY, Karen and HAGEN, Mark von (eds.), *After Empire: Multiethnic*

Irish newspapers and journals after 1918 than during the days of the Dual Monarchy. Among Irish contemporaries, Lambert McKenna provided the most accurate explanation for the changed perception of Jews in the territory of the former Habsburg Central Europe. He highlighted that the situation of Jews in Hungary before 1848 was more favourable than in the surrounding countries. By 1914, McKenna argued, the Hungarian middle class was mostly Jewish⁶¹. The increasing Irish interest may be explained with the association of Jews with the emerging “red menace”. Many leaders of the Hungarian Bolsheviks were Jews: for instance, Irish papers also referred to Béla Kun as «Cohen» and «Kuhn»⁶². The latter was mentioned in the *Freeman's Journal* on 26 May 1920, quoting *Bilder aus dem kommunistischen Ungarn* (1920) [Pictures from Communist Hungary] by Dr Hans Eisele, newspaper editor and first-hand witness of Bolshevik rule⁶³.

In his aforementioned analysis in «Studies», Lambert McKenna emphasised that after the revolution, Hungarians blamed the Jews for the rise of socialism in the country; nevertheless, the author, in a balanced tone, stressed that actually it was the Jews who «suffered proportionately more than any other race from Béla Kun's wild experiment»⁶⁴. Jesuit writer James MacCaffrey also provided a connection between religion and Communism, attempting to suggest a possible way to stop the spread of extreme left-wing movements. In his forward-looking article, he claimed that the real remedy to ‘cure’ Bolshevism was to unite church and state⁶⁵. He was convinced that social anarchy was a possible threat to religion, the state and social order⁶⁶. Moreover, McKenna noted that in Hungary, despite the stabilisation of political power, anti-Jewish feelings deepened. This was also illustrated by, for instance, the establishment of the aggressive nationalist anti-Semitic group called “League of Awakening Hungarians”. The association was banned by the Bethlen Government in 1923; nonetheless, it remained a significant ideological force throughout the

Societies and Nation-Building. The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires, Bolder, Westview Press, 1997, pp. 129-141, p. 137.

⁶¹ MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 543.

⁶² «Doctrinaires' Schemes», in *Freeman's Journal*, 9 August 1919; «In Hungary. First Authentic Account», in *Freeman's Journal*, 26 May 1920.

⁶³ The Dr Eisele in question here is not identical with the SS concentration camp doctor and war criminal, known for his experiments on internees.

⁶⁴ MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 541.

⁶⁵ Theologian and historian Monsignor James MacCaffrey was Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, and on occasion also contributed to the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*. As he received his doctorate from the University of Freiburg, he was familiar with the challenges facing people in Central Europe, including historical, political, and religious matters. See HOURICAN, Bridget, «MacCaffrey, James», in *DIB*, URL:

< <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5114> > [accessed on 2 November 2014]; MACCAFFREY, Rev. James Canon, «The Catholic Church in 1918», in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, XIII, 1/1919, pp. 89-102, p. 93.

⁶⁶ MACCAFFREY, Rev. James Canon, «The Catholic Church in 1918», cit., p. 94.

interwar years. The «Freeman's Journal» compared the group to the Fascisti of Italy, hoping to peacefully overthrow the Horthy Government and re-establish Habsburg rule in Hungary⁶⁷.

McKenna found the Jewish problem «acuter than ever» as the proportion of Jews became greater in independent Hungary than in the empire⁶⁸. He proved aware of the fact that the government introduced the "Numerus Clausus" in September 1920, which, without mentioning Jews *per se*, sought to ensure that the proportion of Jews in universities, schools, banks, factories, and all state offices did not exceed their proportion in the total population⁶⁹. McKenna concluded that Hungary owed much to the Jews; «indeed she could hardly do without them. They should, therefore, be given full credit for their services and encouraged to continue them»⁷⁰. This, he predicted, should be successful due to the Christian and national aspect of the government's official policy. Furthermore, the change in the successor states' ethnic composition also resulted in the more visible presence of the Jewry, especially in Hungary. The peculiarity of the situation lay in the fact that the "disappearance" of ethnicities left the Jews as the only significant minority, which had not been particularly visible prior to 1918. But following the lost war, the red terror (often associated with Jewish leadership) and the lost territories, the presence of Jews «as a foreign body [...] provoked irritation»⁷¹.

4. Long-term impact: Irish anti-Communism and anti-Semitism in the 1930s

During the interwar years, despite the declared commitment of both the *Cumann na nGaedheal* (1923-1932) and *Fianna Fáil* (1932-1948) governments to Irish independence and democratic principles, the news of the clashes between Communist, Nazi and Fascist ideologies reached the Irish Free State as well. Overall, the majority of Irish nationalists adopted an uncompromisingly anti-Communist stance rooted in the strong Catholic traditions of the state. Catholic Irish academics used examples from Hungary, among others, in order to support their own agenda and remind their readership of the significance of Catholic values and of the dangers of a possible left-wing conspiracy, especially following the "red scare" after 1931. Nonetheless, as Terence Brown (1985) noted, the political crisis in the early 1930s should be considered as the legacy of the Irish Civil War, in addition to being part of the broader international context; the struggle between

⁶⁷ «Reported Move to Restore the Habsburgs in Hungary», in *Freeman's Journal*, 12 March 1923; MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 556.

⁶⁸ MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 557.

⁶⁹ HOENSCH, Jörg K., *op. cit.*, p. 107; MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 558.

⁷⁰ MCKENNA, Lambert, «The Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary», cit., p. 558.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 554.

democracy and fascism, or the one between Catholic faith and “godless” communism, depending on the background and agenda of the commentator⁷². The contributors of confessional Irish journals who commented on international affairs overwhelmingly sided with whoever they perceived to respect Catholic principles, leading to, as Fearghal McGarry (1999) stressed, a considerably high «degree of anti-democratic sentiment among the Irish clergy» in general⁷³. The pro-Treaty, conservative nationalist William T. Cosgrave’s Cumann na nGaedheal Government expressed similar sentiments; however, coming up to the 1932 elections, their main fear was not necessarily «a “communist IRA”, much less the actual Communists, but defeat at the polls by Fianna Fáil»⁷⁴. The “red scare” culminated late 1931 after Irish bishops issued a pastoral denouncing communist activities, shortly followed by the government passing the Public Safety Act, banning Saor Éire (1931), the small radical socialist organisation seen as a “violent IRA” with links with Moscow, together with seven other left-wing organisations⁷⁵. Saor Éire was accused of setting out to «impose upon the Catholic soil of Ireland the same materialistic regime, with its fanatical hatred of God»⁷⁶.

In response to Cumann na nGaedheal’s tactics, de Valera’s Fianna Fáil (1926) successfully emphasised that the party was built on democratic and Catholic social principles, prioritising good relations with the Vatican throughout the decade.

As it may be visible from the attitude of Cumann na nGaedheal and the clergy towards the “communist IRA”, the connection between Bolshevism and the Irish Republican movement caused concern for Irish anti-communists. For instance, as Emmet O’Connor (2014) argued, ever since the Great War, «the Bolsheviks were popular too in the republican movement, for their opposition to the world war and support for national self-determination»⁷⁷. This principle remained so throughout the interwar years – the line between Republicanism and Socialism, Bolshevism, and Communism, therefore, became blurred in relation to organisations like Saor Éire (1931) and the Republican Congress (1934)⁷⁸. Both organisations were dismissed by

⁷² BROWN, Terence, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922 to the Present*, Ithaca - London, Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 268.

⁷³ MCGARRY, Fearghal, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, Cork, Cork University Press, 1999, p. 137.

⁷⁴ TREACY, Matt, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁷⁵ O’HALPIN, Eunan, *Defending Ireland: The Irish State and its Enemies since 1922*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 78; MORRISSEY, Thomas J., *Edward J. Byrne, 1872-1941: the forgotten Archbishop of Dublin*, Dublin, Columba Press, 2010, p. 187.

⁷⁶ KEOGH, Dermot, *The Vatican, the Bishops and Irish Politics 1919-39*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 180.

⁷⁷ O’CONNOR, Emmet, «Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century Ireland», *cit.*, p. 62.

⁷⁸ On the establishment and outlawing of Saor Éire, see Ó DRISCEOIL, Donal, *The “Irregular and Bolshie situation”: Republicanism and Communism 1921-36*, in MCGARRY, Fearghal (Ed.) *Republicanism in Modern Ireland*, Dublin, UCD Press, 2003, pp. 42-60, pp. 50-52; KEOGH, Dermot, «The Role of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland 1922-1995», *cit.*, p. 117.

Archbishop of Dublin, Edward J. Byrne; he labelled the latter as an anti-Catholic movement directed against «the foundations of all religion and Christian society»⁷⁹.

In his biography of Eoin O'Duffy, the leader of the proto-fascist Blueshirts, Fearghal McGarry stressed that the outlook of the above-mentioned thinkers was «typical of many right-wing Catholic intellectuals in inter-war Europe»⁸⁰. The majority of the Blueshirts, however, claimed historian J. J. Lee (1989), were « simply traditional conservatives» and did not concern themselves much with the ideology and rather saw the conflict with republicans/communists as a religious war⁸¹. Their short-lived publication, «The Blueshirt», focused on advocating corporatism and did not pay much attention to the left-wing revolutionary turmoil in post-war Hungary⁸².

As for the impact of extreme political changes on the Irish perceptions of interwar Hungary, news was still presented through a Catholic lens, although from multiple sources. From the 1930s it was not only the Ireland-based intelligentsia that expressed interest in the growing communist menace or the advance right-wing ideologies in Central Europe, but so did Irish diplomats based in Geneva, Rome, Berlin or Paris. Furthermore, the strong wave of anti-communism in Ireland, referred to above, also had a major impact on how the “red scare” was presented in relation to the other states. Hungary, was still described as the guardian of Christianity more than a decade after Béla Kun's communist takeover of Budapest, although the nature of articles was different than in the immediate post-war years.

Irish commentators did not find the role of religion as a marker of Hungarian identity as articulated as, for instance, in relation to Austria. Nevertheless, the political associations of Protestants and Catholics in Hungary did attract the attention of Irish intellectuals. And even though, Jörg K. Hoensch (1996) argued, Catholicism «was no longer the established religion, the Catholic Church and the clergy [...] stood solidly behind the policies of the Horthy regime and had no reservations about supporting its revisionist policies»⁸³. Within the Hungarian context, the term “Christian” would be the most accurate to describe the conservative ruling class. The latter placed a large emphasis on “Christianity”, as it expressed their stance against “godless Bolsheviks” and “atheist Jews” in the post-war revolutionary turmoil, with the purpose of fitting into a wider, Christian European context. Nevertheless, Hungarian Catholicism became less politicised in the 1930s, while the social and public aspects of Catholicism became more prominent, due to the effect of Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, which was not only

⁷⁹ «Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop of Dublin to the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Dublin, Lent, 1935, 1st March 1935», cit. in CLARKE, Desmond K. (ed.), *Archbishop Edward Byrne: archbishop of Dublin 1921-1940*, Dublin, s.n., 2004, p. 5.

⁸⁰ MCGARRY, Fearghal, *Eoin O'Duffy: A Self-Made Hero*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 205-206.

⁸¹ LEE, Joseph J., *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 181.

⁸² BRODERICK, Eugene, *Intellectuals and the Ideological Hijacking of Fine Gael, 1932-1938*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010, p. 75.

⁸³ HOENSCH, Jörg K., *op. cit.*, p. 123.

the most popular point reference among Irish academics, politicians, and journalists but also «the catalyst for a strong upsurge in Irish Social Catholicism»⁸⁴. On all accounts, the Irish clergy echoed the Pope, claiming that «no one can be at the same time a sincere Catholic and a true socialist»⁸⁵. Similarly, the idea of the corporate state gained considerable popularity among the Catholic intelligentsia, for instance, by prominent Irish academics such as James Hogan and Michael Tierney. In addition to being devoted to vocationalism, Hogan «viewed the spread of communism as a serious threat to western constitutional democracies»⁸⁶. In his *Could Ireland become communist? The Facts of the Case* (1935) he once again claimed that communism and Catholicism were irreconcilable but he focused on the Irish left instead of looking for lessons beyond Ireland to illustrate his case⁸⁷.

In terms of interwar political ideologies, Reverend Edward J. Coyne, editor of «Studies» and regular contributor to the «Irish Monthly» was known as another expert on corporatism and the corporative organization of society, both in general terms and in the Central European (especially Austrian) context⁸⁸. First and foremost, in his writings as he was concerned with «offering Catholic alternatives to both socialism and capitalism», as he was a well-known supporter of Catholic vocationalism and corporatism⁸⁹. Coyne was convinced that Austrian Socialism was «nothing more or less than Russian Bolshevism with the more blood-stained incidents left out»⁹⁰. Altogether, in his contributions to «Studies», Coyne unequivocally identified social democrats

⁸⁴ FAZEKAS, Csaba, *Collaborating with Horthy: Political Catholicism and Christian Political Organizations in Hungary*, in KAISER, Wolfram, WOHNOUT, Helmut (eds.), *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918-1945*, vol. I, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 160-177, p. 172; MURRAY, Peter, FEENY, Maria, *Church, State and Social Science in Ireland: Knowledge Institutions and the Rebalancing of Power, 1937-1973*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017, p. 18.

⁸⁵ MORRISSEY, Thomas J., *Edward J. Byrne, 1872-1941: the forgotten Archbishop of Dublin*, Dublin, Columba Press, 2010, p. 205.

⁸⁶ KEOGH, Dermot, *Hogan, communism, and the challenge of contemporary history*, in Ó CORRÁIN, D. (ed.), *James Hogan: revolutionary, historian and political scientist*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2001, pp. 60-79, p. 60.

⁸⁷ HOGAN, James, *Could Ireland become Communist? The Facts of the Case*, Dublin, 1935.

⁸⁸ Notably, Coyne's articles covered all aspects of Austrian politics, particularly as far as their Christian Social politicians' merits were concerned; this included Austrian book reviews as well. During the 1920s, Coyne spent time in on the Continent, so he had witnessed Austrian socio-political changes first-hand. He had studied theology at the Franz Ferdinand University, Innsbruck, and had also received education in Münster, Westphalia; the Gregorian University in Rome; the Action Populaire and the Sorbonne in Paris. See DOLAN, Anne «Coyne, Edward Joseph», in *DIB*, URL: < <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2135> > [accessed on 7 November 2014]; KEOGH, Dermot, O'DRISCOLL, Finín, *Ireland*, in BUCHANAN, John, CONWAY, Martin (eds.) *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, pp. 286-287; COYNE, Edward J., «Die Diktatur in Oesterreich by Franz Winkler», «Dollfuss by Johannes Messner», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XXV, 100, 4/1936, pp. 696-698.

⁸⁹ FANNING, Bryan, *The Quest for Modern Ireland: The Battle of Ideas 1912-1986*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2008, p. 79. For further details on vocationalism in Ireland, see MULLARKEY, Kieren, «Ireland, the Pope and Vocationalism: The Impact of the Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno», in AUGUSTEIJN, Joost (ed.) *Ireland in the 1930s: New Perspectives*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1999, pp. 96-116.

⁹⁰ COYNE, Edward J., «The Social Revolution in Austria by C. A. Macartney», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XVI, 64, 4/1927, p. 724.

with Austro-marxists; actually, he made no differentiations when it came to left-wing politics in Central Europe. He interpreted the political contest between Christian Socials (led by Ignaz Seipel) and Social Democrats as «a contest between two different civilisations, just as much as was the struggle against the Turk»⁹¹. In the Hungarian context, the reporter of the «Irish Independent», “C.J.C.”, identified Ottokár Prohászka, Hungarian Bishop of Székesfehérvár, as filling the same role as Seipel when he stated that had it not for the Communist Béla Kun «and his wrecking of the Parliamentary system, [Prohászka] would have been to Hungary what Monsignor Seipel was to Austria»⁹². The article, published in 1937, ten years after the death of the Bishop, made no references to the controversy that surrounded Prohászka for his anti-Semitism, showing no Irish concern for (or maybe even awareness of) this matter.

While the 1920s were marked by political consolidation and economic recovery under István Bethlen’s Unity Party (*Egységes Párt*, 1922-1932), greatly facilitated by Hungary’s admittance to the League in 1922, Irish attention in the interwar years still focused on Hungarian extreme political groups. The legacy of the 1918-1919 revolutionary movements remained visible; the short-lived rule of Bolshevik Béla Kun was a frequent target of Irish anti-Communist authors who aimed to illustrate the long-lasting dangers of the “red threat”. Therefore, reports on post-war communism were brought up more and more often in the 1930s. This anti-Communist propaganda was significantly reinforced especially, as noted above, after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Apart from actual Communism, Irish anti-Communists targeted all shades of left-wing activities and groups including Social Democrats, Bolsheviks, Labour, Freemasons, the Jewry (especially during the Spanish Civil War), and Social Republicans, which was more to do with the political Nationalism rather than class-conscious Socialism⁹³.

Essentially, the «Irish Independent», which was the most avid supporter of General Franco due to his perceived connection with the Catholic Church, used any argument they could to support their case; this included publishing stories like Lia [Cornelia] Clarke’s «When Red Terror Gripped Hungary. Bela Kun’s Five Months’ Dictatorship. A Tale of Tyranny, Disruption and Eventual Collapse»⁹⁴. Clarke had visited Hungary before the war, and emphasised the survival of feudal

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 724.

⁹² «A Remarkable Bishop. Great Reformer», in *Irish Independent*, 6 July 1937, p. 4.

⁹³ MCGARRY, Fearghal, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, Cork, Cork University Press, 1999, p. 135. For further details on Irish involvement in the Spanish Civil War, both in political and military terms, see MANNING, Maurice, *The Blueshirts*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1987; STRADLING, Robert, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39: Crusades in Conflict*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999; KEENE, Judith, *Fighting for Franco: International Volunteers in Nationalist Spain during the Spanish Civil War*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2007; MCGARRY, Fearghal, *Eoin O’Duffy: A Self-Made Hero*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007; MCGARRY, Fearghal, *Frank Ryan*, Dundalk, Dundalgan Press, 2002.

⁹⁴ «When Red Terror Gripped Hungary. Bela Kun’s Five Months’ Dictatorship. A Tale of Tyranny, Disruption and Eventual Collapse», in *Irish Independent*, 20 August 1936.

socio-economic practices there. And although she called Mihály Károlyi «weak and vain», she added that at least he was «still a Hungarian», unlike Kun, that «Galician Jew»⁹⁵. Károlyi was mostly blamed for the armistice and the Trianon Treaty as well, as a result of which Hungary was treated by the great powers as «the hunted stag»⁹⁶. Clarke concluded with the remark «he is now in Spain», even though the rumour surrounding Kun's presence in Spain during the Civil War turned out to be unfounded⁹⁷.

Undoubtedly, one of the most significant aspects of Irish anti-Communism was that the left threat was generally and persistently associated with the Jewish people. The vociferous «Catholic Bulletin», for instance, published a series of articles in 1931, targeting “Jewish Communist leaders and Freemasonry” across Europe, including Hungary⁹⁸. Furthermore, when referring to the establishment of «a Socialist Government» in Budapest after the Great War, conservative right-wing Jesuit lecturer Edward Cahill emphasised that destruction was carried out under Béla Kun and other «Jewish Revolutionary leaders»⁹⁹. Cahill was a Jesuit lecturer, contributor to the «Irish Ecclesiastical Record», the «Irish Monthly», and the «Irish Messenger». Co-founder of *An Ríogacht* (“League of the Kingship of Christ”) in 1926. Keogh and O’Driscoll have stressed the fact that the «extremism and radical confessionism» of Cahill was not approved by his religious superiors. Nevertheless, he worked closely with Éamon de Valera on the 1937 Constitution¹⁰⁰. Cahill was convinced that Socialists had less chance of success in Italy and Spain due to the strength of «the new Fascist and Catholic reactions», which he deemed more favourable in terms of government¹⁰¹. In view of the fact that Cahill was «heavily influenced by right-wing Catholic ideas prevalent in France after the First World War» and that he «devoted himself to the exposure of alleged Jewish-Freemason-Communist conspiracies in Ireland», his reaction fits into the wider context of visibly growing anti-Communist feeling in certain Catholic Irish circles at the time.

⁹⁵ Kun's father was from Galicia but the family lived in Lele, which was situated in the “Partium” (County Szatmár), the geographic region between the later post-Trianon Hungary and Transylvania in Romania; hence the most succinct description would be to describe him as ‘of Transylvanian origin’. Neither of his parents was a practising Jew; Kun, for instance, attended a Calvinist secondary school in Kolozsvár/Cluj.

⁹⁶ «When Red Terror Gripped Hungary. Bela Kun's Five Months' Dictatorship. A Tale of Tyranny, Disruption and Eventual Collapse», in *Irish Independent*, 20 August 1936.

⁹⁷ «Hungary Backs Gen. Franco», in *Irish Independent*, 10 November 1937.

⁹⁸ SACERDOS (pseudo.), «Matters about which the press is silent (Jewish Communist leaders and Freemasonry in Hungary)», in *The Catholic Bulletin*, XXI, F1931, pp. 144-145.

⁹⁹ CAHILL, Edward, «Notes on Christian Sociology. The Soviet Form of Government (Continued)», in the *Irish Monthly*, LVI, 659, 5/1928, p. 274

¹⁰⁰ WOODS, Cristopher J., «Cahill, Edward», in *DIB*, URL:

< <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a1364> > [accessed on 31 March 2015]; KEOGH, Dermot, O’DRISCOLL, Finín, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-283.

¹⁰¹ The military dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera in Spain lasted from 1923 until January 1930. In Italy, Benito Mussolini was in power October 1922-1943. CAHILL, Edward, «Notes on Christian Sociology. The Soviet Form of Government (Continued)», in the *Irish Monthly*, LVI, 659, 5/1928, pp. 274-277, p. 274.

Jesuit bibliographer Stephen J. Brown also alluded to the fact that Jews played a prominent part in the Bolshevik revolutions of Russia and Hungary¹⁰².

The Irish press rarely criticised Hungarian Conservatives openly in relation to the Jewish question; on the contrary. Among others, the «Irish Independent»'s Gertrude Gaffney (who was the paper's correspondent not only during the Spanish Civil War but also during the Eucharistic Congress of 1938 in Budapest, Hungary) pointed to the strong anti-Semitic feeling in Hungary that had existed strongly before the war. However, the controversial and strongly anti-Zionist correspondent also claimed that at the same time, the Hungarians were «too good-hearted and easy-going a people to emulate Germany's fanaticism and cruelty»¹⁰³. On the other hand, the «Catholic Bulletin» spoke rather openly but protectively of Nationalist and Anti-Semitic Secret Societies in Hungary. According to the outspoken journal, these secret societies had suffered unfair treatment in the «Irish Independent»'s article of 5 September 1930, which ignored Bolshevik secret societies and only singled out a right-wing conservative group associated with Gyula Gömbös¹⁰⁴. The Hungarian politician had been associated with anti-Semitic tendencies since the early 1920s. Nevertheless, Mária Ormos (2006) pointed out that it is hard to pinpoint Gömbös' actual stance on anti-Semitism and examine changes in his opinion during his four years in power. It is a fact, though, that between 1932 and 1936 he did not negotiate anti-Semitic propaganda nor did he bring anti-Jewish legislations. Occasionally, in Irish news reports portrayed him in a positive light; for instance, when he removed the Budapest City Council for having shown «a strong anti-Jewish attitude»¹⁰⁵. Undeniably, Gömbös' term as Prime Minister of Hungary (1932-1936) as the head of the Party of National Unity (*Nemzeti Egység Pártja*) marked the radicalisation of the Hungarian Government both in terms of internal and foreign policy. He aimed to transform Hungary into a fascist, corporate state and focused on the cooperation within the «framework of an “axis of fascist states”» in order to restore the historical unity of St Stephen's Crown¹⁰⁶. Therefore, Irish commentators associated the strength of the Hungarian right, and its links with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the mid-1930s with the “nationality question”.

Consequently, the position of Jews and anti-Semitism in Hungary were rarely viewed outside the context of anti-Communism (readers' letters were particularly concerned with the alleged

¹⁰² BROWNE, Stephen J. , «Judaism by A. Vincent», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XXIII, 92, 4/1934, p. 725.

¹⁰³ «In Hungary To-Day. The Jewish Problem», in *Irish Independent*, 7 January 1936.

¹⁰⁴ «Matters about which the Press is Silent», in the *Catholic Bulletin*, February 1931, pp. 144-145. [entire article]

¹⁰⁵ ORMOS, Mária, *Magyarország a Két Világháború Korában 1914-1945 [Hungary in the Age of the Two World Wars 1914-1945]*, Debrecen, Csokonai Kiadó, 2006, p. 192; «Jews in Hungary», in *Irish Press*, 18 January 1934.

¹⁰⁶ HOENSCH, Jörg K., *op. cit.*, pp. 127, 134.

part Jews played in left-wing movements)¹⁰⁷. Historian Tibor Frank has emphasised that anti-Communism in inter-war Hungary enjoyed priority; this, together with the obsession with revising the Treaty of Trianon, were major factors in Hungary becoming a German satellite and joining the war on the German side later in 1941¹⁰⁸. Therefore, interwar Hungarian priorities lay with anti-Communism, providing common ground for Catholic Irish commentators in confessional journals.

Characteristically, the indisputable anti-Communist stance of the Catholic Church and Catholic Irish authors was reflected in their references to the “red menace”, present in East-Central Europe well after the revolutionary turmoil of 1918-1919. Curiously, the historical struggle against the Turk symbolised resistance against the Communist threat, as we have seen, in the case of Austria as well as Hungary. In Irish accounts, both small states served as the keeper of the «gate of western civilisation» against the Turks in the seventeenth century and again in the face of bolshevism in the twentieth century¹⁰⁹. Similarly, Mary M. Macken, Professor of German at University College Dublin, labelled the story of post-war Hungary «an epic in which heroic figures emerge – it is the drama of the guardians of the European gate»¹¹⁰. Therefore, it was these authors’ Catholic and anti-communist stance that determined their conclusions about interwar Hungary. These priorities had a major impact on how Hungarian revolutionary changes were perceived by influential Catholic intellectuals.

5. Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to illustrate that in the first two decades of independence, Ireland had not been as isolated as has been previously argued by highlighting the outward-looking attitude of Irish intellectuals and the significance of the international context when examining Irish anti-Communism. This paper explored Irish reactions to the independence of small states in East-Central Europe, and Hungary in particular, balancing between revolutionary turmoil and democracy. The discussion assessed the significance of Catholic ideas in independent Ireland and it is emphasised that Catholicism was not merely the subject of Irish investigations.

¹⁰⁷ «Topics of the Day. Readers’ Opinions. Jews and Communism. To the Editor “Irish Independent”», in *Irish Independent*, 7 April 1934 and 18 April 1934.

¹⁰⁸ FRANK, Tibor, *Treaty Revision and Doublespeak: Hungarian Neutrality, 1939-1941*, in WYLIE, Neville (ed.), *European Neutrals and Non-Belligerents during the Second World War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 150-173, p. 173.

¹⁰⁹ «Across the Balkans. Hungary an Attenuated Nation. Grace and Dignity of its People. (From Our Special Correspondent)», in *Irish Independent*, 25 April 1930; COYNE, Edward J., «The Social Revolution in Austria by C. A. Macartney», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XVI, 64, 4/1927, p. 724 [entire article]; «Cardinal Told the Tanaiste of Election», in *Irish Press*, 6 June 1938.

¹¹⁰ MACKEN, Mary M., «Hungary by C. A. Macartney», in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XXIV, 94, 2/1935, pp. 333-335, p. 334.

Certainly, the images presented by Catholic Irish intellectuals such as Lambert McKenna reflected their own political agendas and were therefore often deliberately idealistic. Nonetheless, investigating Irish anti-Communism in a wider, European context offered insights not only into Irish perceptions of revolutionary East-Central Europe but also on the lesser known long-term consequences of the Bolshevik Revolution. Therefore, this paper concludes that approaching Irish anti-Communism from a transnational perspective may facilitate further interpretations of the spread of ideas across international borders, and more specifically, of the far-reaching impact revolutionary and counter-revolutionary events in East-Central Europe after 1917. Looking beyond Ireland for lessons after independence, therefore, became an inseparable part of Irish political rhetoric.

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