

# 'Schools of Corruption: The Contexts for Seán South's Antisemitism

**S**eán South's elevation to the Republican pantheon after his death during an IRA raid on Brookeborough RUC station in January 1957, coupled with his well-documented reputation as a kind and courteous individual, "in manner and bearing always a gentleman,"<sup>1</sup> a "shy, gentle-natured, even-tempered" young man<sup>2</sup> who "never raised his voice, never got angry or annoyed [and] never complained"<sup>3</sup> perhaps explains what appears to be a reluctance on the part of recent biographers to engage with one of the most troubling aspects of his ideology - his antipathy towards Jews. This antipathy can only be properly understood by examining it in the context of South's involvement with extremist organisations of the 1940s and 1950s, most notably Maria Duce.

Des Fogerty describes Maria Duce as a group "dedicated to good works and devotion to the Virgin Mary."<sup>4</sup> But it was in fact a Catholic far-right religio-political lobby group which was considered 'unrepresentative', 'bigoted' and 'pro-fascist' even at the time.<sup>5</sup> It was founded in 1942 but its exact origins remain uncertain. According to Enda Delaney,<sup>6</sup> it developed out of a Catholic study circle led by Fr. Denis Fahey, Professor of Philosophy and Church History at the Holy Ghost Fathers' seminary at Kimmage Manor, Dublin and author of a series of best-selling books which detailed what he saw as the conflict between 'Supernaturalism' (i.e. the belief in a Divine Social Order proclaimed by Jesus Christ and embodied in and implemented by his 'Mystical Body', the Roman Catholic Church) and 'Naturalism', a materialist ideology which denied the divinity of Christ and his kingship over the world and worked to destroy his Church.<sup>7</sup> However, in a June 1955 letter to Chris Mangan, secretary to the Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, Maria Duce's president Thomas Agar stated that the organisation had developed out of discussions between members of the Legion of Mary who wanted to form a "special praesidium to strive for Supernaturalism's supremacy in public life". When their request was turned down by the Legion's leadership they decided to go it alone and invited Fr. Fahey to train them "in their specialised work."<sup>8</sup>

What is beyond dispute is that Fahey was Maria Duce's "acknowledged leader"<sup>9</sup> until his death in January 1954 and that his theories and teachings formed its core philosophy. This philosophy was profoundly

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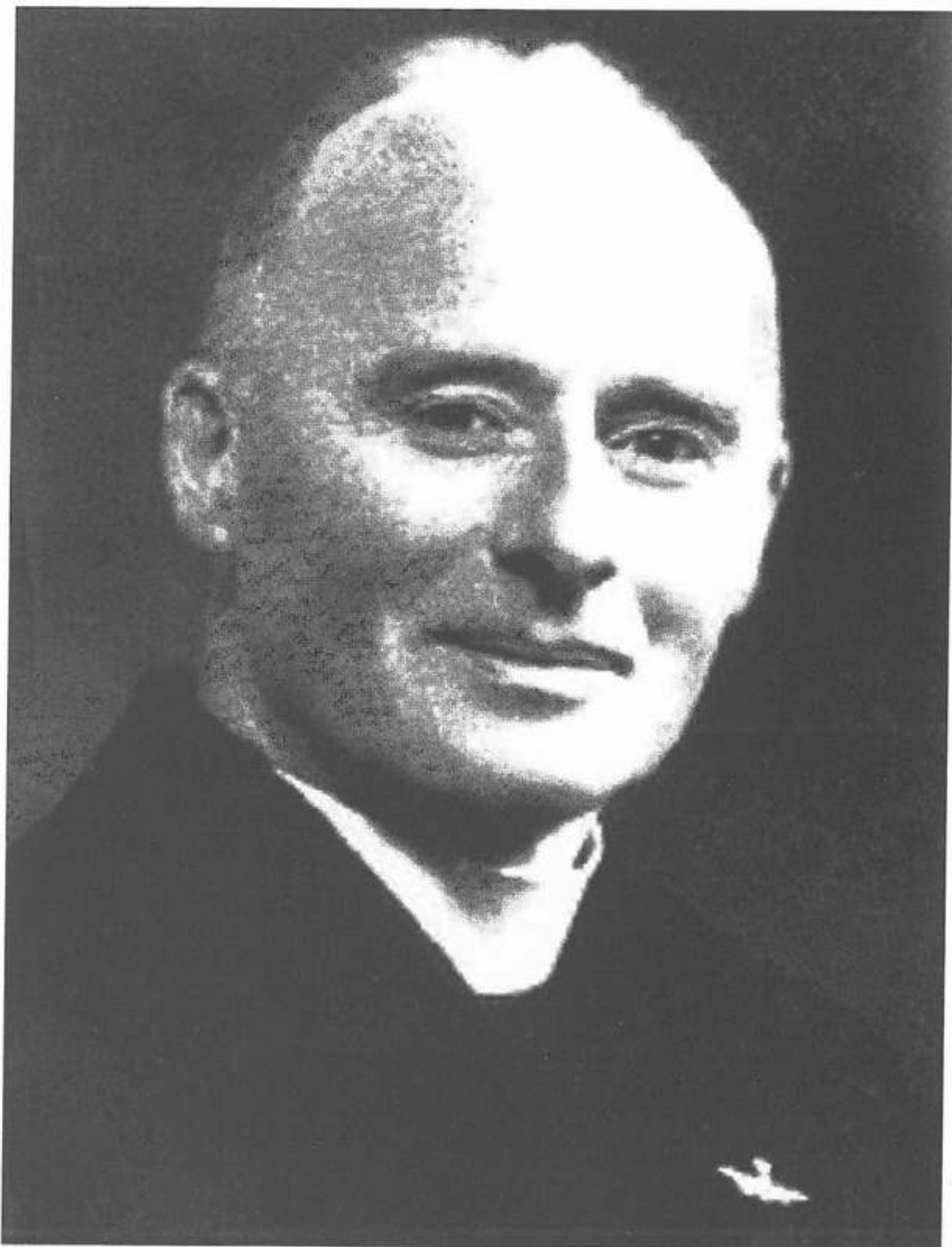
*by Sean Gannon*

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Judaeophobic for Fahey was in fact Ireland's leading antisemitic ideologue of the first half of the Twentieth Century, having imbibed during his novitiate in Grignon-Orly near Paris in 1900 the antisemitism prevailing among the French clergy in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair. Furthermore he was, by his own account, strongly influenced by Grignon-Orly's rector, Fr. Henri L'Floch, and by the Jesuit theologian,

Louis Cardinal Billot, both of whom were eventually removed from their positions by Pope Pius XI because of their links to the antisemitic movement, Action Française.<sup>10</sup>

Fahey's antisemitic worldview can be put briefly as follows: The 'Naturalists' challenging the 'Kingship of Christ' and threatening his 'Mystical Body', the Church, were organised into invisible and visible forces. The invisible he identified as Satan, the visible as Freemasons and in particular the Jews who, divinely rejected on account of their deicide, had endured for two thousand years as Christianity's in-



Fr. Denis Fahey, Maria Duce's acknowledged leader and intellectual driving force



veterate enemies. Drawing on the writings of contemporary antisemitic conspiracy theorists such as Nesta Webster (with whom he corresponded),<sup>11</sup> Fahey interpreted the history of the world as a record of their "efforts for the destruction of Catholic civilisation [through] the perversion of hearts."<sup>12</sup> So, for example, the Jews were the true instigators of the Protestant Reformation while the French Revolution was a Judaeo-Masonic plot which sought "the violent overthrow of the ordered grasp of life still prevailing in Catholic countries" since the Thirteenth Century.<sup>13</sup> This process of perversion culminated in the Bolshevik Revolution which Fahey presented as a Satanically-inspired anti-Catholic plot engineered by an alliance of international Jewish capitalist financiers and Russian Marxist Jews<sup>14</sup>, "the most recent development in the age-long struggle waged by the Jewish nation against... Our Lord Jesus Christ and his Mystical Body",<sup>15</sup> through which they had unleashed the doctrine of Atheistic Communism to prepare the world for the coming of their 'Natural Messiah' and their own supremacy as a nation on earth.<sup>16</sup>

Fahey believed that the Jews used the international press and popular culture, particularly the cinema, as vehicles for the dissemination of Communist doctrine and he groomed Maria Duce to act as a bulwark against the spread of this 'Godless Creed'. Consequently the group developed a singular obsession with Hollywood which, influenced by the work of the McCarthy Commissions, it saw as a hotbed of Bolshevik intrigue and it launched a strident campaign against it. Despite its occasional focus on non-Jewish personalities, this was primarily directed at Jews<sup>17</sup> who were "almost wholly" responsible for "Hollywood's pernicious productions", the "integral purpose" of which, Maria Duce claimed, was the generation of Marxist propaganda in the service of the Jewish nation's anti-Catholic crusade.<sup>18</sup>

Maria Duce's campaign was conducted through public meetings and the national media and through a front organisation, the Catholic Cinema and Theatre Patrons' Association (CCTPA).<sup>19</sup> Formed in March 1949, it attempted to counter "the continued and persistent stream of Naturalism, which through the medium of Film and Drama, is poisoning our whole spiritual and national life" by staging a series of protests against planned appearances in Ireland by cinema personalities it deemed to be Communist.<sup>20</sup> These consisted largely of pressurising theatre managers to cancel performances by the individual in question and the distribution and sale of anti-Communist material to the public at theatre doors. Although treated with contempt by elements of the mainstream media,<sup>21</sup> the CCTPA was reported to be "very influential and anyone on whom [it] hangs a Communist label will not find it easy to work or to get work in Dublin".<sup>22</sup>

It certainly scored some initial successes. In November 1949 it targeted Gregory Peck who was due to appear at the Irish Catholic Stage Guild's annual concert at

# THE RULERS OF RUSSIA

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

"For them (the peoples of the Soviet Union) We cherish the warmest paternal affection. We are well aware that not a few of them groan beneath the yoke imposed on them by men who in very large part are strangers to the real interests of the country. We recognise that many others were deceived by fallacious hopes. We blame only the system with its authors and abettors who considered Russia the best prepared field for experimenting with a plan elaborated years ago, and who from there continue to spread it from one end of the world to the other." (Encyclical Letter of Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, on Atheistic Communism.)

REV. DENIS FAHEY, C.S.Sp.

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**Fahey's "The Rulers of Russia" claimed that the Bolshevik Revolution was the culmination of a 2000 year-old Jewish anti-Catholic plot**

the Adelphi Theatre in Dublin. Amid what an *Irish Times* report called "threats of mass protests" and "whispers" that the theatre would be burnt down, Peck did not attend the event.<sup>23</sup> The CCTPA also claimed credit for the cancellation of a concert at Dublin's Theatre Royal by the celebrated harmonica player Larry Adler in August 1950. According to the *Irish Times* Adler arrived at Aer Lingus's London office to collect his ticket only to find his seat had been cancelled.<sup>24</sup> While a postscript to the article quoted Adler as stating that his non-appearance was due to the injury of his stage partner, the article blamed the CCTPA, a conclusion given credence by both the theatre's refusal to issue a statement on the matter<sup>25</sup> and a June 1952 letter to the Theatre Royal by CCTPA secretary, Michael O'Toole, which recalled its "ready cooperation with us on the occasion of the proposed visit of Larry Adler" two years earlier.<sup>26</sup>

However, the CCTPA soon exhausted the patience of Dublin's theatre world. While its protest against the Gaiety's staging of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* in April 1951 provoked some irritation,<sup>27</sup> its demonstration against a visit by Orson Welles to Dublin the following December caused outrage. An *Irish Times*

editorial described it as a display of "malicious buffoonery" while the theatre critic of the Catholic weekly, *The Standard*, denounced the CCTPA as "Dublin's Holy Hooligans" who appeared "to base their Catholicism rather more on the findings of Californian committees than on the accepted teachings of the Church".<sup>28</sup> The CCTPA's campaign against Danny Kaye, booked to appear at the Theatre Royal in June 1952, was also a resounding failure. In a letter to theatre management, Michael O'Toole argued that Kaye ("real name Daniel Kominski") had "established connections with several Communist-front organisations by reason of which he has rendered himself unfit to be presented to the Catholic patrons of your theatre".<sup>29</sup> However the Theatre Royal, which was paying Kaye the largest fee in the history of Irish entertainment, this time refused to bow to CCTPA pressure and Kaye played to packed houses and ecstatic reviews.<sup>30</sup>

According to Mainín Seoighe, Seán South first became interested in Maria Duce in 1948 and he most likely joined in the latter part of that year.<sup>31</sup> He was certainly a member by January 1949 when he published the first in a series of letters and articles in the *Limerick Leader* on the alleged Communist infiltration of the



cinema industry which were clear statements of Maria Duce positions. In a letter printed on January 10th, he listed sixty or so film stars including Peck, Kaye and Welles whom he accused of having "sold themselves to that diabolical and inhuman task-master, Atheistic Communism" and who were "financially and morally" promoting it through their work. These people were "traitors" against whom Irish Catholics should "rise and strike" by boycotting their films so as not to "indirectly finance Communism [by] keeping them in their positions to use their evil influence against God and man."<sup>32</sup>

South returned to this theme two weeks later with a letter headlined "The Red Virus Being Spread by Cinema" in which he accused "Moscow's minions in Hollywood" of implementing Lenin's "specific instructions that the movies should be utilized fully for the dissemination of the Communist programme for world anarchy and disorder" and quoted extensively from the Fourth Report of the Californian Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities which purported to detail the Communist infiltration of Hollywood unions and guilds.<sup>33</sup> Those "desirous of procuring further details of Communism and the films" he exhorted to read the *Catholic Voice*, the current issue of which contained an article "Some Stars are Red" by Fr. Fahey which warned that "the Communist party is determined to do everything within its power to capture the motion picture industry in order to utilise its glamour and its medium ... for Communist propaganda".<sup>34</sup> South followed up these letters with what he promised would be a series of *Limerick Leader* articles detailing "the treacherous and subversive activities of those screen actors and actresses who have sided with Communism". Published under the pseudonym "Fear Faire" ("Custodian"), the first of these dealt with the left-wing affiliations of the actor John Garfield whose film *Body and Soul* was being screened at Limerick's Carlton Cinema that week;<sup>35</sup> the second concerned those of Gregory Peck and Olivia De Havilland.<sup>36</sup> The third and final article in South's series was a lengthy attack on "Hollywood's Red Stars" (again including Kaye, Peck and Welles) and the part they were playing in spreading the "Communist menace".<sup>37</sup>

South's preoccupation with Communism was hardly surprising given the climate of the time. The post-war persecution of the Catholic Church by the Soviet satellite states of Eastern Europe, coupled with events such as the near victory of the Communists in the Italian general election in April 1948, had given rise to a real 'Red Scare' throughout Ireland and Limerick was no exception. At the time South joined Maria Duce, the show trial and subsequent imprisonment of the Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Mindszenty, was causing something akin to anti-Communist hysteria in the city with condemnatory resolutions being passed by everyone from Limerick Corporation,<sup>38</sup> Limerick County Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Medical Profession of the City of Limerick to

the District Mental Hospital Board, the Limerick Trades and Labour Council, the Mechanics' Institute, Limerick Boat Club and the local branches of the National Union of Journalists, the I.N.T.O and the IT&GWU.<sup>39</sup> Communism was also being relentlessly denounced from the city's pulpits<sup>40</sup> and by the Legion of Mary which, according to Jim Kemmy, "was actively engaged in virulent anti-Communist propaganda of a most crude kind in Limerick" at this time.<sup>41</sup> Public lectures by lay anti-Communist crusaders such as Douglas Hyde and Tom Pope played to packed houses and the local papers frequently published their contents in full.<sup>42</sup> The papers themselves, particularly the *Limerick Leader*, also took a resolutely anti-Communist editorial stance.<sup>43</sup>

However, South's anti-Communist outpourings were set apart by their overt Faheyite antisemitism.<sup>44</sup> "The stream of insidious [Communist] propaganda... which warps and corrupts the minds of our Youth by implanting therein a false philosophy and concept of life" directly emanated, he claimed, from "Judeo-Masonic controlled sources" in Hollywood while he blamed "Jewish and Masonic executives" for turning cinema into "a school of corruption" and, quoting Pius XI, preventing it from being used as "an effectual instrument for the elevation and education of mankind".<sup>45</sup> These statements so pleased Fr. Fahey that he personally thanked South for his efforts ("God will bless you for these letters; they have done my heart good").<sup>46</sup>

But South had been exposed to contemporary antisemitic theory even prior to joining forces with Fahey. This came largely through his involvement with Ailtirí na hAiséirghe (Architects of the Resurrection), a proto-fascist Gaelic revivalist political organisation formed in May 1942 by Gearóid O'Cuinneagáin, a Dublin-based tax consultant and prime mover in a number of Irish pro-Axis groups.<sup>47</sup> Its political programme centred around the unification of the island of Ireland under "a totalitarian government and a single all-powerful leader", the Gaelicisation and Christianisation of Irish society, and "the elimination of the controlling influence of aliens and Freemasons" on the Irish economy.<sup>48</sup> And although antisemitism was a relatively minor part of Aiséirghe's original platform, this had begun to change by the mid-1940s, culminating in an official party statement on the 'Jewish Question' in 1945 which defined the Jews as an "alien body within the nation" and deplored its "unseen hand in politics and finance".<sup>49</sup>

Whether Seán South was actually a member of Ailtirí na hAiséirghe is unclear. While some have maintained that he was, his name does not appear on the party's membership rolls. However, these are far from a comprehensive record of membership as O'Cuinneagáin's insistence that local branches of Aiséirghe forward him three-quarters of all membership fees and two-thirds of its weekly collection meant that, in an effort to stay solvent, many kept separate local membership registers and sent only partial lists to central head-

quarters in Dublin. Moreover, only those rolls for the 1942-1947 period have survived and South's involvement with Ailtirí na Aiséirghe, whatever form it took, most likely began in 1948 as he grew disillusioned with Clann na Poblachta over its decision to join the 'partitionist' Inter-Party Government.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, Jim Kemmy writes that South became involved with the organisation around the time he "began to take a positive interest in Irish" and joined Cairde na Gaeilge which Des Fogerty dates to mid-1948.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, the fact that there is no mention of South in the O'Cuinneagáin papers (which, held at the DDMA in Dublin, run to the late 1970s) seems to suggest that he was not an official member for as R. M. Douglas points out, it is "extremely unlikely" that, given South's emergence as a Republican icon in the decades following his death, O'Cuinneagáin "would have failed to publicise [his] membership" had he formally joined.<sup>52</sup> What is certain is that South was greatly influenced by Aiséirghe's ideology. Indeed his political credo, with its emphasis on militant irredentist nationalism, the Gaelicisation of Irish society and creation of a Catholic corporatist state, and the ending of 'alien' economic control, reads like a party manifesto while his anti-Jewish worldview is resonant of the virulent antisemitism that had, by the late 1940s, become one of Aiséirghe's defining ideological features.<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, South may have had some initial exposure to Aiséirghe's anti-Jewish views even before his association with the party. They had been publicised during its energetic campaign for the 1945 local elections in Limerick<sup>54</sup> and South had, through his interest in Irish, forged friendships with members of Aiséirghe-associated groups such as Craobh na hAiséirghe and Glún na Buaidhe.<sup>55</sup> He also used his frequent trips to Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry with An Réalt to visit the family of the I.R.B. leader Thomas Ashe whose life story he was researching<sup>56</sup> and who himself held antisemitic views;<sup>57</sup> Ashe's sister Nora was a major financial contributor to Aiséirghe.<sup>58</sup> But South's antisemitic education through the party came largely by way of its literature which he bought from Limerick branch members and there is little doubt that he was extremely impressed by its content.<sup>59</sup> This included a stream of articles railing against both the Jewish community in Ireland and the general influence of 'international Jewry' which manifested itself in their control of the press and popular culture and, in particular, the cinema.

South further disseminated Maria Duce's antisemitic message in Limerick by distributing its newsletter, *Fiat*.<sup>60</sup> Issued at irregular intervals since 1945, this four-page freesheet was handed out "Sunday after Sunday ... by volunteer workers ... outside the Church doors in the urban parishes of Ireland"<sup>61</sup> and had a reported circulation of between seven and ten thousand.<sup>62</sup> And, with Fahey as its de facto editor, it was hysterically antisemitic in content and tone.<sup>63</sup> Although *Fiat* was undated, it is possible to work out when most issues were published by analysing





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their content and so identify those distributed by South. On this basis we may assume that *Fiat 15* was the first he could possibly have distributed while *Fiat 41* was certainly the last.<sup>64</sup>

The content of these issues give an insight into the extent of South's antisemitism as he would hardly have distributed material of which he disapproved.<sup>65</sup> *Fiat 15* included an outline of Fr. Fahey's views on Bolshevism as a Jewish creation ("Stalin is merely the tool of the Jewish rulers of Russia") while *Fiat 17* depicted former U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt as "The Masonic Masquerader" who, under the sway of "Judaean-Masonic advisors", had brought America into "a second Jewish world war". This subject was revisited in *Fiat 18* which also contained a synopsis of Fahey's theories on Naturalism's "revolt against God" which blamed Satan and his Jewish agents for all the ills of world history. *Fiat's 23, 25 and 29* lambasted Jewish 'Red Hollywood' while *Fiat 27* attacked "Freemasons, Communists and Zionist Judaism" as "The Allies and Adorers of the Beast of the Apocalypse". *Fiat 36* was almost wholly devoted to diatribes against the establishment of the State of Israel which it described as "a travesty of history ... an event of immense and sinister significance for the future of humanity ... [which] epitomises the inevitable clash between God's Order and the Naturalism of the Jews". Meanwhile *Fiat*

37 presented Zionism as a Jewish "attempt to annihilate the Catholic Church in the Holy Land".<sup>66</sup> *Fiat 40* and *41* were given over to virulent protests against the election of Robert Briscoe in June 1956 as the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin.<sup>67</sup>

South was not, of course, working alone. In the summer of 1949 he formed a branch of Maria Duce in Limerick city.<sup>68</sup> The dearth of documentary evidence among South's and Fr. Fahey's surviving papers and the refusal of former members to give interviews makes it difficult to gauge its size.<sup>69</sup> When South himself joined Maria Duce, the national active membership was just 82 and, even at the height of its 'career', this never exceeded 200.<sup>70</sup> Given that the great majority of these are known to have been Dublin-based, the number of active members in Limerick is unlikely to have exceeded a dozen. Some of the Maria Duce's few thousand 'associate members' were also certainly resident in the city but, as their sole function was to pray for the organisation's success, it is impossible to guess at their number.<sup>71</sup>

A rough indication of Maria Duce's strength in Limerick can, however, be gleaned from material relating to its campaign to amend Article 44 of the Irish Constitution. At the time this recognised the "special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens".<sup>72</sup> However,

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according to Fr. Fahey, this was an utterly objectionable formulation in that it merely acknowledged "what is evident to anybody who can count, namely, that the majority of Irishmen in Ireland profess the Catholic faith".<sup>73</sup> To make matters worse, Article 44 also accorded specific recognition to the Church of Ireland, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers and "the Jewish congregations" which, Fahey argued, effectively gave Catholicism the same status as what he termed 'man-made religions'. In the words of Maria Duce itself, "it is deplorable that the Irish State places all religions on the same level. As far as the State is concerned the only difference between the One True Church and the 'other Churches' is a mathematical one – the number of Catholics is greater, no more. What a manifestation of National Apostasy".<sup>74</sup>

Only official state recognition of the Catholic Church as the "One True Church ... divinely appointed to teach man what favours or hinders his supernatural destiny"<sup>75</sup> could, Maria Duce believed, remedy this situation and in 1949 it launched a noisy campaign to achieve this which, perhaps even more than its anti-Communist crusade, earned it national notoriety. It first organised a petition which protested Article 44's placing of "the One True Religion on the same level as non-Catholic sects, thus confusing truth and falsehood" and demanded that it "be so amended as to conform to the social rights of Christ the



King outlined in the authentic teaching of the Papal Encyclicals".<sup>76</sup> Petition forms were enclosed with issues of *Fiat* or circulated personally by hand with instructions that they be forwarded to either the petitioner's T.D. or the Department of the Taoiseach on completion. Of the 1,200 or so petitioners whose names survive in the National Archives, 39 were from Limerick.<sup>77</sup> However, not all of these are likely to have been Maria Duce members. Enda Delaney is surely correct in arguing that "the only substantive conclusion" to be drawn from the fact that certain suburbs of Dublin such as Rathgar and Sandymount are well-represented in the petitions' file while others are not represented at all is that "active members of Maria Duce requested their friends and neighbours to sign the petition"<sup>78</sup> and the same undoubtedly holds true for Limerick. For instance, 10 of the 39 petitioners gave addresses in Farran-shone while another 9 lived in and around Rosbrien indicating the presence of at least one active member in each of these areas. Indeed, the president of Maria Duce's Irish-speaking section and one of the Limerick branch's most vocal campaigners, A. M. O'Murchadha, lived at Ryan's Terrace, Rosbrien.<sup>79</sup>

The above-mentioned lack of archival evidence and unwillingness of former members to speak means the Limerick branch's activities are also difficult to establish. We may, however, hazard a few tentative conclusions. While South obviously supported the CCTPA's actions there is no evidence that he organised CCTPA-style campaigns in the city<sup>80</sup> and, if the *Limerick Leader* cinema critic Earl Connolly's apparent ignorance of the circumstances surrounding Peck and Adler's non-appearances in Dublin is anything to go by, he did not even agitate locally on its behalf.<sup>81</sup> There is no indication either that prayer meetings of the type held by Maria Duce in Dublin were organised in Limerick.<sup>82</sup> Nor, incidentally, has any hard evidence emerged to support recurring claims that South "actively policed [Limerick's] picture houses, chastising and admonishing courting couples for their perceived lack of public morals".<sup>83</sup>

In fact, apart from the circulation of the Article 44 amendment petition and the distribution of *Fiat*, the Limerick branch appears to have confined its promotional activities to articles and letters in the local press. Indeed the Limerick branch was itself launched in July 1949 with a *Limerick Leader* article (bylined 'Specially Contributed' but almost certainly written by South) which, while it did not mention Maria Duce by name, comprised a lengthy presentation of its philosophy.<sup>84</sup> It detailed Fr. Fahey's so-called Six-Point Programme for Catholic Social Order which had been effectively adopted as Maria Duce's manifesto and, quoting liberally from Fahey's works, contrasted it with "the Naturalism of Communism", the ideological spawn of that "disciple of the Devil... the German Jew, Marx" and the "satanic monster of Bolshevism".<sup>85</sup>

A few published press pieces (mainly letters to the editor) by branch members

other than South also dealt with the 'Judaeo-Communist' issue generally focussing on the accusation that Maria Duce was anti-semitic.<sup>86</sup> Citing Fr. Fahey, the organisation was always careful to draw a distinction between hostility to the Jews as a race and legitimate resistance to 'Jewish Naturalism', arguing that being anti-Judaeo-Masonic-Communist' was antisemitic only in Jewish eyes,<sup>87</sup> and its leadership was genuinely offended by the oft-levelled charge of Jew-hatred.<sup>88</sup> So, for example, in 1954 A. M. O'Murchadha demanded that Limerick's Methodist minister "withdraw unconditionally his statement" that there were "echoes of antisemitism in the expressions of Maria Duce". Citing Fr. Fahey, he claimed that there is "a clear distinction to be made between hatred of the Jewish nation, which is anti-Semitism, and opposition to Jewish and Masonic Naturalism ... [which] must be mainly positive".<sup>89</sup> But, given that these amounted to much the same thing in Faheyite theology ("The Jewish nation has gradually become the most strongly organised non-secret visible force working for the elimination of the supernatural outlook in society and for the installation of Naturalism"<sup>90</sup>) this distinction was utterly casuistic.

However, the Limerick branch's letters to the press were almost entirely dominated by the Article 44 controversy. But this too was, in essence, an antisemitic issue. According to Fahey the first step in Satan's anti-supernatural programme was "to get all religions, including the Jewish religion, put on the same level as the Catholic Church" in order to begin the de-Catholicisation of the country in preparation for its takeover by the Naturalists.<sup>91</sup> This process was initiated in Ireland through "the repeated exhortations to Irish men to accept without discrimination all the principles [of religious toleration] of Wolfe Tone and James Connolly"<sup>92</sup> and been finally achieved in 1937 through Article 44 of the Irish Constitution which "indifferently placed [Catholicism] on the same level... with the Jewish perfidy".<sup>93</sup>

Thus in April 1950, A. M. O'Murchadha castigated "the liberalistic ideas concerning toleration" of Young Ireland's Thomas Davis and their enshrinement in Article 44, arguing that it was surely "not a matter of indifference [to Christ] whether we adore God in His way or in our own".<sup>94</sup> Four months earlier he had wondered "how many of the people of Limerick know that this article contains an insult to Christ the King" by placing Catholicism on the same level as "heretical sects".<sup>95</sup> He returned to the subject in March 1952 with a lengthy front-page *Leader* letter which urged that Ireland "put [its] house in order" and "perfect [its] Constitution" by amending it to ensure that Irish "social, political and economic life are permeated with the teaching of [Christ's] Mystical Body, the Catholic Church".<sup>96</sup> In July 1952, Michael Sheedy, denounced Article 44's 'special recognition' of the Catholic Church as "a thin and undeceiving palliative", arguing that "were Buddhism the religion of the majority of the Irish people" then it would be accorded

this "dubious honour". The Irish Constitution had been framed, he said, so as to "shy the rock of truth in favour of the shifting sands of democratic opinion" and he recommended Fahey's books to anyone "interested in [Article 44's] practical repercussions on Irish life".<sup>97</sup>

Maria Duce's views did not go unchallenged. In an unusual move, the *Limerick Leader's* editor published a rejoinder to A. M. O'Murchadha's letter of December 1949 which argued that Article 44 had received "the full approval" of Ireland's "recognised Catholic ecclesiastical authorities" before being placed before the people.<sup>98</sup> However, O'Murchadha's subsequent request for the "date and occasion and context" of this approval went unanswered.<sup>99</sup> O'Murchadha was again challenged on this issue in August 1952 by a correspondent who asked why criticisms of Article 44 came "almost invariably from laymen and members of an Association [Maria Duce] which has been ... criticised in the Catholic newspaper, *The Standard*, on various occasions."<sup>100</sup> O'Murchadha dismissed the charge, urging those condemning Maria Duce to "seek a more competent authority than *The Standard*" such as Fr. Fahey whose works were "based on papal encyclicals and which bear the Imprimatur".<sup>101</sup>

And to be fair to O'Murchadha, he had a point. There is a tendency to take Paul Blanshard's description of Maria Duce members as "provincial and profoundly uncultured - resembling the least literate superfundamentalist leaders in the southern states of the U.S." at face value.<sup>102</sup> But, as Fr. Fehily makes clear, they were all "excellent Catholics and very high in the estimation of the clergy of their respective parishes"<sup>103</sup> and many of their positions were, in Blanshard's words, "models of Catholic doctrinal correctness". And these positions had the at least tacit support of the Irish Church hierarchy. For example, Maria Duce was well aware through Fr. Fahey that the bishops had, albeit privately, expressed grave doubts about Article 44 during the drafting of the 1937 Constitution. The Primate, Cardinal McRory, had complained that "it makes us no better than the Quakers" while the soon-to-be Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, expressed his displeasure in such vehement terms that he subsequently apologised to De Valera for being found "wanting in courtesy".<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, Fahey's anti-Jewish views had received effective Episcopal sanction through prefaces, 'imprimi potests', imprimaturs and private praise.<sup>105</sup> *The Kingship of Christ According to the Principles of Thomas Aquinas* which laid out the basis for his antisemitic philosophy received the 'imprimi potest' of the Archbishop of Dublin, Edward Walsh, and was prefaced by his future successor, John Charles McQuaid, who praised its "rare maturity of scholarship" and described it as "a storehouse of defensive arguments for Catholic students, clerical and lay".<sup>106</sup> In 1949 he had told Maria Duce's leadership that he regarded *Fiat* as "good but lacking in



technique"<sup>107</sup> and as late as 1955 he told the papal nuncio that "the thoughts expressed [therein] ... are in many instances so true" although he criticised its "exaggerated tone".<sup>108</sup> The Archbishop of Waterford and Lismore, Jeremiah Kinnane, granted an 'imprimi potest' to the wildly antisemitic *The Rulers of Russia* and wrote the preface to Fahey's most detailed presentation of his worldview, *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World*.<sup>109</sup> The Bishop of Cork, Daniel Coholan, provided an imprimatur for *The Kingship of Christ and Organised Naturalism* which, as "the most concise statement of his [antisemitic] thinking,"<sup>110</sup> became "a kind of pocket manual for members of Maria Duce"<sup>111</sup> and which the Bishop of Galway, Michael Browne, praised for its "deep knowledge of the subject and very cogent presentation".<sup>112</sup> Browne also described Fahey's reports on 'Red Hollywood' as "very important" while the Archbishop of Tuam, Joseph Walsh said that they "throw so much light" on the Communistic influences of cinema.<sup>113</sup> Interestingly, there is no correspondence between Fr. Fahey and Bishop O'Neill in either the Limerick Diocesan Archives<sup>114</sup> or the Denis Fahey Papers.

Nevertheless by the early 1950s, Maria Duce found itself almost completely estranged from the Irish Catholic establishment. Its vigorous dissemination of Faheyite doctrine proved acutely embarrassing for the bishops who would have rathered it placed "less emphasis on matters like High Finance and International Jewry" which they felt "were given a place of exaggerated importance in [its] programme".<sup>115</sup> Consequently, the higher Maria Duce's public profile developed, the less inclined they became to be seen to associate with it and, in February 1951, Archbishop McQuaid began the slow process of its effective suppression.<sup>116</sup> Delaney writes that his "opposition was not to the principles for which Maria Duce stood, but rather to the methods its members used to achieve their objectives, particularly the organisation's energetic efforts to secure an amendment of Article 44"<sup>117</sup>, which McQuaid himself described as "provocative and hurtful intrusions" on a matter it was simply "not competent to handle".<sup>118</sup> Indeed, this would appear true of the majority of the bishops who, while they favoured a 'One True Church' formula, realised like McQuaid that it was politically impossible.<sup>119</sup> And while Fahey's final book, *The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation*, contained little not found in his earlier antisemitic works, its publication "caused consternation in ecclesiastical circles"<sup>120</sup> because it went "beyond the point where many of those who had accepted his ideas (even with qualifications) were willing or able to follow" in a post-Holocaust world.<sup>121</sup>

One of those who carried on following Fahey was South. He continued to lead Maria Duce in Limerick even after Fahey's death in January 1954 when the organisation went into a steady national decline.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, between August 1954 and January 1956, he pseudonymously publish-

## The Kingship of Christ and The Conversion of the Jewish Nation



**"The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation" (1953) went beyond the point where many of his supporters were willing or able to follow in a post-Holocaust world**

ed a series of articles on economics for the Gaelic League monthly, *Rosc*, which was printed in Thomas Street, Limerick. These were largely derived from Fahey's works, particularly *Money, Manipulation and Social Order*, which he recommended to his readers.<sup>123</sup> South also quoted admiringly from Hilaire Belloc and A. K. Chesterton, two of Britain's leading antisemitic intellectuals of the time.<sup>124</sup>

However, Fahey's death allowed South to break with his intellectual mentor on one vital issue – militant Republicanism. For Fahey loathed the IRA which he believed to be a Communist organisation which, through its manifesto's demand for 'the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange', had "accepted the central point of Moscow's programme".<sup>125</sup> According to Fahey, "the numbers of the New IRA who are members of the Communist Party of Ireland seem to prove that Russia is ready to utilise the Partition grievance in order to prepare the way for the Popular Front and the attack on the Mass"<sup>126</sup> and, were the IRA to seize power in Ireland, the Irish people would be "trampled under foot in another world-empire ruled from Moscow or Jerusalem".<sup>127</sup>

However, within one month of Fahey's death, South was already contemplating joining the 'armed struggle' and by April had made up his mind.<sup>128</sup> His decision to join the IRA was not only contrary to the teachings of Fahey but to those of the Irish Catholic Church in general, a point subsequently underlined by a statement of the Standing Committee of the Hierarchy in 1956 which declared it a mortal sin "to become or remain a member of an organisation or society which arrogates to itself the right to bear arms and use them

against its own or another state".<sup>129</sup> It also appears to have displeased South's close friend, Fr. Athanasius, a Franciscan priest who had supported his anti-Communist endeavours, and may explain his curious refusal to accompany Jim South to break the news of his brother's death to his mother in 1957.<sup>130</sup> Yet it formed part of an established tradition in Irish Catholicism – the simultaneous profession of loyalty to the Church and rejection of its guidance on matters pertaining to the 'National Question' – and South, like the great majority of the Fenians, the Parnellites, the anti-Treaty irregulars and IRA, considered himself a good Catholic even as he flouted the Church's instruction.

Here too South found support for his antisemitic outlook for, despite being repeatedly denounced by Fahey, the leadership of the Republican rump remaining after the split with De Valera in 1926 had been throughout the 1930s and 1940s a prime exponent of his anti-Jewish views. In July 1949, as South was disseminating Maria Duce's antisemitic message, Sinn Féin's newspaper, the *United Irishman* was accusing the Irish political mainstream of effectively covering up the "violent persecution" of the Catholic Church in Israel "because they have recognised the Israelite pro-Communist anti-Catholic government. Because their newspapers dare not offend the Judaeo-Masonic news-agencies in whom they depend for their foreign news. Because Jewish influence is rampant in some of those pseudo-Catholic parties and because Jewish finance is a power with which they fear to contend."<sup>131</sup> The following September it approvingly quoted Christopher Hollis to the effect that "the battle between Capitalism and Communism ... was in fact little more than a family quarrel between two Jews [Marx and Riccardo] for the divine right to deceive mankind"<sup>132</sup> while in January 1950 it claimed that the Holy Places in Palestine were "being desecrated by a people who have ever been the bitter enemies of Christianity."<sup>133</sup>

Seán South's antisemitism was therefore shaped by the same "emotive and militant cocktail of language, history and religion" that, according to Barry Flynn, led him to Brookborough in 1957.<sup>134</sup> In pursuing the "three loves in his life; the Irish language, Irish history and the Catholic Church,"<sup>135</sup> he aligned himself with extremist fringes of each, organisations such as Ailtirí na hAiséirghe, Maria Duce and the IRA which became for him the 'schools of corruption' where he was educated in contemporary antisemitic philosophy.

### ABBREVIATIONS

DEA:	Department of External Affairs
DDA:	Dublin Diocesan Archives
DDMA:	Department of Defence Military Archives
DJ:	Department of Justice
DT:	Department of the Taoiseach
HGA:	Holy Ghost Archives
NAI:	National Archives of Ireland
NLI:	National Library of Ireland



## REFERENCES

- Nolan, Tony, "Seán Sabht at Work in Limerick" in Des Long (ed.): *Awakening the Spirit of Freedom* (Limerick, Coiste Cuimneacháin Seán Sabht, 2007), p.46.
- "The Passing of an Intensely Patriotic Limerick Man", *Limerick Leader*, 05 January 1957, p.1. See also 'Death of a Brilliant Citizen' in Current Review column, *Limerick Chronicle*, 03 January 1957, p.1.
- Long, p.66.
- Fogerty, Des: *Sean South of Garryowen* (A.K. Ilen Company, 2006), p.31. As will be seen below, Maria Duce changed its name to Firinne in January 1955 but, in the interests of clarity, the group will be referred to by its former name throughout this article.
- See for example, the *Catholic Herald*, 12 June 1953, 'Jotter' column; the *Irish Times*, 12 June 1954, p.15 and Blanshard, Paul: *The Irish and Catholic Power* (London, Derek Verschoyle, 1954), p.197. According to modern historians, Maria Duce represented "a case study of intolerance" and a "lunatic fringe". See Dermot Keogh: 'The Role of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland, 1922-1995 in *Building Trust in Ireland; Studies Commissioned by the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation* (Belfast, 1996), p.135; Murphy, John A.: *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1975), p.91; O'Corráin, Daithí: *Rendering to God and Caesar; The Irish Churches and the Two States in Ireland, 1949-73* (Manchester, MUP, 2006), p.96.
- Delaney, Enda: 'Political Catholicism in Post-War Ireland; The Revd Denis Fahey and Maria Duce, 1945-54' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (July 2001), pp.487-511.
- These books included *The Kingship of Christ According to the Principles of Thomas Aquinas* (Dublin, Browne & Nolan, 1931); *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World* (Dublin, Browne & Nolan, 1935); *The Rulers of Russia* (Dublin, Browne & Nolan, 1938; quotations in this article are taken from the 3rd edition, 1939); *The Kingship of Christ and Organised Naturalism* (Cork, Forum Press, 1943) and *The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation* (Dublin, Regina Publications, 1953).
- Agar to Mangan, 17 June 1955, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/30/1.
- Ibid.
- Athans, Mary Christine: 'A New Perspective on Father Charles E. Coughlin' in *Church History*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (June 1987), p.226.
- Her books, *World Revolution: The Plot Against Civilisation and Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, which she claimed did "not base [their] assertions on merely 'anti-Semite' works, but principally on the writings of the Jews themselves", emphasised the sinister role of the Jews in the post-1789 period. Quoted in Athans, Mary Christine: *The Fahey-Coughlin Connection* (Ph.D thesis, California Berkeley, 1982), p.15. Copy in HGA, Fahey Papers.
- This theme is elaborated upon in all Fahey's works. See for example Fahey (1931), pp.119-126 & Fahey (1935), pp.69-71.
- Fahey (1931), p. 41.
- "All the civil and military administration of the Bolsheviks was and is, in great part, made up of Jews". *ibid.*, pp.157-158.
- Fahey (1939), p.48.
- According to Fahey, the Crucifixion represented "not only the public rejection by the Jewish nation of the Divine programme for order in the world, but also the proclamation by that nation of its determination to work against God for the enthronement of another Messiah". See Fahey (1953), p.121.
- Although Maria Duce's activities against non-Jews were themselves driven by antisemitism in that these people were targeted as the tools of Hollywood's 'Judaic-Masonic' masters, the "Warners, Mayers and Schenks".
- Quotations from *Fiat 23* (non-dated). See below for a discussion of this publication.
- In September 1949 the CCTPA told Archbishop McQuaid that it was "an arm of Maria Duce" (Ryan to McQuaid, 19 September 1949, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/79/1).
- ibid.*
- Irish Times*, 04 April 1951, 'An Irishman's Diary', p.7; *Irish Times*, 20 December 1951, 'Editorial', p.5; *Irish Times* 23 June 1952, 'An Irishman's Diary', p.7.
- Irish Times*, 02 September 1950, p.2.
- ibid.*
- ibid.*
- The Standard*, 25 August 1950, p.1.
- Michael O'Toole to the Manager, Theatre Royal, Dublin, 07 June 1952, p.4 (copy in DDA, McQuaid Papers, XX1/80/88/2). O'Toole also acted as Maria Duce's treasurer and director of its publishing house.
- Irish Times*, 04 April 1951, p.7; *Irish Independent*, Letters, 24 April 1951, p.8 & 15 May 1951, p.4.
- Irish Times*, 20 December 1951, p.5 & *The Standard*, 04 January 1952, p.5. About 20 protestors carried placards such as "Welles - Stalin's Star" and "Welles' Spiritual Home is Moscow" and at least two were led away by police on account of their "riotous attitude".
- Michael O'Toole to the Manager, Theatre Royal, Dublin, 07 June 1952, above cit., p.1.
- Irish Times*, 23 June 1952, p.6 & 28 June 1952. Hundreds of fans had travelled to Dublin airport to welcome him and while thousands more gathered outside his hotel (*Irish Times*, 19 June 1952, p.3).
- Seoighe, Mainchín: *Maraíodh Seán Sabht Aréir* (Dublin, Sáirséal & Dill, 1963), p.49.
- Limerick Leader*, 10 January 1949, p.2.
- Limerick Leader*, 24 January 1949, p.2. The full text of this report is available at <http://www.archive.org/details/reportofsenatefa00calirich>
- Catholic Voice*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (January 1949), p.201. Fahey was also quoting from this same Senate Report.
- Limerick Leader*, 04 May 1949, p.2.
- Limerick Leader*, 11 May 1949, p.2.
- Limerick Leader*, 23 July 1949, p.2.
- "The Red Terror has now reached the zenith of its ravages". Limerick City Archives, minutes of Limerick City Council meeting, 10 January 1949.
- Limerick Leader*, 15 January 1949, p.2; *Limerick Chronicle*, 19 February 1949, p.6; *Limerick Leader*, 05 February 1949, p.10; *Limerick Chronicle*, 01 January 1949, p.5; *Limerick Leader*, 07 February 1949, p.3; 09 February 1949, p.3, 22 January 1949, p.7; *Limerick Chronicle*, 17 February 1949, p.3; 22 February 1949, p.3; *Limerick Leader*, 22 January 1949, p.7 & *Limerick Chronicle*, 15 January 1949, p.5 respectively.
- See for example, the Jesuits (*Limerick Leader*, 03 December 1949, p.7) and the Redemptorists (*Limerick Leader*, 03 October 1949, p.3 & 14 November 1949, p.3). The Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Patrick O'Neill, also used his sermons and pastorals to rail against "a persecution more ruthless than any in recorded history... the greatest scourge of any day" (*Limerick Leader*, 05 January 1949, p.3 & *Limerick Chronicle*, 21 February 1950, p.3) He also warned against "the danger of the cinema which... very often perverted the minds of the young" (*Limerick Leader*, 03 May 1950, p.3).
- Kemmy, Jim: 'Sean South; A Political Assessment' in *The Limerick Socialist* (January 1972), p.4. South himself spoke out against Communism at meetings of the Legion's Irish-speaking section, An Réalt (of which he was president). For example, in 1952 he warned that Ireland "stood at a parting of the ways" between "her native Christian tradition ... and alien materialism" and that while they had "the bright Realt (star) to guide them, in many lands of Europe it was ... the red star of Moscow that confronted the people" (*Limerick Leader*, 13 December 1952, p.2).
- Limerick Leader*, 23 February 1949, p.3; *Limerick Chronicle*, 24 January 1950, p.3; *Limerick Leader*, 19 April 1952, p.5; *Limerick Leader*, 22 September 1952, p.1.
- See for example, *Limerick Leader*, Editorials, 03 January 1949, p.2; 09 February 1949, p.2; 16 February 1949, p.2; 23 February 1949, p.2; 16 November 1949, p.2; 06 February 1950, p.2; & 16 August 1950, p.2. See also *Limerick Chronicle*, 01 January 1949, p.7 & 29 July 1950, p.5 and *Limerick Weekly Echo*, 12 February 1949, p.2 & 23 July 1949, p.2.
- Although Tom Pope also held anti-Jewish views, blaming "a certain section" of the Jewish nation "who gave up the idea of God ... [and] were working for control of the world" for all revolutions since 1792 (*Limerick Leader*, 19 April 1952, p.5).
- Limerick Leader*, 10 January 1949, p.2 & 24 January 1949, p.2.
- Quoted in Seoighe, p.51.
- For details of the formation of Ailtiri na hAiséirghe, see Douglas, R.M.: *Architects of the Resurrection; Ailtiri na hAiséirghe and the Fascist 'New order' in Ireland* (Manchester, MUP, 2009).
- See Ailtiri na hAiséirghe: *Aiséirghe Says ... The New Order in the New Ireland*



- (Dublin, Ailtíri na hAiséirghe, 1943) & the organisation's 16-point 'Policy and Programme' (*Southern Star*, 16 September 1944, p.4) for details of its political platforms.
49. Ailtíri na hAiséirghe: *Aiséirghe and the Jewish Question* (non-dated pamphlet, c.1945). This was based on a position paper by Aiséirghe member Seán O'hUrmoltaigh called *Ireland and Israel* which R. M. Douglas describes as perhaps "the most technically accomplished piece of Irish anti-Semitic literature ever written" (Douglas, p.131).
  50. South eventually broke with Clann na Poblachta over the issue. McDermott, Eithne: *Clann na Poblachta* (Cork, Cork University Press, 1998), p.80. Given the similarity of Clann na Poblachta's policies with those of Aiséirghe, R. M. Douglas describes it as "Aiséirghe Light" (Douglas, p.252).
  51. Kemmy, p.4; Fogerty, p. 25.
  52. Douglas, p.285, n.139.
  53. According to Donal O'Drisceoil, Ailtíri na hAiséirghe was "one of the two most organised groups of anti-Semites in Ireland" in the 1940s. O'Drisceoil, Donal: *Censorship in Ireland 1939-1945; Neutrality, Politics and Society* (Cork, Cork University Press, 1996), p.185.
  54. The *Limerick Chronicle* carried two front page reports of "well-attended" Aiséirghe rallies and one of its two Limerick candidates, Michael O'Brien Kelly, failed to take the final council seat by just 35 votes on the 36th count. Neither report mentioned antisemitic statements by speakers but any such remarks would have been deleted by the press censor under the Emergency Powers Act (*Limerick Chronicle*, 24 May 1945 & 31 May 1945; *Limerick Leader*, 18 June 1945, p.2).
  55. Seoighe, p.44; Kemmy, p.4. Ailtíri na Aiséirghe was originally formed as the political wing of Craobh na hAiséirghe, itself described in a Garda Special Branch report as "a Hitler Youth movement under the guise of an Irish class". However, unhappy with being politicised in this way, the Craobh broke away in November 1942 and subsequently changed its name to Glún na Buaidhe. South later worked alongside Aiséirghe members such as Ristéard Mac Siacuis on the Limerick County Committee of Conradh na Gaeilge (Douglas, p.69; "Gaelic League: Standard for the Fainne", *Limerick Leader*, 13 December 1952, p.2).
  56. Fogerty, p.32.
  57. Novick, Ben: *Conceiving Revolution; Irish Nationalist Propaganda during the First World War* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2001), p.113, n.47.
  58. Douglas, p.154. Soo to was Kathleen Clarke before she 'defected' to Clann na Poblachta in 1946 (*ibid.*, p.254).
  59. Seoighe, p.44.
  60. *ibid.*
  61. *Fiat* no. 42, non-dated, p.1.
  62. Letters from Maria Duce officials Tomás Roseingrave and John Duggan to Denis Fahey, 16 April 1948 & 11 May 1949 respectively (HGA, Denis Fahey Papers, Box 14, 'Maria Duce II'). Roseingrave was Maria Duce's vice-president.
  63. At a meeting of the Irish Civil Liberties Association in May 1950, the Jewish Representative Council strongly protested against *Fiat*'s "incitement to violence against the Jews" (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/8/3).
  64. My conclusions are based on the fact that *Fiat* 17 dealt with the aftermath of the Mindszenty case and so was probably published in Spring 1949 shortly after South joined Maria Duce, while *Fiat* 42, headlined "Hungary - Murdered by Jewish Gangsters", concerned the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising of October/November 1956 suggesting a publication date of early 1957, shortly after his death.
  65. In the course of an enquiry into the organisation commissioned by Archbishop McQuaid in the mid 1950s, the director of the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology, Fr. Thomas Fehily, put it to Maria Duce members that, because they distributed *Fiat* "it must represent your views or at least you agree with the views it expresses". They agreed (Fehily to Liam Martin, Secretary to Archbishop McQuaid, 05 November 1956, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/36/3).
  66. In March 1949 Maria Duce had sent a letter to all members of the Oireachtas deploring the Government's decision to grant de facto recognition to "the Talmudistic State of Israel" which it described as "a religious-political entity which is the direct antithesis of all [Catholic Ireland] stands for in its allegiance to Christ the King" (copy in NAI, DEA files, 305/81/1). Indeed, fears for the safety of Christians in the new Jewish State were widespread in Ireland and Limerick City and County Councils were just two of a number of local authorities to pass a resolution calling for their protection and that of the Christian Holy Places. See Minutes of Limerick City Council meeting, 08 August 1949; T. F. Broe to Dept Taoiseach, 11 August 1949, NAI, DT S/3982 (Broe was Limerick County Secretary).
  67. "God's torn Hands and Feet, God's drawn face, God's scourged and wounded Body ... exercised precious little influence on these proceedings" (*Fiat* 40, non-dated, p.1). Ironically, it fell to Briscoe to organise Dublin Corporation's vote of sympathy with South's bereaved family a few short months later (*Irish Times*, 8 January 1957, p.1).
  68. Seoighe, p.52. Bryan Fanning gives the year of its formation as 1954 but his assertion is based on a misreading of Manus O'Riordan's 1984 essay, 'The Sinn Féin Tradition and Irish Anti-Semitism'. Fanning, Bryan: *Racism and Social Change in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester, MUP, 2002), p.70. O'Riordan's piece can be found in *The Irish-Jewish Yearbook*, 1984-1985, pp.15-27, where it was reprinted as 'Anti-Semitism in Irish Politics'.
  69. No correspondence between Fahey and South survives in the Denis Fahey Papers. This is unsurprising as most of Fahey's papers were destroyed by two Holy Ghost fathers after his death and those that have survived are merely those they overlooked.
  70. Maria Duce claims 82 active members in a letter to Archbishop McQuaid's secretary in January 1949 (Agar to Chris Mangan, 19 January 1949, DDA, McQuaid Papers, XX1/80/2/3) while the figure of 200 comes from Fr. Fehily's report. See Gaughan, J. Anthony: *Alfred O'Rahilly, Vol. III, Part II Catholic Apologist* (Dublin, Kingdom Books, 1993), p.200.
  71. Some historians have put Maria Duce's national associate membership at between five and six thousand. See Bolster, Evelyn: *The Knights of Columbanus* (Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1979), p.92 and Whyte, J. H.: *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1970* (Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1971), p.165. However, Fr. Fehily estimated it to be just one thousand. See Gaughan, p.200.
  72. This 'special recognition' clause was deleted by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution Act in January 1973 following a referendum carried by an 84.5-15.5% majority.
  73. Quoted in Delaney, p.500. There was some justice in Fahey's position in that De Valera indicated that this formulation was simply intended to recognise a sociological fact. See Whyte, p.55.
  74. *Fiat* 8, non-dated, p.1.
  75. Maria Duce membership card. Quoted in Delaney, p.501.
  76. Maria Duce Article 44 petition form (copy in NAI, DT S/9756a).
  77. A few hundred petition forms survive alongside a list of 846 individuals who sent their forms to their local T.D.s which was forwarded to the Taoiseach by Maria Duce in December 1949. 4 of the petition forms have Limerick addresses while a further 35 Limerick names are contained on the list. Interestingly South's is not among them (*ibid.*).
  78. Delaney, p.502. We know from Fr. Fahey's correspondence and letters published in the Catholic and national press that some of Maria Duce's most active officials had Rathgar and Sandymount addresses.
  79. He subsequently became "Director of Organisation" on the group's National Advisory Council (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/44/5).
  80. Trips to Limerick by Hollywood personalities were, in any case, rare. Danny Kaye paid a brief visit in May 1951 but it was not publicised in advance (*Limerick Leader*, 02 May 1951, p.3).
  81. Connolly simply noted that Peck was "dropped from the programme and was not even the subject of an apology" while he was describing the cancellation of Adler's concert as "the biggest mystery in the theatre business in Dublin" eight days after the incident (*Limerick Leader*, 28 November 1949, p.4 & 28 August 1950, p.4).
  82. These meetings reportedly attracted thousands. See Blanshard, p.197 and Whyte, p.165.



83. Flynn, Barry: *Soldiers of Folly: The IRA Border Campaign 1956-1962* (Cork, The Collins Press, 2009), p.103. See *Sunday Independent*, 25 February 1996, p.27 & Long, p.39 for trenchant denials that South engaged in such activities.
84. *Limerick Leader*, 02 July 1949, p.11.
85. This programme included state recognition of Catholicism as the 'One True Church' and official acknowledgement of its power, the indissolubility of marriage, the Catholic education of children and the 'wide diffusion' of property.
86. Such accusations were, according to prominent Maria Duce member, Commandant W. J. Brennan-Whitmore, used "by Jewish Communists as a shield for the indulgence of their Iscariotism" (*The Standard*, 22 April 1949, p.4). Incidentally, Brennan-Whitmore, who remained a fervent anti-Communist crusader all his life, accused the Limerick Maoists of attacking their own bookshop in 1970 ("The device of harmless 'outrages' against one's own organisation and blaming [it] on one's opponents is a Red tactic as old as tyranny itself"). See *Irish Times*, 21 March 1970, p.11.
87. See, for example, *Fiat* 8 & *Fiat* 22 and letter from Fahey to Minister for Justice Seán MacEoin, 23 November 1950, NAI, DJ S/18/45).
88. According to one of his Holy Ghost confreres, Fr. Fahey was "hypersensitive" to such criticisms which "hurt him personally, even to the extent of making him physically ill" (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/23/1).
89. *Limerick Leader*, 10 February 1954, p.1.
90. Fahey (1953), p.72.
91. Fahey (1943), p.7. See also Fahey (1953), p.51.
92. Fahey (1953), p.41.
93. *Fiat* 42.
94. *Limerick Leader*, 22 April 1950, p.7.
95. *Limerick Leader*, 31 December 1949, p.7.
96. *Limerick Leader*, 10 March 1952, p.1.
97. *Limerick Leader*, 26 July 1952, p.7. In an earlier letter, Sheedy argued that "for too long now the sanctity of democracy has been merely an opium for the people in the hands of clever politicians" (*Limerick Leader*, 12 July 1952).
98. *Limerick Leader*, 31 December 1949, p.7.
99. *Limerick Leader*, 07 January 1950, p. 9.
100. *Limerick Leader*, 06 August 1952, p.4.
101. *Limerick Leader*, 09 August 1952, p.5. An imprimatur is an episcopal declaration that a work is free of doctrinal and moral error.
102. Blanshard, p.198. Blanshard had met a delegation of Maria Duce leaders in the course of researching his book in 1952. For a report of this meeting see Duggan to McQuaid, 03 December 1952, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/18/2.
103. Fehily to McQuaid, 01 April 1958, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/44/8. Furthermore, of the 51 members who sat the Catholic Social Guild course examination in 1950, 46 passed, 18 of these with first class honours (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/12/2).
104. Keogh, Dermot & McCarthy, Andrew J.: *The Making of the Irish Constitution* 1937 (Dublin, Mercier Press, 2007), pp. 158-161.
105. An 'imprimi potest' is the permission of a writer's religious superior to publish a work. According to the *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, it implies approval of the work and clears it to receive an imprimatur. Both are always preceded by a 'nihil obstat' which indicates that the work contains nothing repugnant to Catholic faith and morals.
106. Fahey (1931), pp.8 & 12. McQuaid, himself a confirmed antisemite, also praised the works of Nesta Webster.
107. McQuaid also told them that he considered the CCTPA "very necessary" and that those calling Maria Duce intolerant would "swiftly know the truth after death". Roseingrave to Fahey, 25 November 1949, HGA, Fahey Papers, Box 14.
108. McQuaid to Papal Nuncio (draft letter), 22 December 1955, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/32/2. When asked by Fr. Fehily in 1956 whether *Fiat* "were not a little extreme at times" Maria Duce replied that being "extreme for Christ could be a virtue" (Fehily to Martin, 05 November 1956, above citation).
109. Kinnane was Fahey's first cousin.
110. Delaney, p.490.
111. Athans (1987), p.227, n.9. The 1949 minute book of one of Maria Duce's Dublin branches refers to it simply as "the handbook" and records that every branch meeting opened with a reading from its pages (Minute Book for Maria Duce, St Philip Neri Branch, South Dublin, 1949, NLI Manuscripts Collection).
112. Browne to Fahey, 01 February 1944, HGA, Fahey Papers.
113. Athans (1982), p.59.
114. My thanks to Gwen O'Sullivan at the Limerick Diocesan Archive for this information.
115. See report of meeting between Maria Duce's executive committee and Frs. Crean and Kavanagh, 22 December 1952, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/20/1.
116. This began with the withdrawal of his imprimatur from Maria Duce's Six-Point Plan and a request that it stop styling itself a Catholic Action Body and culminated in 1954 in his instruction that it change its name to one unassociated with sacred persons. In January 1955, Maria Duce accordingly changed its title to 'Firinne' which had formerly been that of its Irish-speaking section (Mangan to Agar, 14 February 1951, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/13/1 and McQuaid to Managan, 08 November 1954, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX180/27/1).
117. Delaney, p.510.
118. McQuaid to Fr. Arthur Ryan, 08 April 1952, DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XX1/80/16/2.
119. "Their handling of the doctrinal position will never change the Article because of their failure to understand the distinction between the doctrine and the concrete circumstances of our country" (ibid.).
120. Gaughan, pp.199-200. According to Gaughan, McQuaid would not have it sold in his diocese.
121. Athans (1982), p.66. However, even this book carried an imprimatur, that of the Bishop of Ferns, although it is not clear whether it was actually granted or whether the publisher simply 'presumed' it. It also received a favourable notice in the *Irish Independent* and was recommended as a "book of vital importance" by the Maynooth magazine, *Vexilla Regis* (*Vexilla Regis* 1953, p.144 & 1954/1955, p.115; *Irish Independent*, 11 April 1953, p.6).
122. There were two main reasons for this decline. Firstly, Fahey's death allowed McQuaid (who had been hitherto constrained by his friendship with his former professor) to step up the pressure on the organisation and secondly, as the marked deterioration in the 'quality' of *Fiat* articles after 1954 illustrates, it had lost its intellectual driving force. However, there were reports of Maria Duce's revival in the mid-1970s. See *Hibernia Magazine*, 09 August 1974.
123. *Rosc*, January 1956, p.6; Fahey, Denis: *Money, Manipulation and Social Order* (Dublin, Browne & Nolan, 1944).
124. *Rosc*, July 1955, p.5 & November 1955, p.2. However, neither Belloc nor Chesterton espoused the wilder antisemitic theories of the type propounded by Maria Duce. Belloc thought Nesta Webster's work "lunatic" and the product of "an unstable mind" while Chesterton specifically took issue with some of *Fiat*'s more elaborate claims (Pearce, Joseph: *Old Thunder; A Life of Hilaire Belloc* (London, Harper Collins, 2002), p. 210; Letters from Maria Duce official Séamus Hurley to Fahey, 24 July 1948 & 23 November 1948, HGA, Fahey Papers, Box 12).
125. Fahey (1939), p.61.
126. ibid., p.60.
127. Fahey (1935), p.97.
128. Fogerty, p.51.
129. *Irish Independent*, 19 January 1956, p.7.
130. Fogerty, p.114. Born Patrick Giblin, Fr. Athanasius frequently spoke out against Communism ("the same persecutions and infamies... Ireland had suffered in the past [were] now taking place in other countries under dictators of the same calibre as Ireton") and had even had lectured Maria Duce in Dublin on its evils. He may also have acted as spiritual advisor to its Limerick branch but, for the moment, this remains speculative. Athanasius was transferred to Jerusalem eight months after South's death (*Irish Times*, 5 November 1951, p.6; *Limerick Chronicle*, 6 November 1951, p.3; *Irish Independent*, 1 December 1952, p.10; *Irish Independent*, 26 August 1957, p.5).
131. *United Irishman*, July-August 1949, p.5.
132. *United Irishman*, September 1949. It also carried quotations from Fr. Fahey and his protégé, the American antisemitic 'radio priest', Fr. Charles Coughlin.
133. *United Irishman*, January 1950, p.7.
134. Flynn (2009), p.102.
135. ibid.