**[Published in Irish Political Review in October 2019 with a response from Hyde in November and in January 2020 on the Adler Philadelphia incident]**

Dear IPR Editor,

I wish to take up Jack Lane’s challenge in June’s *Irish Political Review* where he reviews Paul Hyde’s book, *Anatomy of a Lie,* under the headline, “The Gauntlet Is Thrown!” Jack concludes his piece by writing how “the response of those in a position to attempt a rebuttal would be interesting” and something which should come from “a variety of authors (who) have sought to authenticate the diaries”.

I am one such author who has written an 800-page book on Casement, now in its 3rd edition. It encompasses all his diaries (the 1910 and 1911 in full) and a biography under the title *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries – with a Study of his Background, Sexuality, and Irish Political Life.*

Before I start my response to the challenge, I have to advise I understand Paul Hyde’s book has been withdrawn by the publishing company as actionable descriptions of certain Casement authors have been brought to its attention. I however have no such complaint as Paul Hyde studiously avoids addressing anything I have written, both in my books – one also on Casement in Germany – and, since 1999, countless articles, speeches and letters. He does make two cursory (and baffling to readers) mentions of me. On p. 23, to a list of Casement books, he adds just, “Dudgeon’s 2002 volume” and again on p. 104 he reveals my 2nd (paperback) edition which he says is only available on Kindle. In both cases, he gives no book title nor even my Christian name.

I am used to being ignored, even unpleasantly attacked, as by my rival author Angus Mitchell, and subject to criticism in the Irish Political Review. It is hard to say whether the attacks are because I am an Ulster Unionist, given I query Casement’s misunderstanding of my community. (Like Casement, I know the territory – he got it wrong and hastened partition, now a century old.) Or being gay and written off as parti pris and in Angus’s words one who “uses the Black Diaries to update the queer geographies of Ulster and to re-imagine Northern Protestant nationalism as some high camp drama driven by a cabal of queer crusaders”. For either reason, Paul’s refusal to engage, even to acknowledge me, means he does not deal or have to deal with any of my arguments, assessments or evidence. Perhaps I know too much given there are some 10,000 facts in my book plus some reasonable speculation, being an historian not a lawyer, and only 1,000 facts or assertions in Paul’s.

I pick up the gauntlet having spent the intervening months researching some of those assertions and contradictions while reading the continuing discussion of the book in the IPR. Indeed I wrote at length for Paul Hyde’s website on one well-known contradiction about Casement diarying that he stayed at the Cosmopolite Hotel, in Iquitos on 31 August 1910 yet as evidenced going elsewhere. Not a word of my detailed explanatory exposition appeared, only the two concluding sentences.

The diaries incorporate perhaps 20,000 facts, mostly minor, but each still requiring research, imaginative writing or vigorous manipulation from other texts. Forgery theorists have concentrated on perhaps a score of discrepancies and confusions which on inspection can be reasonably explained. Hyde’s thesis is that the typescripts came before the manuscripts although work on both might have co-incided. Typists either copy manuscript material, are dictated to, or, rarely, create text mentally as they type. There is however not the tiniest fragment of evidence of any such forgery in official records. To ensure any evidence was eliminated even in the form of instructions or payments, let alone research itself, would leave a paper trail. But the Brits are mighty clever. Silently it all went.

Hyde’s central and novel assertion is that because there is, in his view, no evidence outside official records of the diaries in manuscript being seen before Casement’s execution, the typescripts which did so exist must have been forged first. By virtue of this assertion the whole edifice apparently crumbles and nothing can be believed.

He makes great play of a statement in the 1959 Home Office report on the diaries (TNA HO 144/23481 ‘Treason: Sir Roger Casement: Report of Working Party on the Casement Diaries: proposed transfer to the Public Record Office’). The statement is from a memo of 6 March 1959 which says in its Annex A, “There is no record on the Home Office papers of the diaries or the copies having been shown to anyone outside the Government service before Casement's trial.” That statement (on his pp. 41 and 81) is heavily relied on as evidence of absence of evidence of the diaries existing before, at least, the trial if not the execution.

On inspection, that statement adds up to very little. It says there is no record in the Home Office’s own files of the diaries being shown to anyone outside government before the trial which started on 26 June 1916. There are however two sets of files that have been made public since that 1959 date and which the Home Office could not, and did not take cognisance of in its remarks. They are the Scotland Yard (MEPO) files and the Security Service (KV) files. In both, detailed mention is made of the diaries being in existence and in the government’s hands from 25 April 1916. There is also evidence of certain people seeing diary manuscripts or photographs of manuscripts before the execution, in those files and elsewhere.

Those outside government who saw manuscript material in some form include US Ambassador Walter Page, American journalist Ben Allen, John Quinn in the United States, Rev. John Harris and Henry Massingham, editor of *The Nation*.

It is true that nowhere do they or anyone else set down precisely what they saw and what form these volumes took. Even the top officials write varied descriptions but the police repeat the particular items were taken from an Ebury Street hoard of Casement material after being brought in to Scotland Yard by a Mr Germain following the arrest. One record (MEPO 3/2415) says there were three diaries and a ledger, an address book and memorandum book extracted. Contrary to another Paul Hyde assertion, this time in *History Ireland* (November 2016), there were also 23 books in the Germain trunks. Indeed there were over 100 books eventually returned to his cousin Gertrude Parry (NLI 10763/24). The address book seems to have gone back into the pile and ended up also being returned to Gertrude.

One official writing in haste to another and knowing well the level of knowledge of the recipient does not relate repetitively and precisely details of the matter in hand in order to provide historians and barrack room lawyers, a hundred years on, with an exact account or description of things passing through their hands or minds.

Hyde, despite saying that British officials cannot be trusted, in contradiction, frequently avers that certain government documents can be accepted as true and accurate. I take everything with a pinch of salt. For example, I agree with him that the witness statements recorded in Christiania in 1916 for possible use at the trial are at times unconvincing and suggest more a dislike of Casement’s companion Adler Christensen than anything else. I would however dispute two other facts he asserts on the same subject.

He says his mother Henriette had not seen her son since 1906 but she states on 18 July 1916 that she saw him in 1914 and 1915 (TNA HO 144/1637).

Similarly he discounts Adler’s remarks recorded on his visit to the British Consulate in Philadelphia in 1916 which were then written up by the police to be signed as a statement (which is standard police practice). In the event, as when he betrayed Casement in 1914 in Norway, Adler changed his mind and did not sign. But a key part of what he said, that he had met Casement in South America before they connected up in New York in 1914 is confirmed by a document written by Casement while in Germany (NLI 17023). The fact that Adler was a thoroughly deceitful and unreliable person whom Casement could not fault despite evidence from someone like John Devoy tells you something of his judgement.

Another area I was sceptical about is Casement’s denial of the diaries while in prison or almost the opposite Serjeant Sullivan’s reporting the prisoner’s defence of his homosexuality. Neither happened. Sullivan admitted he was wrong. Casement’s solicitor George Gavan Duffy, who tried desperately to stop any such discussion makes it plain Casement said nothing on the matters. Duffy was well aware of what might emerge, having looked over three suitcases of his documents in London in 1915 and presumably destroying everything.

For evidence of Casement’s homosexual status, people will have to read my book. Outside the diaries, there are no definitive accounts of sexual activity beyond the Norwegian witness statements and those of Adler. All of course are derived from British records, which if not permitted to be taken account of, or if disputed in every respect, as is the case with diary deniers, leaves only historical assessment of what has come our way in Casement’s papers, his behaviour patterns, the considered views of others and the absence of evidence of heterosexual activity. These are normally private matters, unfathomable to outsiders. Casement simply wrote it all down. Better for his aficionados to accept that reality and then argue for his political foresight and accuracy.

Yours sincerely

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