RESPONSE TO PAUL HYDE LETTER IN MARCH 2020 IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

[Published in April 2020 edition]

Dear Editor,

Responding to Paul Hyde’s letter in the March 2020 edition, I do apologise for mis-titling his ‘Philadelphia Exercise’ article as ‘Philadelphia Experience’. He however asserts I have made a number of other mistakes some of which I must refute, as briefly as I can.

He reminds us that Gavan Duffy did not say either what was in the three cases of Casement papers he inspected in 1915 or what happened to them. I made a reasonable deduction, something which Paul calls ‘imagining’. He will not engage as to the necessity of historical assessments and sticks instead to lawyering, yet then brazenly asserts: “Most likely they were retained and later passed to Gertrude Parry”. But there isn’t a fragment of evidence for that speculation. Parry certainly did not mention it.

When writing I alone had drawn attention to a particular story, what I was referring to (perhaps unclearly) was not the Philadelphia interview itself but the fact of a document existing where Casement confirmed he had met Adler previously in South America, and not in July 1914 along New York’s Broadway. This meant he had lied to John Devoy about the matter for what I suggest is an obvious reason. The document I referenced, NLI 17,023, on the earlier meeting is one Hyde disingenuously quotes, as if his own discovery. He then tries to turn it against the police by stating they embellished the story by fabricating Montevideo as a location for the meeting. It is a mystery why they would want to pick that city. It is plain the mistake was Adler’s.

It is correct to say the Scotland Yard detective Ward reported seeing Adler Christensen once in Philadelphia not twice. In truth on his second visit the following day he only saw Consul Ford, and announced he would co-operate no further.

Inspector Ward in his report spelt the word as jewellery not jewelry, something one should follow. It remains the standard non-US spelling.

Ward was indeed killed in a Zeppelin raid in September 1916 not as I wrote 1917, eliding the year with that his ship, the SS Cameronia, was torpedoed.

Paul Hyde says “the Ward document is not a copy but is the *original* from DPP files”. However I am correct in that the item I quoted from, marked ‘copy’, is in MI5 file TNA KV2/9/3. There must be two archived copies.

I did mistakenly write Adler visited Casement at his rooms. It was of course Adler’s rooms which Casement frequently visited in South America, according to the Norwegian.

If as Paul says his research is “substantially based on HM Government documents in the UK National Archives (TNA)” then it is reasonable for me too to rely on them. In the case of my statement about “the failure to locate Casement’s possessions in London”, which Paul calls “demonstrably false”, the TNA files reveal that inspections of Casement’s papers in London all occurred after his 21 April 1916 arrest. Despite Scotland Yard knowing his various London addresses, the two landlords and the shipping agent Allisons confirm this non-inspection.

In the last case, his trunks, bags and a deck chair were provided to Scotland Yard on 27 April 1916 (TNA MEPO 3/2415). Mr Allison insisted on 12 May he was totally ignorant of their contents but could not say on what date they were delivered into his care except that it was previous to the outbreak of war (TNA KV 2/7). He also stated, somewhat plaintively, that there was “an account of fifteen shillings owing” in respect of the packages. Gavan Duffy declined to pay the bill.

Jeffrey Dudgeon 3 March 2020