

prepared. He regretted that, while there was considerable co-operation and good will between staff and students in particular schools of the two Dublin colleges, there existed none at the highest levels of the two institutions. In spite of efforts by T.C.D. members, he complained, to contact and co-operate with those in U.C.D. there was no encouragement from that quarter. Alfred, he continued, would know from experience the want of co-operation from U.C.D. even towards the Cork and Galway colleges which had made the N.U.I. so ineffective.

McConnell's assessment of who was responsible at the highest level on the U.C.D. side for the negative attitude to T.C.D. was uninformed. Alfred and McQuaid were as responsible as Tierney. Perhaps McConnell's close friendship with both of them partially blinded him to this. On 22 March 1967 the Commission on Higher Education published its recommendations, the principal ones of which were: (1) U.C.D., U.C.C. and U.C.G. to become independent universities replacing the N.U.I. and (2) T.C.D. to remain a separate university. A month later Donogh O'Malley, minister for education, since Colley's transfer to the department of industry and commerce in July 1966, announced the government's intention to combine T.C.D. and U.C.D. in one university of Dublin. Alfred privately welcomed this.

On 5 July 1968 Brian Lenihan, who had succeeded O'Malley, announced that the N.U.I. was to be dissolved; U.C.C. and U.C.G. to become separate universities; and T.C.D. and U.C.D. to be combined in one university of Dublin but each to retain its identity and to have equal representation on the new institution's governing body. Largely because of financial stringency these plans were never implemented. However, they facilitated agreement on 7 April 1970 between representatives of T.C.D. and U.C.D. on a wide range of issues. Three months later with a collective sigh of relief the Catholic bishops announced the removal of their restrictions on Catholics attending T.C.D.

Theories of Fr Denis Fahey, C.S.Sp.

During his stay at Blackrock College Alfred usually took his meals with Fr Michael McCarthy, C.S.Sp., and Dr Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp. The three became very close friends. Frs McCarthy and O'Carroll were frequently surprised at how informed and up to date Alfred was on any subject which arose

in conversation. Although Alfred tended to dominate the conversation,¹⁹ his comments were always worth a hearing.

There was scarcely a topic which the three did not discuss. One topic, it seems, was never raised. This concerned the theories of Fr Denis Fahey, C.S.Sp., who had been professor of philosophy and church history at the Holy Ghost Missionary College, Kimmage, Dublin. From 1931 onwards Fahey, whom Alfred never met, wrote extensively on Church-State relations and cognate matters in terms of a world-wide struggle between the spiritual and the temporal.²⁰ His views on 'Judaeo-Masonic subversive activities' in general and the Jewish people in particular caused considerable concern. Many people, including several bishops, a number of priests and Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary, objected to Fahey's more extreme ideas when he first published them. David Goldstein, an American Jewish convert to Catholicism, published an article criticising Fahey's theory that communism was a Jewish invention supported by the Jews worldwide.

By the end of his life it was well-nigh impossible for Fahey to have his books reviewed or given an 'imprimatur'.²¹ The appearance of *The kingship of Christ and the conversion of the Jewish nation* with an 'imprimatur' from Dr James Staunton, bishop of Ferns, caused consternation in ecclesiastical

19. Dr Michael O'Carroll recalled introducing Alfred to John D. Sheridan. Alfred was delighted to meet the humorist and proceeded to tell him how much he enjoyed his writing. Later Dr O'Carroll informed Sheridan that Alfred had enjoyed the conversation. To which Sheridan replied that probably Alfred assumed it was a conversation but that in fact it had been a monologue.

20. Fahey's works include: *The kingship of Christ according to the principles of St Thomas Aquinas* (Dublin 1931), *The mystical body of Christ in the modern world* (Dublin 1935), *The rulers of Russia* (Dublin 1939), *The kingship of Christ and organised naturalism* (Dublin 1943), *Money manipulation and social order* (Cork 1944), *The mystical body of Christ and the re-organisation of society* (Cork 1945), *The kingship of Christ and the conversion of the Jewish nation* (Dublin 1953) and *The Church and farming* (Cork 1953). He also translated a number of pamphlets on these subjects from the French. For a neat summary of the life and work of Fr Fahey, see *Irish Independent* 22 January 1954.

21. Fahey did receive an 'imprimatur' for his books. However, it should be remembered that the 'imprimatur' does not signify ecclesiastical approval of political ideas or authentication of claimed historical facts, but only a judgement that a work contains no doctrinal or moral error. As time passed, however, the ecclesiastical authorities became alarmed at the moral and doctrinal implications of Fahey's tendency to attribute virtually all evils in modern history to the 'organised naturalism' of the Jews.

circles.²² Archbishop McQuaid had a meeting with Dr Staunton on the issue and let it be known that he did not consider that any copies of Fr Fahey's latest book should be sold in the Catholic bookstores of the archdiocese. When Fr Fahey died in 1954 Archbishop McQuaid sent a note that he 'must be absent' from the funeral. He also insisted that Maria Duce, an organisation established by Fr Fahey's admirers and supporters, curtail its activities. In 1955 he persuaded its leaders to change its name to Fírinne, which had been the name of Maria Duce's Irish-speaking subsidiary.

Archbishop McQuaid never formally recognised Maria Duce and it seems was deeply concerned that some of its activities and ideals were associated with the name of the Mother of God to whom he had a singular personal devotion. In 1954 he had asked Fr G. Thomas Fehily, director of the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology, to report on the organisation. Both were surprised at the size of its membership. With branches in Belfast, Cork and Limerick, as well as Dublin, there were some two hundred members and about a thousand associate members.

Some members of Maria Duce were expelled from the Legion of Mary when they had attempted to infiltrate that organisation. Fr Fahey's former confreres were also embarrassed by his anti-semitic views and those of his followers. After his death they discouraged members of Maria Duce/Fírinne from organising annual demonstrations at his grave, suggesting that people only make private visits to the cemetery. Thereafter the movement dwindled and became extinct.

Alfred's uncharacteristic reticence about the writings and activities of Fr Fahey was almost certainly due to his awareness of the acute embarrassment they caused members of the Holy Ghost Order. Fr Michael O'Carroll could recall only one comment by Alfred on Fahey during his fifteen years in Blackrock

22. It seems that Fahey requested and was refused an 'imprimatur' for *The kingship of Christ and the conversion of the Jewish nation* from those bishops who had been more co-operative with regard to his earlier books. The book was eventually published with the 'imprimatur' of the bishop of Ferns, but it remains unclear as to whether the episcopal approval was actually received. When the question was raised at that time, it was stated, on behalf of Dr Staunton, that the publishers had simply presumed the 'imprimatur'. The editor of the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* informed Fahey that he could not find anyone to review his book. Eventually a review appeared after Fahey persuaded one of his ex-students to draft it.

College. When someone observed that Fahey quoted a great number of authors in his works, Alfred replied that, while Fahey read widely, he seemed to have digested very little in so doing.

The publication in the early spring of 1941 by Alfred of *Money* prompted an exchange of letters between him and Fahey.²³ Alfred indicated that he was not familiar with what Fahey had published up to that time. He warned him to 'beware of the catches of Douglasism' and cautioned him against being too radical, as that would jeopardise any chance of financial reform. Subsequently, in a letter, dated 18 August 1941, he claimed that 'the Portuguese financial system', incorporated 'most of the moderate reforms' for which he was pressing. However, he distanced himself from Fahey's enthusiasm for financial reforms in New Zealand, stating that he was 'no blind admirer' of these, as they involved 'too much State and too much specialisation'.

The only reference in Alfred's huge *corpus* of published work to Fahey was a review of the latter's *Money manipulation and the social order* in the *Standard* of 9 February 1945. This was one of Fahey's shorter works and it did not contain his more outrageous conspiracy theories. Alfred applauded the main thesis in the book which he had already popularised in his *Money* (1941), a book greatly admired by Fahey. The thesis was that unless the monetary mechanism was subordinated to human needs it was futile to be advocating social justice and peace. Alfred commended Fahey's critical treatment of the Gold Standard, but regretted his failure to examine the disadvantages of the country's adoption of, and complete subordination to, sterling. He pointed out that Fahey was aware that hard work and the utilisation of natural resources were as essential to the improvement of the economy as a radical overhaul of the monetary system. He acknowledged that Fahey had many interesting things to say from an environmental point of view about agriculture, fertilisers and bread, but was critical of his seeming acceptance of Major Douglas's then popular economic theories of social credit.

Alfred's attendance at Fahey's funeral on 23 January 1954 was not significant. At that time he was residing in Blackrock College and would have attended from a sense of Christian duty.

Besides, in effect, giving a veneer of respectability to anti-semitic theories, Fahey also had extreme views on freemasonry.

23. Fahey papers, letters, dated 4, 18 March 1941, O'Rahilly to Fahey.

While never commenting on these, Alfred had a strong antipathy to that organisation. This arose from his awareness of the hostility of the freemasons to Catholicism at different times and different places, not least in France. He wrote about freemasonry on at least one occasion. In a piece under 'Pat Murphy's jottings' in the *Standard* of 14 June 1946 he warned against the danger of secret societies acquiring too much influence. He recalled that in a recent broadcast from Radio Éireann it was stated that an American could not be elected president unless he was a freemason and that President Truman had been the grand master of his own State. He continued that previously he had read of the stranglehold which freemasonry had in France in 1912-13 and still had. In the earlier period in a population of forty million the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge of France combined claimed a membership of only 36,000. Yet in the chamber 300 deputies out of 580 and in the senate 180 out of 300 were masons. He indicated his suspicion that in Ireland masonry had a strong grip on business, especially on finance.²⁴ Alfred urged people to be alert about the activities of small subversive minorities. Harking back to the recent turmoil in the Labour Party, occasioned by the fear that it was being infiltrated, he pointed out that in Russia the all-powerful Communist Party numbered only about two million in a population of 170 million.²⁵

24. Both Alfred and Fahey would have read Fr Edward Cahill's description of the threat allegedly posed to the Irish Free State by freemasonry in *Freemasonry and the anti-Christian movement* (Dublin 1924) and *The framework of a Christian State* (Dublin 1932). For more on this subject, see T. J. Morrissey, S.J., *A man called Hughes* (Dublin 1991).

25. There is no evidence that while at U.C.C. (1914-54) Alfred ever associated himself with anti-semitic views. Gerald Y. Goldberg, the well-known Cork Jewish solicitor and former lord mayor of the city, in 1983 recalled only one instance of anti-semitism at U.C.C. This occurred in 1934 when the standing committee of the Literary and Philosophical Society, it seems, did not wish to present him with the Alfred O'Rahilly medal which he had won, because he was 'an alien'. However, Goldberg's peers, including Tomás Mac Curtain, son of the famous lord mayor, insisted on justice being done. ('Marian Finucane Show', interview with Gerald Y. Goldberg, 27 July 1983, R.T.É., Sound Archives; 'Gerald Y. Goldberg: A Jew, a Corkman and an Irishman', November 1983, R.T.É., Television Archives). Goldberg expressed his admiration for Alfred, remembered him as a strict disciplinarian at U.C.C. and from his 'first clash' with him in November 1930 concluded that he was resentful of what he regarded as an undue influence being exercised on public life at that time by members of the masonic order (letter, dated 7 September 1983, Gerald Y. Goldberg to J. Anthony Gaughan).

Fr Charles Davis Affair

One topic which was discussed by Alfred and his friends, Fr Michael McCarthy and Rev Dr Michael O'Carroll, was the case of Charles Davis. A priest of the archdiocese of Westminster, he was a former editor of the *Clergy Review*, a well-known theologian and a prolific writer. At a press conference on 21 December 1966 he announced that he had left the Catholic Church and issued the following statement:

I remain a Christian, but I have come to see that the Church as it exists and works at present is an obstacle in the lives of the committed Christians I know and admire. It is not the source of the values they cherish and promote. On the contrary, they live and work in a constant tension and opposition to it. Many can remain Roman Catholics only because they live their Christian lives on the fringe of the institutional Church and largely ignore it. I respect their position. In the present confused period people will work out their Christian commitment in different ways. But their solution was not open to me; in my position I was too involved. I had to ask bluntly whether I still believed in the Roman Catholic Church as an institution. I found that the answer was no.

For me Christian commitment is inseparable from concern for truth and concern for people. I do not find either of these represented by the official Church. There is concern for authority at the expense of truth, and I am constantly saddened by instances of the damage done to persons by workings of an impersonal and unfree system. Further, I do not think that the claim the Church makes as an institution rests upon any adequate biblical and historical basis. The Church in its existing form seems to me to be a pseudo-political structure from the past. It is now breaking up, and some other form of Christian presence in the world is under formation.

It is my intention to get married. This is not my reason for leaving the Church. To marry it would have been enough to leave the priesthood; for the reasons given I am rejecting the Church. I am marrying to rebuild my life upon a personal love I can recognize as true and real, after a life