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A Nationalist Network in South America: Diaspora and Diplomatic Action

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Abstract:

The apparent failure of the Easter Rising in 1916 set off a chain of events that culminated in the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Considered by the Irish people as the martyrdom of their republican leaders, it served to continue the fight through other strategies, not restricted only to armed conflict. The Sinn Féin began to coordinate a transnational political action network by means of its diaspora. This state of affairs has been studied in cases such as the United States of America, Australia and Canada, but has not been delved into in the case of the countries of the Southern Cone – Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and southern Brazil. In this essay, I intend to analyse the role of immigrants in Argentina and their prominence in this strategy as well as how the network expanded through Chile and Uruguay.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Ireland, Nationalism, Political Action, Southern Cone

1. Introduction

The purpose of the present paper is to answer a topic that has not been yet extensively studied: Irish emigration to the Southern Cone countries – in its broad definition, the region comprises Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and southern Brazil¹ – and their transnational² political action in favour of Irish national-

¹ In this work we will not dedicate ourselves to Brazil. It is known that Roger Casement served as British consul in that country and had contacts there, but his work was centered in Rio de Janeiro (at the time, capital of the Republic), the Amazon area and Pernambuco in the northeast and, therefore, it exceeds what refers to the Southern Cone.

² We use the theoretical framework “transnationalism” as a tool that provides us with an explanation about the way migrant groups simultaneously act in both the sending and receiving countries, although with different levels of intensity in each of them.

ism. This strategy – previous to 1921 – is usually considered as “protodiplomacy” or “paradiplomacy” since it is developed by informal actors instead of states³.

The existing body of research on various aspects of the life of Irishmen in English-speaking countries, with a particular focus on those territories ruled by the British Empire, is rich and interesting. However, little is known about the characteristics, cultural and economic pursuits, and political action – both domestic and transnational – in the Spanish-speaking countries in the American continent.

It is true that some progress has been made in the last fifteen years, notably in regard to Argentina, the country that has received the largest community of Irish settlers. From Coghlan’s pioneering works (1982, 1987), though mainly genealogical in nature, to Korol and Sábato’s foundational volume (1981), which approached the topic with historical and scientific criteria, Murray’s substantial contribution (2004), Keogh’s comprehensive work (2016), Cruset (2006, 2015) and articles about some topics, and the newest by Patrick Speight (2019).

In the case of Peru – though not strictly one of the Southern Cone countries but with a strong historical and cultural relationship with Chile – Gabriela Mc Evoy’s book (2018) merits a mention for its substantial contribution to the body of research. Regarding the other countries in the region, Chile (Griffin 2006) and Paraguay, little research has been done. In Paraguay, Maria Graciela Monte de López Moreira (2020) has recently written an article on this topic as well⁴. However, in the case of Uruguay, no studies delved exclusively into the matter with the exception of one article by Murray about both Paraguay and Uruguay immigration (2006), and Tim Fanning’s book (2017), who writes about distinguished Irishmen who performed on both shores of the Rio de la Plata. In other words, there have been no specific publications on this topic. Therefore, it is my belief that this paper will be a contribution not intended to exhaust the subject; on the contrary, it aims at inaugurating a path of similar output⁵.

With this paper, I aspire, the, to expand the analysis to new regions and countries – recipient of Irish immigration – in order to understand their particular traits and inner logic, thus being able to establish comparisons with the Irish circumstances in other countries. It is my hope that, in the future, it will lead to publications on a greater, global scale. Many unanswered questions remain, several of which we have put in writing, to be resolved at a later date. An essential reminder is that scientific knowledge advances further due to the questions posed than to the answers gathered. The following pages should be considered in the light of this assertion.

2. *Irish People in Argentina and their Diplomatic Action*

After the Easter Rising in 1916 and its military failure, Eamon de Valera – who had been appointed as *Príomh Aire*, that is as Prime Minister, by the Dáil Éireann⁶ – took a series of

³ These new frameworks are still debatable in the field of International Relations. For further reading Cruset 2006; Mitchell, Ní Bheacháin 2021.

⁴ In the case of Paraguay, beyond the popular and romantic figure of General Francisco Solano López’s partner, Elisa Lynch (Lillis, Fanning 2009), there are only a few families that arrived mainly during the colonial period through Spain who did not maintain ties with the island nor were they too interested in what was happening there.

⁵ Without ignoring the enormous contribution that is being made from Europe and North America in relation to the global studies for the period 1912-1923, in particular the Project “Global Ireland and 1916”, this article aims at focusing on the literature produced from the Southern Cone – most of it in Spanish – and offering an original perspective from a “non-central” or “peripheral” area. At the same time, the stress will be laid on the regional countries’ historical contexts, as they were the primary field of action for the actors involved.

⁶ Since 1922 it has been the Lower House of Parliament in Ireland and the one that appoints the Prime Ministers.

foreign affairs measures in order to get the recognition of the Republic of Ireland on behalf of the potentially allied world powers. With this goal, a committee was sent to Paris, where the Treaty of Versailles was being discussed in 1919 to put an end to World War I⁷. As expected, their attempt failed since the matter was not considered at all. Consequently, de Valera came up with other alternatives to achieve his purpose and, considering the close relationship with the United States, he decided to begin a long journey throughout the country.

That journey took place from June 1919 to December 1920. In the meantime, Terence MacSwiney, Mayor of Cork, died after a 74-day hunger strike in prison. When the news about his death arrived, at the end of October 1920, de Valera decided to go back to his country to reassume the domestic political activity. During those almost two years in America, de Valera travelled from coast to coast organizing political rallies and meetings with personalities from and outside the diaspora. Even when the primary goal was not achieved – the recognition of Ireland as a republic – de Valera managed to achieve two other important things: a considerable amount of money, which later would be essential to finance the government expenditures while working clandestinely, and a favourable public opinion towards the cause.

It is in this context that de Valera realized the importance of diplomatic work and the urgency in adding new delegations to work co-ordinately among them and with Ireland. In order to attain this goal, a special office was created and, from there, delegates were sent to Germany, Russia, South America and South Africa. In addition, press offices were opened in Switzerland, Spain and Italy, and the idea was to replicate that initiative in Argentina and Chile. However, as some active propaganda was already being made in the Southern Cone of America, their main purpose was to boost these previous activities.

During this period, a series of intelligence reports were sent to Ireland with the clear purpose of providing information that might be used in favour of the cause. While most of them were signed with a real identity, in others a pseudonym was used, a fact that prevent us from knowing the author with accuracy. That is the case of one report, dated 10 August 1921, in which there was a detailed account of all the activities conducted in every country. The names of Eamon Bulfin in Argentina and Frank Egan in Chile were also mentioned in the document:

Argentine: Through our Representative in Buenos Aires (Mr. Eamon Bulfin) steps are being taken for the issue in that country of a 'Bulletin' the material for which would be derived from the 'Irish Bulletin' and other sources of propaganda. We are at present awaiting from Mr. Bulfin an estimate of the probable cost of the proposed production.

Though communication from home with the Argentine is difficult and slow Mr. Bulfin's reports afford great encouragement as to the support that might be expected there for the Republican cause. He emphasizes, however, the urgent need that exists of educating the whole people of the Argentine – as distinct from the Irish there – to the true position of Ireland and her claim to recognition as an Independent Republic, and considers that a publication something similar to that proposed would affect enormous good in this direction as well as helping to secure a solid footing for a special mission from Ireland to the Argentine. In the opinion of Mr. Bulfin, the President of the Argentine is favourably disposed towards the Irish Republican Cause, and if the United States Government recognised the Irish Republic he (Mr. Bulfin) feels sure that the Argentine Government would do likewise. Mr. Bulfin mentions local

⁷ American President Woodrow Wilson was a strong supporter of those populations which aspired to be recognized independently of a sovereign state (a concept that has evolved through time and it is currently known as national self-determination). That way of thinking was more than favourable to Ireland's intentions. To expand, see (Keown 2019). For similar cases, Núñez Seixas offers an interesting insight about the way other diasporas made use of the same context (1995).

differences and animosities resulting from a split of ten years ago as factors operating against the power of the Irish in the Argentine but here again he believes the 'Bulletin' could be put to good use in wiping out misunderstandings and working towards complete and effective reorganisation. A number of newspapers published in the Argentine are friendly disposed towards the Irish Cause. Mr. Ginnell T.D. who has been sent as special envoy on a mission to the Argentine and the other South American Republics, was present by official invitation at the *Te Deum* to commemorate the Independence of Peru. (NAI DE 4/4/2, No. 104)

This is an interesting text due to all the valuable information that it contains and the way it reflects how the reality of a foreign country, in terms of distance, customs and language, is seen from Ireland. Eamon Bulfin, born in 1892, was an immigrants' son who had arrived in Argentina to make his fortune and gain prestige inside the community. His father, William, was the director of the community newspaper, *The Southern Cross*⁸, and all his family, including his sister Anita and his uncle Padraic MacManus, were strong supporters of nationalism. Young Bulfin had fought in the Easter Rising but later on, once the revolt was suppressed, and in view of his Argentine citizenship, he was sent to Buenos Aires.

It is true that there were some divisions and rifts among the immigrants since some of them were more radical (like Bulfin) while others held a much more moderate position. To better understand this situation, it is necessary to bear in mind that the *hiberno-argentinos*, as they called themselves, were dependent, in many different ways, on the economic relations they kept with the English capital. While a sector of the urban, working, middle-class was employed by the British railways, the upper social class from Buenos Aires (*porteños*) sold the goods they produced in their extensive farms (*estancias*) – firstly wool, and secondly meat and cereal – to London. Some families, as the Usshers⁹, made a living out of the import of typically British products, such as tea, which came from Ceylon – a colony of the empire – so, they needed the colonial approval to run their business.



Fig. 1 – Historical Museum of the city of Monte Hermoso, Argentina¹⁰. Courtesy of the Author

⁸ *The Southern Cross* is the community newspaper founded on January 16, 1875, by Fr. Patrick Joseph Dillon, it continues to be published until today. Its aims, which are the same today, were gathering the Irish people in Argentina and bringing the information from Ireland and the new country where they had settled.

⁹ The Ussher family held a prominent place in community leadership. In particular, Bishop Santiago Ussher, who was an Irish chaplain.

¹⁰ Monte Hermoso is a seaside resort on the Atlantic coast in the south of the province of Buenos Aires. In 1918 a wooden hotel was built that was meant to be the summer resort for rich families from Bahía Blanca city and the region. This box is kept in the hotel.

In 1911 MacManus founded the newspaper *Fianna*, which was all in favour of an independent Irish state. This initiative not only did emphasize the division among the immigrants, but it also brought about the discussion of other problematic issues, ranging from the children's orphanage administration to the leadership of community associations as well as political matters.

Regarding the chances of getting some support to the cause and the potential recognition of independence from President Yrigoyen¹¹, I believe that it was too optimistic and unlikely a possibility. Hipólito Yrigoyen assumed the presidency of Argentina on 12 October 1916, thanks to the votes of the urban and rural middle-class sectors and the millions of immigrants that had arrived in the country since the end of the nineteenth century who were now trying to gain some participation in the governmental political life of the receiving country. Precisely, it was in this sector that the Irish people were included, who showed their strong support to the newly elected president.

The Southern Cross provides us with all this information, due to the fact that the newspaper informed its readers, in detail, about Yrigoyen's access to power, making express reference to the massive popular support, to the political party members' honesty and to the active work they displayed against the former official government: "We supported them when it was not fashionable to predict their success [...]" (*The Southern Cross*, 15 September 1916). Nevertheless, the new president was well aware of the fact that the close economic relations the country maintained with England were a real problem to create a kind of enmity towards such a distant country like Ireland.

Much in the same way, this idea is reinforced by P.J. Little¹² in a report he sends from Buenos Aires on 4 October 1921:

The President of A.[rgentine] Republic Irregoyen [*sic*], of Basque¹³ extraction is head of Radical Government and a most determined opponent. Irregoyen's Government tho' favourable to us, would not involve the country in diplomatic entanglements by recognising Republic. (NAI DE 5/21 No. 109)

In September 1920 Laurence Ginnell, representative of the Irish Republic, was sent to Argentina to collaborate with Bulfin. The plan was to expand the activities beyond the country and, with the help of Ginnell's wife, Alice, the three of them did a great job in that respect. The main objectives were to organize and reunite the Irish diaspora by creating a federation of institutions which would include both the sectors from the interior of the country and those from the capital. Eventually, they would be able to send delegates to Paris, to participate in the conference that was being organized to express support to the republican cause and, of course, to enable a bonus with the intention of collecting enough money to support the clandestine government¹⁴. This bonus is an important matter because it was already common knowledge that at least a large sector of Irish immigrants had managed to become wealthy. When Casement visited the country, he gave an accurate description of the situation: "There are many more Irishmen here, and most of them really quite rich. They are, by far, the most successful out of all the immigrants in this wonderful country"¹⁵.

On 29 November 1921, Ginnell succeeded in celebrating the first Congress of the Irish race in Buenos Aires. Over fifty organizations sent their representatives, and they founded a

¹¹ Dr. Hipólito Yrigoyen was president of Argentina on two occasions, from 1916 to 1922 and from 1928 until a military coup in 1930. He came to power, after the first national elections with universal male vote, through the party called Unión Cívica Radical, representing the interests of the middle class.

¹² Patrick J. Little arrived in Argentina in 1921, succeeding Ginnell.

¹³ The reference to the Basque origin of President Yrigoyen has to do with the consideration of that people as friends and possible allies. To see more about this relationship between Basques and Irish people, see Crusset 2015b.

¹⁴ According to Murray (2004), the bonus was expected to raise £ 500,000 but only raised £ 10,000.

¹⁵ The original in Spanish reads: "Hay muchos más irlandeses aquí & la mayoría de ellos realmente muy ricos. Son, lejos, los más exitosos de todos los inmigrantes en este maravilloso país" (Mitchell 2012, 114). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author.

new Federation. At the meeting, the delegates who would attend the Congress in Paris were selected as well. However, despite this achievement and the delegation's popularity, the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 and its consequences brought bitter divisions not only on the island but also in Argentina. While Ginnel and his group stood against the treaty, the community expressed itself in favour of it. As a result, the whole situation became unattainable for the former who were forced to close the delegation and leave the country. According to Ginnel's widow's memoirs, few people gave them a farewell at the harbour and during the journey "the people on board seem to be boycotting us. Not one of them spoke to us. We were asked if we would mind having some people at our table and said 'no', but the people never came" (BMH, "Mrs. A. Ginnel. Diary of her own and her late husband's national activities, 1874-1923", File No. S2302, 58)¹⁶.

The creation of a network of diplomatic connections in the Southern Cone that had once been conveyed, turned out to be weak and attained little success. Little wrote to Brennan:

The Irish are very few in point of number outside the Argentine, and scattered. Unless you have a fairly large Irish Community it is waste of time and money to travel enormous distances to produce little or no result. I have remained all the time in Buenos Aires because this is the centre for the Irish for the whole of South America. All the other Republics can be best worked from here. (NAI DFA ES Box 32 File 216 (4), No. 120)

The only two exceptions were Chile and Uruguay. The former, in particular, displayed an important propaganda activity conducted by Frank Egan. For this reason, in the following sections I will concentrate on these two countries.

3. Irish Nationalism in Chile

Contrary to the case of Argentina, Chile had not received waves of mass migration. During mid and late twentieth century, a group of Englishmen arrived in the country and occupied mid-level management positions in the already settled British companies which were predominantly focused on mining and trade. It was not unusual to find some Irish immigrants among them.

There were already a few Irishmen in Chile during the colonial period. These settlers had firstly spent some time in Spain, as merchants, priests, students or soldiers¹⁷. In this latter case, they had enrolled in the Spanish Army and, later on, they had been relocated to the overseas Spanish dominions. As trained Catholics and enemies of the English, they were prone to act as mercenaries under the Crown. Thanks to the fact that those immigrants occupied different positions in the colonial administration, they were able to climb up the social and economic ladder. One paradigmatic case was that of the O'Higgins family: Ambrosio was firstly appointed Governor of Chile and then, due to his successful work, he turned to be Viceroy of Peru. Similarly, his son Bernardo was a hero of the Chilean independence and considered the "Father of the Nation"¹⁸.

¹⁶ For a better understanding of the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations, their impact on the Argentine diaspora and the Irish delegation position, see Cruset 2019. To analyse this circumstance both in particular and in its broader context, see Keogh 2016.

¹⁷ To learn more about the Irish in the Spanish armies see Recio Morales (2004).

¹⁸ Bernardo O'Higgins (1778-1842) was a prominent military man who had an outstanding role in the independence process of Chile. Together with General José de San Martín, they expelled the royalists from the country. Between 1817 and 1823 he was Supreme Director of the liberated nation.

However, it is not until the beginning of the twentieth century that an Irish nationalist movement was set up or, at least, greater awareness in the matter was built. One of the main promoters of this switch is Frank Egan. Frank's father is Patrick Egan, who deserves a special mention for his enrolment in several republican groups and for his ongoing political action both in his homeland and, as an immigrant, in the USA. Owing to his close involvement in the American domestic political arena, Egan was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Minister of the Government of the United States in Chile, between 1889 and 1893¹⁹, having had an active participation in the American Civil War in 1891, as the historian Augusto Iglesias clearly points out:

On the same day as the *Lo Cañas* events – August 20th – the Revolutionary Army disembarked in *Concón*, in number of 10,000 men. The American Ambassador, Mr. Egan, informs Balmaceda of the arrival of the expeditionary forces seen by the American vessels and of the estimations they made about the number and the capacity of the transports in which they were coming. (Iglesias 1960, 170)²⁰

In 1892, there was an incident in Valparaíso harbour, during which some marines of the American ship “Baltimore” lost their lives. Since a group of Chilean people was involved in the conflict, Mr. Egan made a series of complaints about it, a decision that led the tension of the bilateral relation to its extremes. Although the imminent war could finally be avoided, Mr. Egan was declared *persona non grata* by the Chilean government. Eventually, the whole situation turned favourable to Mr. Egan who received a compensation by the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1893). All this information is shown in the annual reports that the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to the National Congress in compliance with the National Constitution of 1833, which in section 88 stated that the Ministers had to inform the Congress all that was related to their Department affairs²¹.

Patrick Egan had nine children that reached adulthood, among them Frank and Bryan who remained in Chile once he left both his duties and the country. On 30 September 1919, Patrick died in New York; at 78 and was buried in St. Raymond cemetery on 3 October. Described as a retired lawyer in the death certificate, Patrick is now remembered as a conspicuous character who represented the United States' interests and was determined to take part in the Chilean political domestic arena (New York Municipal Archives, Death files, Manhattan, New York, United States, microfilm 1,322,453).

As in Bulfin's case, the nationalist commitment also passed on from father to sons in the Egan family. Francisco Guillermo Egan was married to the Chilean Amelia Rojas. In the registers he appears as American or Irish and with an employment in mining (but not as one of those who actually work in the mines, mostly as someone involved in the business). His Irish brother, Brian (*sic*) Egan (Patrick and Alicia María Mc Gee's son) firstly got married to Elvira Mendeville Alessandri in 1890, and once he became a widower, to Elvira's sister, Amelia Mendeville Alessandri. The Mendeville family belonged to the Santiago de Chile's elite (Chilean Civil Registration Office, Marriages files, Santiago, No. 81, p. 16; Santiago, No. 69, p. 54), a fact that is confirmed by the marriage between Carlos Mendeville and Elvira, president Arturo Alessandri Palma's aunt. President Alessandri Palma was one of the most influential politicians in

¹⁹ He was put in office on 30 March 1889, presented his credentials on 9 August of that year and ceased his functions on 4 July 1893 (<<https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/egan-patrick>>, 03/2021).

²⁰ The original in Spanish reads: “El mismo día de los sucesos de Lo Cañas – el 20 de agosto –, desembarcó en Concón, en número de diez mil hombres, el Ejército Revolucionario. El Embajador americano, Mr. Egan, informa a Balmaceda del arribo de las fuerzas expedicionarias avistadas por los buques americanos y del cálculo que hicieran sobre el número y la capacidad de los transportes en que vienen” (Iglesias 1960, 170).

²¹ This Constitution modifies that of 1828. It is presidential and conservative and gives more power to the president taking it away from the congress.

the twentieth century. These powerful relationships provide us with a clear idea of the Egan family profile: immigrants that arrived in the country with some fortune but expanded significantly, a process that was only possible by the creation of a wide network of local political contacts.

For this reason, Frank W. Egan was designated as “our honorary Representative in Santiago” by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, due to his personal qualities, his connections, and the work that he had been doing until then in favour of the cause – more potential than real, though – all of which was highly praised in Dublin. The designation has to be understood as part of the general and broader policy of support to the nationalist cause that was being fostered from Dublin and implemented through the diasporas’ informal work. Egan intended to organise an association of Irish migrants and, at the same time, to influence Chilean internal politics, as it is shown in the excerpt below:

Mr. Egan hopes to get forward a declaration from this assembly [Chilean congress], and, with this end in view is working with several of the new deputies. Plans are being laid for the formation of an Irish Association and Mr. Egan hopes for great success, judging from the results of his appeal to all Irishmen to join the organization known as the ‘Irish Colony of Chile’. In a report recently received from a gentleman in Santiago, genuinely sympathetic towards the Irish Cause, and a close friend of the new President, the writer states that the latter is in sympathy with the Irish Cause and adds: ‘The great point is that recognition (of the Irish Republic) by Chile would inevitably bring recognition by the Argentine and possibly Brazil as well in addition to acting as an incentive to the United States to take the step over which they appear to be hesitating’. (NAI DE 4/4/2, No. 104)

Similarly to what happened in Argentina, the distance and the little knowledge about Ireland was supplied with special reports which were intended to provide an overview of the general context and the possible courses of action. The most complete report is the one written by Mr. Simpson in October 1921. The document stands for the detailed account of the country situation and the prospect actions that could be taken, but, curiously, it does not make any reference to Egan. This is a very interesting dossier since it sheds light on the great difficulty for many workers who were Irishmen had to express their ideas freely, due to the presence of the British capitals in the country. According to Mr. Simpson, these were the strong points that could help to tilt the balance in favour of Ireland:

Favouring Irish Cause.

1. Several of the chief leaders in Chile’s struggle for independence – O’Higgins, McKenna, Lynch - were Irish.
2. Public opinion is usually on the side of the weaker party in an exterior struggle. Chile has been pro-Boer, pro-Japanese and pro-German.
3. Public men are friendly. So is labour, Irish priests, nuns, and teachers are very keen, and religious generally, who have much influence; are friendly. There is no specific hostility to Ireland in any quarter. (NAI DFA ES Box 32 File 16, No. 110)

For propaganda purposes, it was extremely useful to associate the image of the national heroes of the Chilean independence with those who fought for the Irish freedom. The fact that the Irish contributed to the independence of their new land, up to the point of risking their own lives, was more than well received in the Andean country and, at the same, helped to create gratitude and sympathy towards the Irish cause. Simpson also highlights the tendency of the Chilean public opinion to back the weakest causes, an aspect that deserves some attention. In addition, religion is another point that both countries have in common: The Catholic Church beliefs were in alignment with those of the island. This is an interesting feature to be analysed because it is usually used as an influential variable in those countries where the church has enormous power, as in Argentina, Chile and Spain. Finally, Simpson makes a shrewd observation about the press and its ideological orientation. He refers to *El Mercurio* as pro-British, to *El Ilustrado* as conservative and an organ of the Catholic Church, and to *La Nación* as favourable to the cause.

As regards the nationalist propaganda work displayed in the country, Alice Ginnell's memoirs, whom I have already referred to, are also a valuable source of information. In those documents, she mentions a special request that was made to her and her husband from Ireland to visit Chile and Peru, to which they agreed despite their desire to return home. That tour, particularly the one made to Chile, would be financed by Egan and would take place in April or May 1922. However, the political conflicts already described prevented them from making the trip, although for Gavan Duffy²² it was of utmost importance. It is for this reason that Eamon Bulfin was asked to set off on the journey by himself.

From Patrick Little's Memoirs, who was an outstanding politician, it is also possible to extract important data. In fact, much of this information is similar to the one provided by Alice Ginnell's memoirs, what seems to corroborate them. Little has the same positive opinion about Egan, but there are some additional details about his militant past actions: "In Chile, there was a very reliable man, named Egan, who had been deeply involved in the land agitation in Ireland, many years before, and who had emigrated to Chile" (BMH, "Patrick J. Little. National Activities, 1904-1922", File No. S. 96, 104)²³. He also adds that, owing to Ginnell's health problems and his anti-treaty position that forced him to come back abruptly to Ireland, the trip to Chile was suspended.

On the other hand, almost simultaneously, Chile opened a consulate in Dublin. On 3 April 1924, the government of Santiago accepts William Kelly's resignation as Honorary Consul, being replaced by Ambrose Aliaga Kelly. This position was neither necessarily filled by a citizen of the sending country nor was it meant to formally represent the state. Thus, the selection was made on account of the candidate's personal qualities.

The Honorary Consuls' duties were mainly notarial ones, although subjected to the express mandate they received. Generally speaking, they did not receive a salary or any money to cover the offices' maintenance expenses. It is clear that Chile was much more concerned about its relationship with London than about the island itself, an attitude that seemed to be totally understandable. On 7 June 1936, the Consul that was located in Belfast, Bernardo Blejer, was transferred to Dublin. He was a career diplomat, who had already served in other European destinations. It is necessary to bear in mind that in 1937, Ireland was given a new constitution, by which the Irish Free State was dissolved and, unilaterally, the country decided to separate itself from the Commonwealth. This radical change explains why the consulate was relocated and also why Chile showed a change of behaviour.

As it was already mentioned, it was necessary for Chile to have a good political and economic relationship with England. For this reason, Agustín Edwards, a remarkable politician, was chosen as Ambassador in 1911. More than a decade later, in 1924, Edwards left his position to go back to his homeland, after 13 years of service. In the speech Edwards gave during the farewell banquet, he made an account of his work and emphasized the notable changes occurred in the empire, which, from his viewpoint, were of a considerable importance and quite incredible:

I have seen constitutional reforms so profound as the House of Lords' political power disappearance, the creation of a Parliament in the Free State of Ireland, political reforms so radical such as the women suffrage, economic setbacks so significant as those provoked by the war and its aftermath, and, at last, shaken by the tragic convulsions of a fight for the existence itself, to the whole empire that rests on the Great Britain security. (Historical Archive, Uruguay's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Fund, Box 1004, year 1924)²⁴

²² Mr. Duffy was in charge of International Relations between January 1922 and July of that same year.

²³ In this text it is difficult to know if it refers to Patrick or Frank, because it could be either of the two.

²⁴ "He visto reformas constitucionales tan profundas como la desaparición del poder político de la Cámara Alta, la creación de un Parlamento en el Estado Libre de Irlanda, reformas políticas tan hondas como el sufragio femenino, trastornos económicos tan profundos como los producidos por la guerra y sus consecuencias y, por fin, sacudido por las convulsiones trágicas de una lucha por la existencia misma, a todo el Imperio que descansa en la seguridad de Gran Bretaña".

It is clear that Chile's real interest lay in England and not in the small island. In both countries, that is, Argentina and Chile, the sympathy that one might have towards the republican cause had been kept in the private sphere, without interfering with the higher interests of the state. Nevertheless, this circumstance does not diminish the constant and arduous work so many men and women carried out in search of an independent Ireland.

4. Uruguay and Ireland: *The Bilateral Relationship between Small States*

Since the creation of the Spanish Viceroyalty of the Río de La Plata in 1776, Argentina and Uruguay's destinies became intimately linked. Even after both countries obtained their independences from Spain, in 1816 the former and in 1825 the latter, the crossing of people, livestock and capital between the two was a reality, owing to a rather permeable border.

It is in this context that the first Irish immigrants settled in the *Banda Oriental del Uruguay*. The newcomers turned out to be some of the soldiers who once were taken as prisoners after the failing English invasions (Murray 2006) but, later on, decided to remain in the region and married to locals.

Since its independence, Uruguay was well aware of its inferior position in relation to the other two greater neighbouring countries, Argentina and Brazil, which had been fighting over their sovereignty since the eighteenth century (Cruset 2012). For this reason, Uruguay's priority in foreign affairs relied on three aspects: to achieve international recognition, to attract capital and, more urgently, to welcome immigrants.

Uruguay's main goal was a foreseeable one: to get Great Britain's recognition. At the time, Great Britain was one of the strongest world powers so, it was vital to receive its official approval. With this idea in mind, General O' Brien established diplomatic contacts, but it would be Edward Neill who carried out a more sustainable and successful work in this respect. In fact, he steadily set up consulates all around Ireland, as shown in the following chart. Unfortunately, there are no files on record of the oldest consuls; this is all the information available to us concerning diplomatic personnel in Ireland.

Country	City	Surname	First Name	Title	Appoint-ment Date	End Term Date
United Kingdom	Cork	O'Neill	Gregorio	Consul	21/5/1856	
United Kingdom	Dublin	Mahony	Diego	Consul	29/11/1859	
United Kingdom	Dublin	Caldbeck	Guillermo Francisco	Consul	17/3/1860	
United Kingdom	Cork	Foley	Ricardo	Vice-consul	24/4/1878	
United Kingdom	Dublin	O'Connell	John Robert	Consul	29/4/1896	23/10/1925
Irish Free State	Dublin	Rooney	Patrick	Honorary Consul	30/7/1926	
Irish Free State	Dublin	Doyle	Charles Stanislaus	Vice-consul	19/1/1955	
Republic of Ireland	Dublin	Reynolds	Peadar	Honorary Consul	30/8/2000	
Republic of Ireland	Carrick on Shannon	De Bellis	Jessie	-----	16/1/2013	27/4/2015

Table 1 – Uruguayan Consuls in Ireland 1856-2015, data provided by the Historical Archive, Uruguay's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

As Ireland and Uruguay were two small countries able to identify with each other, after the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, Dublin began to establish connexions with Montevideo. It is thought that the fact that Uruguay was a member of the League of Nations could have been another strong reason for Ireland to reinforce its interest in that nation.

A curious booklet can be found at the Library of Congress, entitled: “Missive for the National Congress of the *República Oriental del Uruguay*, approved in session at the national congress (Dail Eireann) of the Republic of Ireland, held in January 1921” (Communication for the National Congress of the Republic of Uruguay, January 1921). Its interest derives from its style, written in Peninsular Spanish, which is not used in the *Río de la Plata* region or in the American continent. The translation is very good and seems to have been produced by a native Spanish speaker. Its content explains the reasons for the communication by depicting the two nations as brothers with noble common goals:

We, the elected representatives of the people of Ireland, recognize you, the elected representatives of the República Oriental del Uruguay, as our brothers in a joint effort to hasten the day in which all nations may live together in harmony, protected by justice; we have the honour of greeting you and communicating the following:

1. We are certain that the struggles of our people – the people of Ireland – against England’s aggressions have not gone unnoticed by you. We hope to hold your regard and appreciate your respect and support [...]

5. The Irish people have steadily endured this wicked tyranny with all their strength. Nearly every generation has witnessed at least one armed uprising.

14. An orgy of murders and theft. There was no respect for sex (gender?), age, or profession. Octogenarians and small children, ill, maimed young men and mothers and wives, even the ministers anointed by God, all were killed without distinction – the head of the family before their very eyes, and the mother with her child held to her bosom on the cabin doorstep. (Communication for the National Congress of the Republic of Uruguay, January 1921)

Clearly, the goal was to be as graphic and dramatic as possible to earn the favour of Uruguayan congressmen and counteract what they believed to be the negative propaganda stemming from England. Hence, the emphasis on the fact that the violence perpetrated against the Irish people “is not the result of any provocation whatsoever” and that they hoped to be able “to make peace with England on a fair basis”. Finally, the missive appealed to the claim that Uruguayan congressmen must not “remain indifferent before the conflict” (Communication for the National Congress of the Republic of Uruguay, January 1921).

Beyond this communication sent to the Uruguayan congress as an attempt to associate “between peers”, the first efforts made by Ireland to establish informal diplomatic relations can be traced to the report P. J. Little sent to Robert Brennan from Buenos Aires, dated 4 December 1921 (received in Ireland on 7 January 1922). The document contained a detailed analysis of the countries in South America, their chances to support the Irish cause and information about whether the Irish diaspora had settled in each of them, as an asset to facilitate the cause. Regarding Uruguay, he wrote:

Uruguay – which although so near the Argentine and so rich yet no Irish from there make any attempt to approach or get in touch with the Diplomatic Mission at B.A. – William Morgan – very rich Estanciero (rancher) is the only Uruguayan and his family was and is Argentine and very strong on National cause. He tells me there are a few Irish in Monte Video but timid and very dominated by the English. Generally Uruguay is very much under the English. Capital domination. Morgan came to B.A. for our meeting and he is a trustee for Loan. (NAI DFA ES Box 32 File 216 (4), No. 120).

He would recall as much in his memoirs: “We were in close touch with Uruguay, through Mr. Morgan” (BMH, “Patrick J. Little. National Activities, 1904-1922”, File No. S. 96, 105). William Morgan would play a major role in organising the Convention of the Irish Race:

First Convention of the Irish Race in the Argentine held in the Irish Girls’ Home - about ninety delegates present, and, all things considered’ might be said to be a success. Mr. William Morgan was Chairman. A Standing Committee for a new organization was appointed consisting of the trustees and Irish members of the Consultative Council [...] Mr William Morgan bought a 500 dollar bond. (MBH, “Mrs. A. Ginnell. Diary of her own and her late husband’s national activities, 1874-1923”, File No. S2302, 45)

Alice kept a very fond memory of Morgan’s wife, thanks to the support and solidarity she showed when the Ginnell couple were forced to return to Ireland owing to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and its consequences – the ensuing civil war –:

Mrs Morgan went to Uruguay to her son William. Before going away she wrote to Mother Rita not to take any money from L.G. – that she would settle with her on her return! Rev. Mother was told not to mind that. We saw her off and she said she was wondering if anyone would come and was delighted to see us; saying that all she had in the world was at our disposal. (Alice Ginnell’s Memoirs, 52-53)

However, beyond Morgan and his wife’s good will, it was evident that it would not be entirely feasible to amass greater support in Uruguay through the immigrants settled in that country. Therefore, a change of strategy was in need: since the Irish Free State had already put forth several proposals before the League of Nations, the main ambition would be now to get Uruguay’s favourable vote. Uruguay had been a member of that organisation since 1 January 1920 and a non-permanent member of the Council from 1923 until 1926. The Irish Free State had become a member on 10 September 1923.

In fact, the Irish Free State had to settle two different issues through the new international institution: first, the announcement of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and thus, the corresponding acknowledgment of the Irish Free State as a nation state with the highest degree of sovereignty; second, its admission as a non-permanent member of the Council. As for the first issue, there was great concern that the treaty would not be interpreted as a domestic matter within Great Britain, as it would remove Ireland’s ability to act on the international stage. For this reason, Uruguay was considered a country to establish relations with, so that it would side with the Irish and support the cause.

5. Conclusion

Even before it became a sovereign state, Ireland already had a very active foreign policy. It clearly understood the need for a favourable international public opinion in order to achieve its objectives against a rival as powerful as the British Empire. This explains why not only propaganda was so important in Ireland’s strategy, but also informal networks to carry out diplomatic activities. These networks were basically located in countries considered friendly or like-minded – Spain, for instance – but, primarily, where the Irish diaspora community resided.

In the case of South America, Laurence Ginnell, a distinguished representative, was sent. He collaborated closely with the efforts already being conducted by Eamon Bulfin, hero of the Easter Rising and Argentine citizen by birth. To the underground republican government, which had scarce economic resources, it was clear that Argentina was the priority. There was a committed hard core of nationalists, along with a second and third line that sympathized with

the cause. Therefore, the plan was, firstly, to work in Argentina and, from there, to reach other nations where the immigrant groups were small or inexistent.

What the sources prove is the back-and-forth work, on both ends, of these “paradiplomatic” activities, as well as the differences regarding the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which will culminate in a civil war on the island that will be reflected on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. This demonstrates the transnational action of the diaspora. Despite people’s best efforts to create cooperation networks in the region, the lack of enough migrant communities made the work extremely hard. The reality is that the strategies, the objectives as well as the agenda were defined from Dublin. That is the reason why those attempts failed once the civil war broke out on the island and the divisions were replicated in South America.

When the community leadership in Argentina sided with the pro-treaty wing, unlike the Irish delegation, this spelled the end for the relatively successful and hard work of Ginnell and colleagues. On the other hand, the English presence in the region remained very strong, so it was little what these countries could do to support the island, no matter how close they felt to it. Their degree of autonomy in foreign affairs was severely limited. Towards the end of WWII, the United Kingdom was no longer the main dominant power in the region. As a consequence, Ireland faced a new reality and its direct interest in the Southern Cone countries started to diminish. However, a relationship based on gratitude and friendship between the embassies of Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay would remain untouched until the present, including the newly opened in Chile in 2019.

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