

The Catholic Association For International Relations: An Organisational Sketch

HIS31510 Religion and Society in Independent Ireland

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The Catholic Association For International Relations (CAIR), an Irish organisation founded in 1938, has been given no historical consideration beyond the footnote or the paragraph. This could not be called any great oversight. It left little imprint on Irish society nor an obvious body of archival material for historians to pore over. Primary evidence is scant and scattered across archives or embedded in newspapers. This essay brings together this material, comprising a small number of leaflets, pamphlets, books, lectures, letters and newspaper articles, and sketches the history of the CAIR starting with its first president Fr. Stephen Brown's early writings on international thought and his involvement in post World War I European Catholic organisations. Then the circumstances of the CAIR's foundation are outlined along with a discussion of it aims and philosophy based on pamphlets and printed lecture material. From there this essay charts the fortunes of the CAIR in a rough chronology using newspaper articles beginning with its activities and difficulties during the Emergency and ending with its seeming dissolution in the early 1960s. The scope of this essay is tightly bound by the available sources. More consideration is given to the early years of the organisation than its activities in

the 1950s simply due to the lack of material for the latter period. So too are many of the conclusions speculative in the absence of internal reports or correspondences to confirm the organisation's motives. Attempts to connect the CAIR to its wider Irish context are similarly tentative. The primary aim of this essay is to outline a basic intellectual and organisational history of this previously unstudied topic while considering future avenues of research and to that end chronology and basic narrative have been prioritised.

The prehistory of the CAIR begins with Brown who was writing on national questions in the Jesuit journal *Studies* as early as 1912.¹ In the following decade his focus shifted from the national to the international and in 1923 he published another essay in *Studies* titled *An International Enquiry concerning Nationalism* in which he summarised French speaking Catholic thinkers' responses to nationalism.² The basic premise of these writings was that nationalism was "a legitimate and necessary force" but needed to be tempered and controlled by religion.³ A concise exposition of the correct form of international relations was given by Maurice Blondel who stated "the mistake is to think that nations in order to maintain their nationhood must be so many egoisms in a state of constant hostility to one another".⁴ Brown's work translating and publishing Catholic thought from continental Europe was part of his larger effort to intellectually integrate Irish Catholicism into the continental mainstream, later a fundamental goal of the

¹Stephen J. Brown, "The Question of Irish Nationality," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 1, no. 4 (1912); Stephen J. Brown, "What Is a Nation?," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 1, no. 3 (1912): 496–510.

²Stephen J. Brown, "An International Enquiry Concerning Nationalism," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 12, no. 46 (1923): 306–313.

³Brown, "An International Enquiry Concerning Nationalism," 311.

⁴Brown, "An International Enquiry Concerning Nationalism," 312.

CAIR.⁵

In 1925 Brown reported on an international Catholic conference held in Oxford by three organisations: the Catholic Union for International Studies (C UIS), the International Catholic League (IKA) and the Catholic Council for International Relations (CCIR). Each organisation had sprung up autonomously from a post-war desire to create the conditions for lasting peace in Europe. The C UIS was founded by Swiss Catholics in Fribourg in 1917 and then reorganised in 1923 toward the study of how Catholics could positively influence and Christianise the League of Nations.⁶ The IKA was founded in Austria 1920 and held conferences to discuss “international relations and dangers to peace”.⁷ The CCIR was established in England in 1923 with the aim “to put before Catholics [...] the long-neglected teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the Mutual Rights and Duties of Nations as members of the great human family” and to “provide a channel of communication between the various branches of Catholic Action in this country and those in other lands”.⁸ The Oxford conference was organised in part to combine the three organisations, an endeavour which appears to have only been partially successful given that CAIR leaflets and Brown’s correspondences continue to refer to the C UIS and the CCIR but make no mention of the *Confederatio internationalis Catholica*, the new umbrella organisation. The Oxford conference was attended by the Irish delegate to the League of Nations, Cumann na nGaedheal TD and University College Dublin Professor John M. O’Sullivan. The Irish delegation was

⁵Maurice Curtis, *A Challenge to Democracy: Militant Catholicism in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: History Press, 2010), 93.

⁶Stephen J. Brown, “Catholic Internationalism,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 14, no. 55 (1925): 476.

⁷Brown, “Catholic Internationalism,” 477.

⁸Brown, “Catholic Internationalism,” 478.

comprised of 3 members of Catholic organisations: two from the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland and one from the Knights of Saint Columbanus.⁹ Brown praised the internationalism of the conference while bemoaning Irish isolation and lack of curiosity. His closing line was a call to action, “shall we in Ireland stand idly by in an isolation of very dubious splendour”.¹⁰

Four years later writing in *The Irish Monthly* Brown, no doubt inspired by the CUIS, wrote that the League of Nations could be used for Catholic purposes. He asks his readers to reign in cynicism of the league and see it as a unique instrument to achieve a higher peace beyond the mere prevention of war. He writes that nations must not indulge in “jealous isolation and selfish national individualism” instead he asserts “there must be ever closer union and co-operation. There must be international friendship”.¹¹ Furthering this end in 1932 Brown edited an English edition of *International relations from a Catholic standpoint* by Catholic Sociologist Joseph Delos. Delos’ book was written for the CUIS as Catholic primer for students studying international relations.¹² Brown edited the book under the heading of the Catholic Union of International Studies (Irish Section), a branch organisation and precursor to the CAIR founded in 1930.¹³

Delos distils the attitude Catholics ought to have toward the League of Nations into a few short lines. First he notes that there are criticisms of the league from a Catholic standpoint. Some he calls disputable like “the League of Na-

⁹Brown, “Catholic Internationalism,” 478.

¹⁰Brown, “Catholic Internationalism,” 479.

¹¹Stephen J. Brown, “What of the League of Nations?,” *The Irish Monthly* 57, no. 670 (1929): 209.

¹²Joseph T. Delos, *International Relations from a Catholic Standpoint : Translated from the French [La Société Internationale]* (n.p.: Browne and Nolan, Ltd., 1932), 4.

¹³CAIR Leaflet, 1945-46, J54—34(1), Irish Jesuit Archives, Dublin.

tions is an instrument of Freemasonry, of a Super-state, or an English weapon against France, or a league of big nations against the small”, others reasonable “it is exclusively lay”, “in the Covenant there is no mention of God nor of the Church”.¹⁴ Nevertheless the correct Catholic attitude was “let us try to correct rather than to destroy what actually exists”.¹⁵ His formulations reveal the reservations of Catholics toward international bodies which the CUIS were obviously anxious to dispel. Another concept outlined by Delos central to the CAIR’s later programme was the “higher peace”, a peace which was more than the absence of war but the presence of a greater harmony among nations, one reminiscent of an idealised Medieval Christendom and only achievable under the guidance of the Church.¹⁶ This could be seen as the international corollary to the lionisation of Medieval social structures in Catholic vocationalism.¹⁷ Brown at this point had for over a decade been imbibing continental Catholic thought on international relations and slowly introducing it to Irish audiences. The next step was establish a larger more public presence in Ireland, an opportunity which was to come in 1937.

The 1937 Dublin conference of the CCIR brought together key figures in the CAIR’s creation. Brown recounted in an essay the presentations of Fine Gael members Desmond Fitzgerald and John M. O’Sullivan who pressed for a Catholic response to the fraught political situation in Europe.¹⁸ Fine Gael’s integration of Catholic social theory found here a small expression in international affairs by

¹⁴Delos, *International Relations from a Catholic Standpoint*, 198.

¹⁵Delos, *International Relations from a Catholic Standpoint*, 199.

¹⁶Delos, *International Relations from a Catholic Standpoint*, 41, 53.

¹⁷Bryan Fanning, *Irish Adventures in Nation-Building* (Manchester, UNITED KINGDOM: Manchester University Press, 2016), 45.

¹⁸Stephen J. Brown, “Catholics and Peace: A Conference in Dublin, August 1937,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 26, no. 103 (1937): 493.

linking to Catholic calls for peace which had been growing as the European crisis deepened.¹⁹ It was however the president of Blackrock college Dr. John Charles McQuaid, who predicted the outlook of the CAIR best when he stated that “the surest hope for peace” came from a Catholic education, although McQuaid himself appears to have had no involvement with the CAIR.²⁰ Cardinal Joseph MacRory, Archbishop of Armagh, spoke at the conference’s opening reception in University College Dublin and gave his support for the “promotion of peace through Catholic public opinion” and the establishing of “contacts between Catholics of different countries [...] to bring to bear on any question of international morality the full weight of Catholicism”.²¹ MacRory later acknowledged that the CAIR “came into being as a result of the Dublin International Conference”.²² Two decades of international Catholic organising in Europe had created institutions in which Irish delegates participated and a body of Catholic international thought for them to bring home. Foreshadowed at the conference were the CAIR’s strong informal connections within Irish society, particularly to UCD and to Fine Gael. It was the conference, the deteriorating political situation in Europe and a sense that Irish Catholics were too isolated from their continental counterparts which turned a branch organisation with little to no public profile into a public facing body with an educational mission.

The first mentions of the CAIR come in late December 1938. The coverage

¹⁹John Henry Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923-1979* (n.p.: Dublin : Gill and Macmillan ; Totowa, N.J. : Barnes & Noble Books, 1980), 80.

²⁰Brown, “Catholics and Peace,” 494.

²¹Brown, “Catholics and Peace,” 490.

²²John Marcus O’Sullivan, ”*Some Elements of European Disorder*” : *Lecture Delivered at University College, Dublin, February 24, 1939* (n.p.: Catholic Association for International Relations, 1939), Forward.

was not extensive but it included a weighty list of names promising cooperation. MacRory was patron. Other influential clerical figures were Bishops Gilmartin of Tuam and Neely of Raphoe. TDs J. M. O'Sullivan and leader of the opposition W. T. Cosgrave were followed by a scattering of academics in the list of well wishers.²³ Printed in full are the stated goals of the organisation:

1. To create Catholic public opinion informed by the tradition of the Church which shall be a real power for international justice and peace.
2. To enable Catholics to understand, appreciate and criticise from the standpoint of their religion the international organisations and movements of the day.
3. To establish contact between Catholics at home and Catholics abroad.
4. To marshal and co-ordinate the knowledge and experience of all its members so as to direct now on this, now on that aspect of international morality, the force of Irish Catholicism at home and abroad.

A planned outline for its educational work followed the list of aims. The main activity of the CAIR was to organise lectures, although it also planned to send delegates to international meetings and to hold conferences and study circles. For the latter of these it would provide a syllabus of Catholic textbooks on international relations and copies of relevant papal encyclicals. The need for an Irish organisation of this kind was stated to be manifest, a sentiment which was to be often repeated in the CAIR public pronouncements.

²³New Association For Catholics, *Irish Independent*, December 30, 1938, 8.

With patronage secured and aims laid out, the CAIR held its inaugural lecture on the 24th of February 1939. Titled *Some Elements of European Disorder* The lecture, given by O’Sullivan at UCD, was a political overview of Europe on the eve of war. He makes a cogent argument against realist international relations as an amoral system which was a threat to small nations and whose logical endpoint was the current crisis.²⁴ He also de-emphasises anti-Communism. Communism he argues, although an ever dangerous enemy of Christianity, was after its defeat in Spain no longer the principle threat to peace. This title belonged to National Socialism.²⁵ He, like Brown and MacRory before him, chastises the Irish for a small minded Catholicism saying, “In Ireland, we have the feeling [...] that the real Catholic Church and her interests are bounded by the four seas of this country”.²⁶ Although the CAIR would run lectures from a variety of speakers on a wide range of topics over the next decade, the themes expressed in O’Sullivan’s lecture are recurrent: peace, international morality, international organisations, the rights of small nations, denouncements of Nazi ideology and calls for the Irish to broaden the horizons of their understanding.

Absent are any calls for concrete political action. Not only did the CAIR not pursue political ends it rarely went so far as to state them. The closest it gets to doing so is in its foundational statement “A Charter of Christian Peace”. Of the 14 points outlined within some are explicitly political like: “the State should acknowledge that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God” which was plucked verbatim from the Irish constitution.²⁷ This is the pattern of the 14

²⁴O’Sullivan, *“Some Elements of European Disorder”*, 4.

²⁵O’Sullivan, *“Some Elements of European Disorder”*, 21.

²⁶O’Sullivan, *“Some Elements of European Disorder”*, 17.

²⁷A Charter For Christian Peace, 1937-40, P80/1295 (2), Desmond Fitzgerald Papers, UCD

points, those which could apply to Ireland are already fulfilled while those applying internationally are hardly actionable. Likewise O’Sullivan lectured in specifics of international problems and in generalities of their solutions. The coming years would not be spent forwarding immediate solutions but sketching post-war futures from the safety of Europe’s isolated corner. The CAIR’s creation was, to put it mildly, awkwardly timed. It came into being on the eve of a war which would sideline its central mission immediately. O’Sullivan admitted in the lecture that the prospects of any sort of de-escalation were effectively non-existent, a fatalism which would touch the CAIR deeply in the coming years.²⁸

In 1940 the CAIR expanded, with a University College Cork based branch which was organised by UCC professors. The CAIR was now well connected in UCC and UCD where Brown and O’Sullivan both held positions. The CAIR was a part of the ongoing promotion of Catholic Sociology in Irish universities.²⁹ Seen in this light the educational mission of the CAIR was defensive as well as constructive likely motivated by the desire to establish Catholic international thought in Universities as a bulwark against its secular counterpart. The opening of the Cork branch was marked by a lecture from Brown which recapitulated O’Sullivan’s while reorienting the organisation toward the imagining of post-war settlements.³⁰ Brown states the CAIR’s strategy outright, “public opinion is susceptible to influence [...] We have the press, the public platform, the radio, the stage and the screen. Can we not use them?”.³¹ His enthusiasm was not matched by action. The CAIR, following the

Archives, Dublin.

²⁸O’Sullivan, *”Some Elements of European Disorder”*, 23.

²⁹Fanning, *Irish Adventures in Nation-Building*, 47.

³⁰What Can We Do For Peace?, 1937-40, P80/1295 (3), Desmond Fitzgerald Collection, UCD Archives, Dublin, 2.

³¹What Can We Do For Peace?, Desmond Fitzgerald Collection, 3.

publication of this lecture, does not appear to have published a single piece of new material until 1946. As for newspaper coverage, it could expect to have lecture notices and select quotes published but never with regularity. Of the other media there is no evidence to support the idea that they fared any better in those arenas. Brown points to Irish reactions to the Spanish civil war as a moment of failure in the Catholic ability to influence public opinion on international affairs, writing “our Irish public began by being uninformed about the facts: certain sections of it ended by being grossly misinformed.”³² The CAIR then was born not only from a desire to imbue international bodies with a Catholic ethos but also a sense of Catholic failure to manage public opinion.

The Cork expansion marked the furthest physical extent of the CAIR in Ireland. It is difficult to gauge exactly how many organisational connections the CAIR attempted to make within Ireland. In a 1943 letter to Reverend J. MacMahon of the Society of Jesus, Secretary of the CAIR Frederick Ryan enclosed a leaflet and a blank application form for Catholic societies to affiliate with the CAIR. He writes that on receipt of application the CAIR would provide copies of their publications and opportunities to have lectures organised for them.³³ This particular solicitation was unsuccessful but a 1945 leaflet lists An Rioghacht, the Catholic Women’s Federation of Secondary School Unions, the Christian Brothers, the Loreto Hall Dublin, St. Catherine’s Training College and the Sodalities of Parish of St. Nicholas of Myra as affiliated organisations.³⁴ The number of affiliations with Catholic societies did not match the expectations of Brown who later

³²What Can We Do For Peace?, Desmond Fitzgerald Collection, 4.

³³Frederick Ryan to J. MacMahon, 30 January, 1943, IE IJA ADMN/3/59, Irish Jesuit Archives, Dublin.

³⁴CAIR Leaflet, 1945-46, J54—34(2), Irish Jesuit Archives, Dublin.

noted that “[the CAIR] had experienced great difficulties in attempting to awaken the interest of other bodies in [international relations]”.³⁵ The CAIR, however, was able to consistently deliver lectures from experts and foreign dignitaries for well over a decade. Between 1939 and 1949 it hosted at least 56 averaging almost a lecture every 2 months, benefiting along the way from the war’s one silver lining from their perspective, continental émigrés and delegates from governments in exile who brought a much desired European perspective to their lecture series.

An incident which highlighted the difficulties of the CAIR’s work during wartime took place in late 1944 when Taoiseach Eamonn De Valera denounced the Irish Institute of International Affairs (IIA) in the Dáil. The IIA, he charged, was a cagey organisation set up by British interests “to endeavour to bring the Government of [Ireland] into contempt and to create embarrassment for it in external relations”.³⁶ He names four men as “the leading lights of the organisation” among them James Auchmuty, an academic and British intelligence asset.³⁷ The CAIR were anxious to get ahead of their conflation with the unrelated IIA and within two days of the debate had put notices in three newspapers. They were probably especially eager to distance themselves considering that Auchmuty had four months prior given a lecture for them.³⁸ The brief affair reveals that discussing international relations under war-time censorship was not without its dangers. It is possible that the CAIR were taking steps to ensure future good relations with Fianna Fáil when

³⁵Catholic Role In Preserving Peace, *Irish Independent*, November 21, 1951, 7.

³⁶Committee on Finance. - Adjournment Debate—International Affairs, Dáil Éireann, November 9, 1944, Vol. 95 No. 6.

³⁷Kenneth R. Dutton, “James Johnston Auchmuty (1909–1981),” in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 18 vols. (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.).

³⁸People And Places, *Irish Press*, July 18, 1944, 2.

they had Frank Pakenham, a personal friend of De Valera's, give a lecture titled *Can we Make a Real peace* where he asserted the compatibility of Britain's international interests with the end of partition and praised the inherent Catholicism of De Valera's external affairs policies.³⁹ The lecture was given a longer than usual treatment in the Irish Press, the organ of Fianna Fáil.⁴⁰ Further evidence of the CAIR's political considerations came in 1948 when Seán MacBride, then leader of Clann na Poblachta and Minister for External Affairs, spoke at a CAIR event where he echoed that an "enlightened Catholic public opinion" was needed to create closer connections with the European Catholic world.⁴¹ It is probable that the CAIR, although not visibly lobbying politicians tried through its organising of lectures to curry favour with relevant political figures. The inverse is likely true that parties saw the CAIR as an organ through which they could propagate their message to a small but elite audience of members. Bishops, Professors, Senators, TDs, Judges and other members of influential professions were regularly reported to be attending or lecturing at CAIR events in a manner typical of the closeness of clergy and politicians in this period.⁴² Proximity, on this occasion however, did not equal discernable influence.

Despite this, the size of their membership was a perennial issue for the CAIR. In 1944 a columnist reporting on the CAIR annual meeting wrote that of their 150 members "barely half paid their subscription and less than half of these attended the meeting", a fact which he calls disillusioning.⁴³ He then asked fellow Catholics

³⁹British Security And Irish Unity Compatible, *Irish Independent*, May 18, 1945, 3.

⁴⁰Big Powers' First Aim, *Irish Press*, May 18, 1945, 1.

⁴¹Minister On Cause Of Europe's Failure, *Irish Independent*, September 28, 1948, 5.

⁴²Dermot Keogh, *The Vatican, the Bishops, and Irish Politics, 1919-39* (n.p.: Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1986), 201.

⁴³Leader Page Parade, *Irish Independent*, October 18, 1944, 2.

to make the CAIR “a living force, a guiding beacon in modern Ireland”. His exhortations do not appear to have had any effect as by 1945 numbers had bumped up only to 155.⁴⁴ 6 years later membership had plummeted to 50.⁴⁵ As early as 1945, Brown had commented that despite being a supporter of neutrality the policy had made things difficult for the CAIR and their inability to make meaningful connections overseas had given the impression that “the work of the association was futile. They knew that nothing could be done to prevent such a war and that any such attempt would be regarded as impertinence on their part”.⁴⁶ Brown goes on to say that the CAIR would turn things around in the coming years by fostering overseas links, an aim which was evident from the post war lecture programme but which failed to revive interest in the flagging organisation. By 1951, the CAIR publicly made their first real foray into policy advice suggesting that they ought to “devise formulae for world peace which should be acted on by the government”, a proposal which smacks of desperation rather than confidence when considering that the same meeting announced what was likely a record low in membership and expressed despondent attitudes toward public interest.⁴⁷ In 1954 a small headline announced *New Premises For Catholic Body*, detailing a new series of lectures and increasing membership.⁴⁸ A year later they seemed to be flailing for direction again when their new Cardinal sponsor John F. D’Alton urged them to focus “more public attention on Church persecutions”.⁴⁹ It was a hardly a pivot as their post-war interests had been moving steadily toward anti-Communism.

⁴⁴Immediate Task Of Catholic Body, *Evening Herald*, November 28, 1945, 5.

⁴⁵Catholic Role In Preserving Peace, *Irish Independent*, November 21, 1951, 7.

⁴⁶Immediate Task Of Catholic Body, *Evening Herald*, November 28, 1945, 5.

⁴⁷Catholic Role In Preserving Peace, *Irish Independent*, November 21, 1951, 7. & Catholic Opinion Silent On Peace, *Irish Press*, November 21, 1951, 5.

⁴⁸New Premises For Catholic Body, *Irish Independent*, January 1, 1954, 8.

⁴⁹Cardinal On Work Of Association, *Irish Independent*, January 24, 1955, 7.

By 1960 anti-Communism had become an integral part of their programme with opposing “atheistic Communism” and supporting anti-Communist organisations listed second only to holding lectures in importance.⁵⁰ At the same time they were struggling to meet rising administrative costs.⁵¹ Likely it was this combined with persistent low membership, insufficient public and institutional interest and a high turnover in its administrative ranks which caused the CAIR to disintegrate within the next three years. Whatever the exact causes, the CAIR faded from view not soon after the death of Brown in 1962. Although Brown had become less involved with the association over the previous 10 years, there is a poetic resonance to the fact that what he had breathed so much life into could barely outlive him. Seemingly the final mention of the CAIR in mainstream Irish newspapers is on 24th of January 1963 fittingly in an obituary, after which it appeared no more.⁵²

The CAIR was a response to post-war continental intellectual currents which called for a permanent Catholic peace through the League of Nations. Bolstered in the 1930s by the rise of Catholic Action in Ireland and the international situation on the continent, it called for peace on the eve of war. As war broke out the CAIR found itself out of place and time. On the corner of Europe in a neutral country, it was ill placed to have any influence at all even within its own nation’s borders and the international connections it had aimed to foster were denied by the situation on the mainland. While it was able to benefit from continental émigrés fleeing the war, many of whom gave lectures for the organisation, its capacity to comment on international affairs was likely stymied by the government’s wartime

⁵⁰ Association’s Call For Funds, *Irish Independent*, September 24, 1960, 2.

⁵¹ibid.

⁵²State Funeral In Dublin For German Ambassador, *Irish Times*, January 24, 1963, 7.

expectations of acceptable speech. The CAIR did give much thought to the post-war world order and never wavered from supporting a new League of Nations type body. Low membership numbers and subscriptions were an issue which it never overcame. Despite a prominent list of Irish political and clerical figures which had to some degree associated with or acknowledged the CAIR it never took off as a publicly influential body. Its publications were few and while it maintained a steady schedule of lectures for over two decades, interest from other Catholic organisations and the public was low. After the immediate post-war years the CAIR organised less lectures on the prospects of world peace and more on the lurking red menace. It was by no means a closed minded organisation. It brought lectures on European integration and federation into Ireland as early as 1942.⁵³ It did, however, suffer from a fatal lack of timeliness and a largely indifferent public.

This was an initial foray into the study of the CAIR. One blind spot of this study is its neglect of the Catholic press, any further work should expand its scope to periodicals like *The Irish Catholic* which also reported on CAIR activities. Other potential avenues for future research were apparent when researching this essay. The CAIR's elite audience and early interest in pan-European ideas suggests that it could be an under appreciated part of Ireland's intellectual journey toward European integration. Similarly the CAIR's educational mission and connections to Universities could be relevant to histories of third level Irish education. Potentially the most fruitful area for future work is the suite of international Catholic organisations of which the CAIR was part. A study of the various national branches of the CUIS during wartime could reveal whether the perceived lack of interest

⁵³Way To World Order, *Irish Press*, January 27, 1942, 1.

from the Irish public was in fact an issue common to organisations of its kind. The papers of the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) in England also bear researching either to discover potential continuities between the two organisations or to compare the issues they faced. The CAIR did not succeed but it would be a lazy assumption to conclude that its failure was caused by a small minded Irish Catholicism, although its members often assumed as much. However, in the absence of sources detailing the CAIR's decision making it remains difficult to assess if the ultimate causes of failure were internal or external.

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