

## **A Fateful Day for Ireland**

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When people say, disparagingly, that Ireland is 'not quite all there', does this not involve a truth? Not only are the Irish and their island divided, the diaspora means there are 7 million Irish on the island and up to 80 million elsewhere in the world.<sup>1</sup> But may be Ireland is not 'all there' because its mission is either incomplete or lies in the future. Then, again, maybe it is a mission to be completed by the gods.

Interestingly, therefore, on the day of the AGM of the Anthroposophical Society in Ireland, held in Omagh, Northern Ireland (that is, in the United Kingdom albeit on the island of Ireland), Sinn Féin won the local elections, signalling a majority. It did so, according to its leader's statement, by courting the youth vote, but without dropping its goal of a single island country. What is going on here?

I ask these questions, not to demonstrate naivety – how on earth can one today conceive a united island?! – but because 'Irish' surely means something over and above religious affiliations or whether one is of republican persuasion or a constitutional monarchist. And because according to its constitution the Anthroposophical Society in Ireland belongs to the island of Ireland, being 'inclusive of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland,' despite Northern Ireland being also within the 'jurisdiction of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain.

Looking backwards in history will always tend to arrive at several separate origins – along with the temptation to prefer one's own, while to look forwards in history is to look for what unites and the principle of respecting diversity that this presupposes. And yet, that is to speak 'I' to 'I'. It is the 'I' that does unto others what it would have done unto itself.

To switch one's gaze from backwards to forwards requires a 'trick' of historical imagination. Firstly, one has to take one's imagery seriously – of the kind being described in this article, for example. Then one has to learn to discipline or educate our blood- and brain-based understanding by thinking independently of both blood and brain.<sup>2</sup>

In one's historical imagination one has also to envisage, not just imagine, that we have a second chance in history, especially now, and that when this second chance is taken, it is possible to develop 'fast track' historical remedies – understandings of history that do not forget, trivialize or excuse what has gone before; but by the same token do not keep alive old stories.

For example, how would it have been back in Cromwell's time had the English asked of the Irish, "How can we further your destiny?" And how would it now be if that question were asked afresh and sincerely?

William and Mary were enthroned to displace Charles II's unpopular successor, James, in order to secure the primacy of the Anglican Church. Given his somewhat fingers-crossed accession, does the arrival of Charles III signal a new chapter, therefore? Could the Republic of Ireland even now – today in historical terms – seek and acquire membership in the Commonwealth of Nations, for example?

There, the Republic would sit in a circle which includes Northern Ireland (the more so if the four nations of the UK were to arrive at true devolution). But there, too, one would meet Charles III, not only as the king and head of state of only *one* of the countries present, but as the head of the Commonwealth – and by its own choosing, for that is not a hereditary role, nor does convention require the office to be inhabited by the head of state of the United Kingdom.

So, here we have to ask a critical question: Who is Charles as an 'I'? Is he himself truly of the bloodline, or is he, like Gorbachev when he wrought change from *within* the Politburo, also inhabiting a role without seeing that role as his identity?

When Queen Elisabeth II was alive, the Unionist and Protestant cause had an ultimate reference. That is now gone. Just as is blind fidelity to the Pope. Seen through the eyes of future incarnating souls (a larger concept than 'the youth of today'), to what truly can one own allegiance if not to one's own 'I'?

The 'fast track' here – i.e. at *this* moment in history – takes the form of freely capitalising initiatives. If this can be done using the worldwide currency invented for the Goetheanum – Hibernia and Ceadus<sup>3</sup> – so

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<sup>1</sup> Source: *Wikipedia*, 22 May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> This is something that understanding bookkeeping requires, but that is not the focus of this short essay.

<sup>3</sup> 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a Hibernia.

much the better, because currencies are powerful signifiers of identity. Of note, therefore, is the Anthroposophical Society in Ireland's use of this currency when budgeting, because it sits above the euro and the pound. Perhaps Ireland is already giving life to a newly envisaged history.