

# CENSORSHIP IN IRELAND DURING WORLD WAR II, 1939 - 1945

by Charles J. G. Verge

## Introduction

I read with interest Mr. Moxter's article, entitled "Why did the Irish Censor Civil Mail During WW2?". The subject of Neutrality in Ireland during the Second World War and its reasons is of relevance to the research that I have undertaken to prepare my handbook entitled "The Irish S.P.1. Censor Labels, 1939-1945". The political reasons behind neutrality, the return of the Six Counties, was new to me but did not surprise me. It stands to reason that Mr. De Valera would have used this opportunity to attain a political goal. But there are more pragmatic reasons for the maintenance of neutrality, albeit they also are mostly political in nature.

In the following few paragraphs, I would like to quickly outline some of the reasons I have found while perusing the Archives and to give some additional details on Censorship in Ireland during WWII.

## 1.0 Historical Background

Censorship in Ireland has existed since the time of Elizabeth I. Throughout the 16th to 19th century it took the form of political and diplomatic censorship as it was practiced in many other European states. In the 20th Century, the British Government and the governments of the Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland continued to censor communications of all kinds, including letters, packets, press and telegraph, in both times of peace and war.

Great Britain's censorship was particularly prevalent during the First World War and the troubles leading first to the Easter Rebellion in 1916 and to the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. The Free State also used censorship during the Civil War and there are indications in the State Papers, at Dublin Castle, that the Irish government wished to establish a censorship office as early as 1925. The subject was brought up by the Cabinet again at least twice before World War II: in 1928 and in 1935.

## 2.0 World War II Censorship in Ireland

With tension rising in Europe in 1939, the government of Prime Minister Eamon De Valera started earnestly looking into the establishment of censorship in the Spring of 1939. On June 16, 1939 things were far enough advanced for the Secretary to the Minister of Defence to write to The Controller of the Stationery Office a secret memorandum which starts as follows:

"I am directed by the Minister for Defence to refer to the conversation which Mr. Coyne (1) had with Mr. Coveney some months ago upon the subject of the provision of a supply of labels, slips, etc., for use by the Censorship in time of war or emergency (2), and transmit to you a copy of a minute, from the Department of Finance, dated 22nd April last, sanctioning the provision immediately of a fortnight's supply of certain of the labels, etc., in question. Attached you will find drafts of two labels and five slips

(numbered in the right hand top corner S.P.1. to S.P.7.),..." (3)

## 3.0 Censorship versus Neutrality

As Mr. Moxter, in his article, asks, why did Ireland censor communications during WWII so did the Irish people. They could not see the reason behind censorship as they felt that Ireland was a neutral country. The issue is still quite controversial, with many articles, giving varying explanations, being written on the subject. This is not the forum for such a discussion, but suffice it to say that it existed. As indicated in notes (4), prepared by Mr. Connolly, for a discussion between himself and An Taoiseach (the Prime Minister), Eamon De Valera, on September 19, 1939 it was felt at the time that efforts should be directed to "preventing publication of anything that would (,) in the slightest degree (,) impair our neutrality" (4). He goes on to say that he feels that both government and nationalist supporters

"will be quick to criticise anything that may seem to favour the British or British tendencies and that will seem to 'cut across' our avowed neutrality" (4).

- (1) T. J. Coyne, Secretary, Department of Justice at the time this document was written. The signature block to this document is probably his. Coyne became Deputy Controller of Censorship on September 3, 1939 and Controller in replacement of J.J. Connolly on September 15, 1941.
- (2) The Irish Government, in all its documents refers to World War II as The Emergency.
- (3) Censorship Archives, Ministry of National Defence, Cathal Brugah Barracks, Dublin. File 5/86. A complete transcript of the memorandum will be found in Appendix 'A' to this article.
- (4) State Papers, Dublin Castle, Dublin. File S11-306

By January 1940, it became evident, to the government, that information had to be given to the public in response to the question, censorship vs neutrality. To reassure the Irish of the need for censorship a three page pamphlet was printed. Entitled Postal Censorship Memorandum it addressed two main issues: the necessity for censorship and what type of restrictions were necessary and the reasons they were implemented (5).

## 4.0 Periods of Censorship

Censorship of the mails followed many different patterns and time frames. The mails from some countries were censored throughout WWII. Others such as mails from Britain and Northern Ireland apparently were not looked at systematically until in 1942 in retaliation for the Britain insisting that all mails from North America be routed through the United Kingdom and not directly to Ireland.

Overall, though, censorship was officially proclaimed by the Irish Cabinet on September 3, 1939 (6). The meeting of the Government, held in the Council Chamber between 8:00 and 9:30 PM on that Sunday, issued an Emergency Power Order, one of the almost 400 Emergency Power Order the Government was to issue during the 'Emergency'. The Order gives the Minister of Post and Telegraphs (Oscar Traynor, at the time) the right to intercept "postal packets" (7), as defined in the Post Office Act of 1908, for censorship purposes.

In fact, as Mr. Moxter indicates, postal censorship may have begun before September 3, possibly as early as two days before. Figure 1 shows a cover that was posted at Longphort on August 31, 1939. It is now the earliest known outgoing Irish WWII censored cover. It was censored in Dublin at the Censorship Office on Exchequer Street probably on September 1 but possibly on the 2nd.

(5) Office of the Controller of Censorship, Exchequer Street, Dublin. Ref. #: B.6172.WL4280/4-R.8285.500.1/40. A.T.&Co.,Ltd.G9. A complete transcript of this memorandum will be found in 'Appendix B' to this article.

(6) State Papers, Dublin Castle, Dublin. Minutes 2nd Government, Vol. 2, 9 MAY 39 / 2 JAN 40

(7) State Papers, Dublin Castle, Dublin. File S10-845, Emergency Powers September 1939 Order, 1939, Schedule A, Part IV.

Censorship was revoked by abolishing the order noted above and a subsequent order of 1942 (8) with effect May 15, 1945 (9). However, there are indications that censorship continued well into the Summer of 1945 and possibly until September of that year.

(8) State Papers, Dublin Castle, Dublin. File S11-306, Emergency Powers 1942 Order No. 151, 1942.  
(9) State Papers, Dublin Castle, Dublin. File S13-673, Emergency Order No. 359, 1945.

APPENDIX 'A'  
MEMORANDUM  
16TH JUNE 1939  
DIRECTING  
THE PRINTING OF S.P.  
LABELS AND INSERTS  
FOR  
CENSORSHIP PURP

S/86. Éire. 16th June, 1939.

SECRET.

The Controller,  
Stationery Office.

I am directed by the Minister for Defence to refer to the conversation which Mr. Coyne had with Mr. Coveney some months ago upon the subject of the provision of a supply of labels, slips, etc., for use by the Censorship in time of war or emergency, and transmit to you a copy of a minute from the Department of Finance, dated 22nd April last, sanctioning the provision immediately of a fortnight's supply of certain of the labels, etc., in question (at an estimated cost of about £40). Attached you will find drafts of two labels and five slips (numbered in the right hand top corner S.P.1 to S.P.7), together with a specimen slip and label as used by the British Censorship during the War 1914-18, showing the size and general lay-out which is required, and I am to request that you will arrange for the printing of the following quantities:

<u>Reference Number.</u>	<u>Quantity.</u>
S.P.1 (Gummed)	800,000
S.P.2 (Gummed)	8,000
S.P.3	8,000
S.P.4	800
S.P.5	800
S.P.6	8,000
S.P.7	800.

It will be observed that it is proposed to have bi-lingual labels and slips and this may occasion certain difficulties in the lay-out, as it is desired that the size of the enclosed specimens should be adhered to, if possible. In the case of one of the gummed labels (S.P.2) it will clearly be necessary to reduce the size of the print, as both the Irish and English versions must appear on the same side and it is not practicable for technical reasons, to employ a larger label. As regards the non-gummed slips (S.P.3 to 7), there would be no objection to having the Irish version on one side and the English on the other if this does not give rise to undue expense or difficulty in printing. In fact, however, it is only in the case of S.P.4 that it would not be feasible to print both versions on the same side without increasing the size of the slip. As regards the colour of the paper and type, it is desired that the printing on the two gummed labels should be in bright and contrasting colours, i.e., one red and the other yellow or any similar contrast and the colour of the paper used in each of the slips should, if possible, be different. This is to facilitate picking out and checking the use of the various slips. Obviously as the variety of different slips, forms, etc., increases it will cease to be possible to differentiate by colour and changes of form will have to be considered, but to begin with, it is desired to have as many separate colours as possible.

I am to add that as the Censorship is not yet in being it would be a great convenience to the Department of Defence if the Stationery Office could see their way to store the labels, etc., which are now being ordered as it is understood that gummed labels are particularly perishable.

APPENDIX 'B'  
POSTAL CENSORSHIP  
MEMORANDUM  
DESTINED FOR  
PUBLIC CONSUMPTION  
JANUARY 1940  
POSTAL CENSORSHIP

NECESSITY FOR CENSORSHIP

The question most commonly asked by persons who resent, perhaps naturally, the censorship of their private correspondence with their relatives and friends in neutral countries is "why is there any need for censorship at all in Ireland which is itself a neutral country?"

Ireland which is itself a neutral country? The answer to the question is, quite briefly, that censorship is necessary in order to safeguard our national interests and to prevent this country from becoming a centre of espionage in the interests of or to the detriment of any of the States which are actually involved in the war and thus to ensure that our neutrality will not be compromised. In time of war, direct communication between one belligerent country and another is frequently interrupted and the usual and, often, the only

possible way for the intelligence services of the belligerents to communicate with their agents abroad is through the neutral countries. It is, in fact, precisely because a country is neutral that, in certain circumstances, it is likely to be made use of in this way, particularly if its territory happens to adjoin that of one of the belligerents. In our case the existence of the Border does not make this any less likely: on the contrary, it makes the control of our communications a task of extreme difficulty.

#### WHAT RESTRICTIONS ARE NECESSARY AND WHY?

It is not practicable to make censorship effective without making some requirements of the public, all of which must necessarily interfere to a greater or less degree with the freedom hitherto enjoyed by the individual letter writer. These requirements fall, chiefly, under three heads: —

- (1) Restrictions as to the class of matter which may be despatched.
- (2) Restrictions on destination.
- (3) Restrictions as to the form of correspondence or its manner of despatch.

As regards (1) and (2) little need be said in this memorandum as *up to the present* no formal restrictions have been imposed under either of these heads. Accordingly, the letter writing public is free, so far as our censorship is concerned, to despatch any class of matter allowed by the Post Office Regulations and to despatch it to any destination. Two observations are called for. Firstly, it may be found necessary later on to prohibit the despatch to places outside the State, except under permit, of certain classes of matter, *e.g.*, printed matter, which cannot be effectively examined and which lends itself to secret writing and code or cipher communications. Secondly, although there are no restrictions of the kind in question in this country such restrictions are in force in other countries, and correspondents would do well before posting picture postcards, newspaper cuttings and printed matter of any kind to any particular destination to bear in mind that such matter is liable to be detained in transit through certain foreign countries.

As regards (3) there is only one restriction that is absolute, namely, that code or cipher or invisible ink must not be used. Correspondents who ignore this restriction may be sure that their letters will not be forwarded and they will be liable to prosecution for an offence under the Emergency Powers Order, 1939. The reason for this restriction is obvious.

Of the other restrictions imposed the following are the principal requirements: —

*Name and address of the sender to be shown.*

A letter which shows the name and address of the sender bears *prima facie* evidence of honesty. Note, however, that expressions such as "your affectionate mother," even in letters to sons, are inadequate for this purpose, as mothers do not always have the same names as their children.

*Letters should be brief and legible.*

Letters of excessive length and illegibility are bound to be delayed. Accordingly, correspondents should make every effort to comply with this requirement in their own interests. Moreover, failure to do so causes a lot of unnecessary trouble and expense. Correspondents should remember that the number of letters with which the censorship has to deal runs into millions a year.

*Letters should be written on one side of the paper only and NOT on flimsy paper.*

The purpose of this requirement is to make it easier to

detect invisible writing. Further, where letters are written on both sides of flimsy paper they are often illegible.

*Letters should be in Irish or English, so far as possible.*

Obviously this requirement cannot be complied with unless the correspondents know either of those languages and letters are not detained merely because they are written in foreign languages. Letters in uncommon languages, however, are liable to considerable delay and much time and expense is saved if letters are written in Irish or English.

#### EXEMPTIONS.

After the question "what is the necessity for censorship at all?" the question most commonly asked by persons from whom protests have been received is "why was my correspondence opened?" or, alternatively, "of what am I suspected?" The fact is that many persons of integrity feel that their correspondence, at any rate, should be exempted from censorship and they imagine that the fact that their letters are being opened is a slur on their character or means that they are under suspicion. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. A censor's label on an envelope does not mean that the sender or addressee is under suspicion and everyone should realise that censorship is general, that it applies to everybody, and that, since this is so there is no implied reflection on his character or integrity.

There is a number of sound reasons why the letters of persons of undoubted integrity cannot be allowed to pass free of examination. Two of these may be specially mentioned. In the case of outgoing letters the censor cannot be sure that a letter bearing an external indication that it was despatched by a particular person was in fact written or despatched by that person. In the case of incoming letters a letter may be addressed to a well-known person at premises which are not occupied by the nominal addressee or a letter may be intended to be intercepted by an agent of the sender in the employment of the addressee.

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER OF CENSORSHIP,  
DUBLIN.

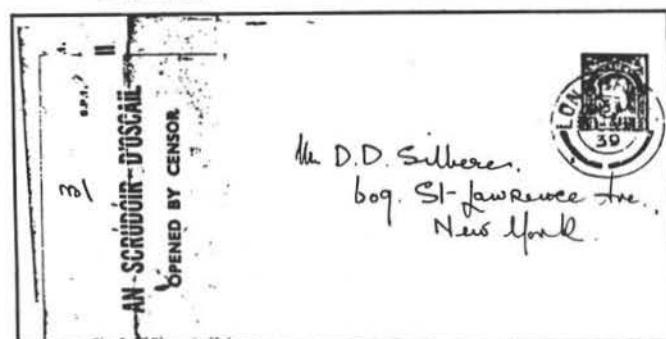


FIGURE 1. The cover above is the earliest known outgoing Irish WWII censored cover. Mailed at Longphort on August 31, 1939 it bears a TYPE IAC label and was probably censored on September 1, 1939 in Dublin. It was franked with a surface rate postage of 2 pence. This was three days before the German invasion of Poland. Earlier foreign postmarked covers exist but they are all coming into Ireland. Therefore there is no certainty as to the date the letters were censored and the labels applied to the covers.

## CENSORSHIP IN WORLD WAR II

(Second part in a continuing series)

### THE S.P.1. through S.P.7. PROOFS

by Charles J. G. Verge

In the first installment of this series, we looked at Ireland and Neutrality in the Second World War. As part of that article, I provided, in Appendix 'A', a copy of a secret memorandum, dated June 16, 1939, from the Secretary to the Minister of Defence to The Controller of the Stationary Office. In this memorandum it was made mention that there was an urgent requirement to print censorship labels and slips.

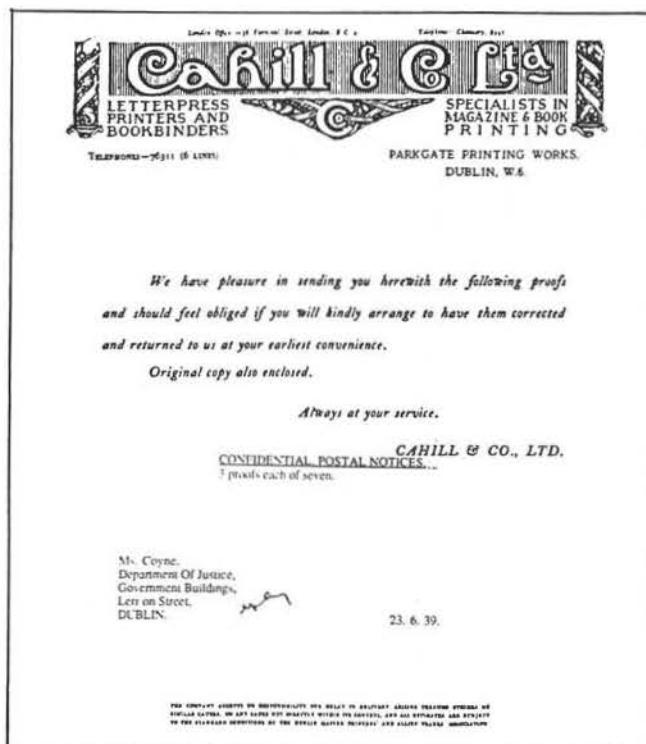
The Controller of the Stationary Office was quite diligent on receipt of this memorandum because a week later, on June 23, 1939, Cahill & Co. Ltd sent Mr. Coyne proofs of the seven labels and slips (The firm calls them postal notices). The exchange of correspondence as well as copies of the proofs are illustrated with this article.

Cahill & Co. Ltd, a Dublin firm which still exists today under different ownership, certainly printed the first order of S.P. labels and slips. Did they do it throughout the war remains to be determined. Were there other printers involved? The Stationary Office probably sent to tender their orders and may have changed printers during the War. The different types of fonts and papers for the S.P.1. label, the most common, may be a proof that supports this statement, though it is possible that wartime conditions may have been behind the cheaper, more porous, paper used later on.

The S.P. series was to continue on to at least S.P.10. The copy of the S.P.10. slip in my possession would indicate that some of the labels/slips were printed in-house. It looks like somebody printed them on a Gestetner type machine and then cut them down to size. The professional approach to printing the first labels having been abandoned.

All in all, some of the labels, such as S.P.4., 5. and 7., may not have had more than one printing. They are extremely scarce and rarely seen on the market. When purchasing Irish censored materiel it is always worthwhile to look inside the envelope. That is usually where one finds gems such as the S.P.10. label mentioned above. As well some of the philatelically inspired covers may have a note or a letter inside which gives additional information on the state of philately and/or the country some 50 years ago. They are of interest to the postal historian. I would enjoin you to share any such discoveries with the readers by publishing the information you find in The Revealer.

Should you have information you wish to add or questions you would like answered please feel free to contact me. I will share the information with the readers in a further article and will attempt my best to answer the questions. Please write to Charles J. G. Verge, P.O. Box 2788, Station 'D', Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1P 5W8.



23rd June, 1939.

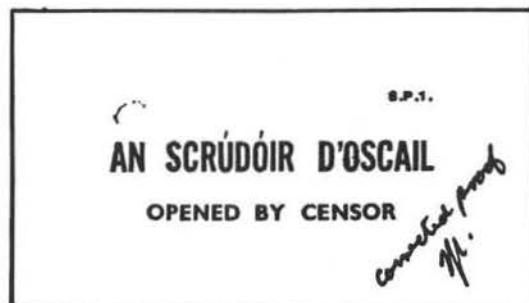
A Chairde,

I return herewith for final printing the proofs which accompanied your letter to me of even date.

I have found it unnecessary to make any change except in the case of S.P.2 in which I wish to make a small correction as set out in red ink on the proof. You need not send me any further proofs of this or of any of the other labels.

Mise, le meas,

Messrs. Cahill & Co., Ltd.,  
Parkgate Printing Works,  
Parkgate,  
Dublin, W.6.



S.P.2.

AR N-A CHUR THAR N-AIS ON  
SCRÚDOIR -CHUN AN TSEOLAT GO DTÍ AN SEOLTÓIR  
AR AN GCÚIS A MINÍTEAR SA  
MHEAMRAM ATA SA CHLUDACH  
SO.

Returned to Sender by the Censor for Reason  
Explained in Memorandum Enclosed in this  
Cover.

S.P.2.

S.P.3.

**ÉIRE—IRELAND.**  
**SCRÚDOIREACHT PHUIST.**  
**POSTAL CENSORSHIP.**

Tá an leitir seo á cur thar n-aís go dtí an seoltóir do réir an fhógra a tugadh don phuibliocht á rá nach foláir leitreacha go dtí tortha coigríche do bheith gairid so-léigthe.

This letter is returned to the sender in accordance with the notice which has been given to the public that letters to foreign countries must be brief and legible.

S.P.3.

**ÉIRE—IRELAND.**

**SCRÚDOIREACHT PHUIST.**  
**POSTAL CENSORSHIP.**

Ní hí an Scrúdóireacht Eireannach fóideár an leitir seo do chiorrbhadh.

The Irish Censorship is not responsible  
for the mutilation of this letter.

S.P.5.

S.P.4.

**ÉIRE—IRELAND.**

**SCRÚDOIREACHT PHUIST.**  
**POSTAL CENSORSHIP.**

An ní.....

a luaidhtear a bheith i dteanta na leitre bhi sé ar iarraidh nuair a hoscladh an leitir. Sara gouirir a thuirisc go Oifig an Phuist faigh amach go cinnte, let-thíil, ó s'fhlóidir na leitre ce ca cuireadh an ní atá i gceist i dteanta na leitre no nár cuireadh. Má cuireadh, ba cheart don tseoltóir a thuirisc a chur ar Roinn Riaracháin Phuist na tire inaist postálaí an leitir, agus a rá go raibh an ní sin ar iarraidh nuair a shroich an leitir an Scrúdóir. Ba cheart clúdach na leitre, agus, más féidir é, an méid a bhi istigh ann nuair a tuartnas e, do chur i dteanta an leitre i dtaoibh an scéil a curiúear go dtí an Roinn Riaracháin Phuist.

Ní tugtar aon chúiteamh i gcailliúint a mbíonn i leitir do thír choigríche no uaithe, mara mbíonn an leitir curtha fí árachas le hOifig an Phuist. Ní leor i bheith cláruithe.

Enclosure mentioned.....

was missing when the letter was opened. Before making enquiries of the Post Office, please ascertain definitely from the sender of the letter whether the article in question was actually enclosed. If so, the sender should make enquiry of the Postal Administration of the country in which the letter was posted, mentioning that the enclosure was missing when the letter reached the Censor. The cover of the letter, and, if possible, such of its contents as were received, should accompany any communication to the Postal Administration.

No compensation is given for the loss of the contents of a letter for or from a foreign country, unless the letter was insured (not merely registered) with the Post Office.

S.P.4.

## QUIZ 1 – ANSWERS

1. I am the Caribbean island of Montserrat. I have, unfortunately, not issued stamps to illustrate these links except for one stamp which shows St. Patrick's Church in the town of Plymouth. (Montserrat, Scott 479)
2. I am St. Brendan. The Irish Post Office issued a stamp to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of my birth (484-1984). I am reported to have discovered an island in a region of fog (Newfoundland) and am known as "The Voyager". (DF C393, Scott 601)
3. We are George Washington, (DF C15-C16, Scott 103-4 for the 150th anniversary of the American Constitution), Andrew Jackson (DF C364, Scott 572) and John F. Kennedy (Scott 729 for the 25th anniversary of my assassination).
4. Saints Killian, Totnan and Colman are we. The Irish and the Germans commemorated the 1300th anniversary of our Martyrdom in 1989 by issuing common design stamps. (Ireland, Scott 748 - Germany, Scott 1580)
5. My name is Robert O'Hara Burke (1821-1861). My claim to fame is to have led the Burke and Willis expedition to cross the Australian Continent from North to South. My picture is found on the 28p commemorative issued by Ireland in 1988 to celebrate the Bicentennial of Australia. (Scott 709)
6. The 'Messiah' is my best remembered composition. It was

first played in Dublin on April 13, 1742. I am George Frederic Handel (1685-1759). On the occasion of the Tercentenary of my birth and the European Music Year Ireland, and many other countries issued stamps for me. (DF C410, Scott 619)

7. I am going down in philatelic history because of the envelope I designed: 'The Mulready'. I am William Mulready (1786-1863). My 200th birthday was the occasion for the first of the two stamps issued by Ireland for me. (DF C446, Scott 674). The second showed one of my paintings 'The Sonnet' in the 1989 'Love' series (Scott 735)
8. The Pope raised me to a Papal peerage in 1928. I, John McCormack (1884-1945), was one of the greatest tenors of this century. Both the U.S.A. and Ireland issued common designs stamps for my 100th birthday. (Ireland, DF C386, Scott 594 - U.S.A. Scott 2090)
9. I am St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (1651-1719). I am the founder of the De La Salle order, more commonly known around the world, but not in Ireland, as the Christian Brothers. I was canonized in 1900. (Ireland, DF C289, Scott 477 - France, Scott 646)
10. I am the architect of the White House in Washington. My name is James Hoban (1762-1831). It is said that I modelled the Presidential residence on the Duke of Leinster's seat, Leinster House in Dublin, which now houses the Irish Parliament, An Dail. (Ireland, DF C316, Scott 504 - U.S.A., Scott 1935-36)



S.P.6.

S.P.6.

ÉIRE—IRELAND.  
SCRÚDOIREACHT PHUIST.  
POSTAL CENSORSHIP.

Do réir mar a fógruodh go puibl  
deintear gach leitir a bhíonn thírithe  
go thír choigríche do chur thar n-ais  
go dtí an seoltóir mara dtugtar  
sloinne agus seoladh an scribhneora  
in iomlán.

In accordance with the public  
announcement all letters addressed  
to foreign countries are returned to  
the sender unless the full surname  
and address of the writer is given.

↓ S.P. 7.

S.P.7

ÉIRE—IRELAND  
SCRÚDOIREACHT PHUIST  
POSTAL CENSORSHIP

Bhí an cíodach so ar oscailt nuair a  
shroich sé an Scrúdóir.

This cover was open when it reached  
the Censor.



## CENSORSHIP IN WORLD WAR II

(Third part in a continuing series)

### HOW PHILATELY GETS IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR

by Charles J. G. Verge

This is the third in the series on WWII censorship in Ireland and I thought that you might wish a bit of levity this time around. It is nice to note that our colleague philatelists of 50 years ago were already on the trail of collectibles.

Below is a copy of an Undated and Unsigned Memorandum to the Chief Postal Censor from the Assistant Controller of Censorship (1) in which he relates, albeit succinctly, the history of the first (?) attempt at collecting the pink S.P.1. labels used to reseal the letters opened by the examiners at the Censorship Office on Exchequer Street in Dublin.

"Chief Postal Censor (2)

Mr. Boland of External Affairs has been informed by Mr. Antrobus of the U.K. Representative's Office that there is an American in Dublin at present offering 4d. a piece for uncut censorship labels. It is stated that the American Minister in Dublin is aware of the identity of this American and has been informed by him that he is collecting them purely for philatelic purposes (3).

It appears from this that censorship labels have a philatelic value and, also, it is an additional reason for tightening up the arrangements for the safe keeping of our censorship labels. There was also the recent prosecution which discovered that unused censorship labels were in the possession of the accused. We have asked the Chief State Solicitor to let us have the labels in question but they are not at hand as of yet.

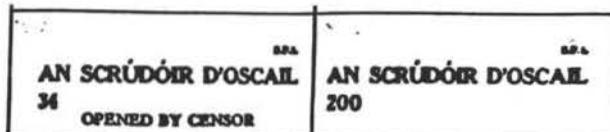
Perhaps when you have examined the position you will report as to any steps which you consider necessary to improve the present arrangements.

You might as well tell M.I. (4) about the alleged activities of the American with a view to having them check up on him.

Assistant Controller"

As we have seen, philatelic value was already being given to the labels. If only they knew the cost of some of these today.

The Assistant Controller of Censorship's memorandum muddies the waters as to the original state of the labels. It is



III. 1 On the left, a TYPE VII S.P.1. label with bilingual text (Gaelic and English). On the right, a TYPE VIII with only Gaelic wording.

felt, by many, that these labels were printed individually. This memorandum implies the existence of 'uncut censorship labels'. Some students of these labels believe that, at one point at least, probably the printer's shop, labels were in full sheets (maybe 12 to a sheet) before being cut. Others, citing the fact that no full or part sheets have ever come to light, disagree. More research will have to be undertaken before the answer is found.

There are no other documents on this particular file, at the Cathal Brugah Barracks, related to this case and its philatelic nature. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain as to what measures were taken to prevent these labels from falling into philatelic hands in the future.

It would be interesting to follow up on the legal case mentioned in the memorandum. It could clarify many of the points still left to discover about the labels. It would be interesting to know if the 'accused' intended to use the labels to bypass the censorship process or to sell them to philatelists. What security measure where in place? How were the labels stored so that it was easy to pilfer some (how many were taken)? What happened to the unused labels? Unused labels resemble the ones found on envelopes. Used labels however, if they are steamed off the envelope, become brittle, wrinkled and the gum mottled. Therefore it would be difficult to re-use them. If removed from the envelope by soaking, they have a tell-tale fold in the middle (labels were usually applied to the left side of the envelope) and have no gum.

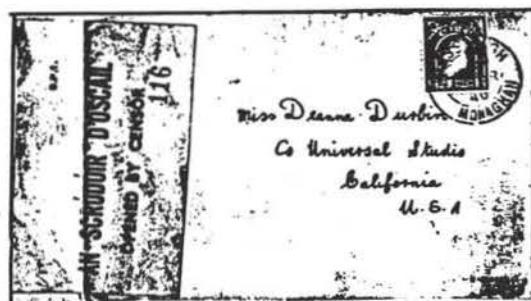
If anybody has any clues as to the legal case referred to above or can point me in the right direction to inquire, I would appreciate it. Please feel free to write to me with the information or with any comments, additions or sources concerning censorship in Ireland at P.O. Box 2788, Postal Station 'D', Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1P 5W8.

(1) Censorship Archives, Ministry of National Defence, Cathal Brugah Barracks, Dublin. File 3/2: Postal Censorship Instructions to Chief Postal Censor concerning Staff Matters.

(2) J. J. Purcell

(3) The bold text is by the author of this article.

(4) M. I. - Military Intelligence. Military Officers apparently visited the Postal Censorship Office at 11 Exchequer Street at least once or twice a day to pick up mail considered subversive or requiring additional testing.



III. 2 TYPE I (Type IAB): the first S.P.1. label used. Note the late usage of an English cancel (Glasslough, co. Monaghan, March 2, 1940).

The Duke of Portland, is his "most secret and confidential" reply to Lord Cornwallis, is willing to hope that Lord Tyrawley has become so insensible of the impropriety of persisting "in his request on behalf of Colonel Cuffe as to withdraw it altogether" ... (Cornwallis' Correspondence iii page 257). His Grace was, however, mistaken. Lord Cornwallis, in another 'secret and confidential' letter says:-

"I beg leave to assure Your Grace that I have not made Lord Tyrawley or any other person in this country sensible of the impropriety of their pretensions, nor have I the most distant hope of succeeding in an attempt of this nature". (Cornwallis Correspondence iii page 263).

As Lord Cornwallis had only promised to "recommend" Colonel James Cuffe (3) for a Peerage, the request was refused. Lord Tyrawley however, who, notwithstanding the open scandal of his life, had been raised to the Irish Peerage and sworn a member of the Irish Privy Council was 'elected', through the influence of the Lord Lieutenant as compensation for his disappointment in not getting a Peerage for his son, an Irish Representative Peer, thus securing for life a seat in the House of Lords of the Imperial Parliament, which he entered as a notorious adulterer, in 1803 he obtained, in addition to his other offices, a commission of Public Works, which he held until his death, this promotion was, of course, the result of a "Union Arrangement".

In view of all the aforementioned, he must have used his position of power, to demand or coerce the people within the Irish Post Office to make Deel Castle a Post Town any time after he obtained his peerage in 1797, or about 1803, when he became Commissioner of Public Works, which in view of the nearness of Ballina of less than three miles, was a disgrace and should have been stamped on by the surveyor for the Irish Post Office, if one was ever allowed to go out and assess this new Post Town. It should also have been noticed that he lived at

Castle Lacken, in the parish of Lacken, Co Mayo. Post Town Rathlacken, 5 1/4 miles north of Killala, and that his application for a Post Town at Deel Castle was no more than a further favour for his son, and as you have read, they got away with it until 1830/31 when the Postal Authorities in London took over the running of the Irish Post Office, a day of reckoning then arrived for more than Lord Tyrawley and son for many, many more Lords, Earls and landed gentry were abusing the postal system in Ireland.

Sir Edward Lees who had run the Irish Postal System for 30 years prior to the takeover by London in 1831, recommended to the incoming Authorities that at least 200 Post Towns should be reduced to Sub Offices.

Also, consider the amount of Postal Revenue of £4.12s.3d per year. It is so small that it must make the Deel Castle postal marking very scarce. (One hundred or so letters per year.) If one ever existed? Until I see proof it looks unlikely! i.e. Letters dropped and picked up at the Park Gate, unless it meant Gate House.

One last point to consider, if you check the townland Ordnance Survey of Ireland Maps of 1837 for County Mayo, sheets 29 and 30, Map Book 1, the Park Gate or Gate House referred to was possibly at Knockdangan Bridge in Knockdangan Townland, but there were three entrances to Deel Castle (at A, B or C, see attached sketch) at the time the letter was written to the P.M.G. in June 1831: the occupier of Deel Castle was George Cuffe (4), the son of James (3) M.P. for Tralee, who died in September 1828.

Well, whilst you ponder on this story, I think I will write to "An Post": you see, I have this garden shed, oops sorry, I'll get back to reality they're closing Post Offices nowadays, not opening them, and I don't have the 'pull' with a T.D. so I'll just forget it...it was an outrageous thought, anyhow!!!

## CENSORSHIP IN WORLD WAR II

(Fourth part in a continuing series)

### IRISH POSTAL CENSORSHIP: Its First Month

by Charles J. G. Verge

A month after censorship started, a report was prepared on all the foreign postal packets and letters, not written in English, submitted for censorship during September 1939. The data contained in this report will be of help to the postal historians, censorship researchers and even to the Irish social historian in general.

Unfortunately, the report below is the only one I have been able to find in the Censorship Archives at Cathal Brugah Barracks. If there are others, they are not in the file. They may surface one day. But if they, like the file entitled Censorship Labels and Handstamps, have disappeared, what a pity for Irish postal history and our (my?) research.

You will note throughout the report that the writer does not mince his/her words relative to the problems caused by handwriting and grammar or the problems created by some of the more uncommon languages. I have submitted the report as written and I firmly believe that the writer had no intention of

demeaning anybody but was intent on graphically explaining the problems inherent to the work to be done. These problems are well illustrated by the sampling technique used for the Hungarian letters, the letters in Japanese, Chinese, Gujarati, Maltese and Latvian being let in without censorship and the delays in processing the Dutch correspondence.

Note, as the writer of the report did, the different writing style of sailors when they write to their sweethearts or to their wives. I guess this still is true today.

Once again should you have comments or additional information please feel free to contact me at P.O. Box 2788, Station 'D', Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1P 5W8.

With Part Five, I will provide comments received from readers on Parts One, Two and Three. I intend to do this on a regular basis if and when I received your comments and/or additional information on the topics I have written about. It is important that we share such information so that we may enhance our knowledge of Irish Postal Censorship during The Emergency.

"Report of the Foreign Correspondence  
submitted for Censorship during the month of  
September, 1939."<sup>1</sup>

Some 19,000 letters and postcards in 24 foreign languages have been received. These include both incoming and outgoing

mails. The following table shows in detail the proportion of letters in each language. There is no indication that the volume of correspondence in these languages will decrease.

Romance Languages	(French	7,500	
	(Italian	620	
	(Spanish	625	
	(Portuguese	6	
	(Roumanian <sup>2</sup>	1	
	(Latin	4	8,756
Teutonic Languages	(Dutch & Flemish	6,250	
	(German	2,500	
	(Danish & Norwegian	800	
	(Swedish	25	9,575
Slavonic Languages	(Czech	70	
	(Russian	47	
	(Polish	30	
	(Bulgarian	8	
	(Serbo-Croatian	5	160
Finno-Ugric Languages	(Latvian	38	
	(Hungarian	26	
	(Finnish	6	70
Miscellaneous	(Yiddish	200	
	(Japanese	3	
	(Gujerati	2	
	(Modern Greek	22	
	(Esperanto	3	
	(Maltese	1	231
			18,792

The unexpectedly large number of letters in Deutch, Norwegian and Flemish is explained by the fact that a high proportion of them are to and from sailors on ships temporarily berthed in Irish ports. Apart from this, however, there are a considerable number of Belgium, Dutch, Danish and Czech nationals resident in Eire and employed in various industries, such as Sugar Beet, Alcohol and Cement factories.

Adequate arrangements exist for the censorship of the correspondence, with the exception of Dutch & Modern Greek (and Swedish). The whole time of at least one reader will be needed in Dutch. In fact, extra help will have to be given occasionally to the whole time officer dealing with Dutch. There are some 300 Dutch letters held up<sup>3</sup>, in spite of the fact that one officer has devoted most of her time, and Dr. Hayes an hour a day, to them.

The Italian letters fall into the following classes (1) Private letters to and from ice-cream merchants and cafe proprietors resident in Eire, (2) Sailor's letters, (3) Clerical letters (4) Miscellaneous private and business letters. The handwriting, grammar and spelling of most of the letters in classes (1) and (2) is very bad and imposes considerable eye-strain on the reader. The letters in French, Spanish [,] Danish and Dutch of classes (1) and (2) present the same difficulty as regards grammar, etc. The Russian, Czech and Polish letters are nearly all to or from a few regular correspondents who reside in Eire. The Russian scripts of some of these letters presented great difficulties at first but as time goes on one becomes familiar with the handwriting of the various writers.

In some of the less common languages it has been found necessary to adopt the expedient of "sampling". For example, in Hungarian, the actual correspondents number only two though they have written or received 26 letters between them. Two or three of the letters of each correspondent have been read and rough translations have been worked out. These test letters having proved harmless others by the same writer have been let through opened but unread. Sampling as also been applied to the Bulgarian, Serbian and Finnish letters. The Bulgarian and Serbian letters were all to or from one correspondent.

The Japanese, Chinese, Gujerati, Maltese and Latvian letters have all been let through unread. All the Latvian letters were to or from sailors.

The number of letters which contain passages which it is advisable to delete is very small, probably less than one per cent. Apart from reference to ship's movements such matter is rarely found in the letters of sailors. Where it occurs at all it is more generally found in the letters of educated persons who are more prone to circulate rumours and discuss political and military questions.

The following factors tend to increase the difficulties of censorship: - (a) bad writing, (b) letters of inordinate length, (c) the use of very thin semi-transparent note-paper, (d) unnecessary use of languages like Russian and Yiddish where English, French or German could have been used.

The instructions issued by the Government on some of these matters are not followed. A considerable number of correspondents fail to write their names and addresses on the envelopes and to state the language used. Women and sailors writing to their sweethearts frequently write letters of five or six closely written pages. Sailors writing to their wives do not offend in this respect. Letters in Russian and Yiddish often contain passages in English, French or German. It is clear that in such cases the whole letter could have been written in English, French and German.

Under the present arrangements we undertake the censoring of all letters in French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, Italian, Esperanto, Flemish, Portuguese, Roumanian, Latin, Czech, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Serbian, Norwegian, Finnish, Hungarian and Yiddish.

The present staff of the section consists of 9 whole-time and 5 part-time officers. The whole-time officers are, without exception, competent and hardworking. Although, perhaps, not germane to this report it appears to me to be definitely unjust to those officers who have been put on this work because of their linguistic qualifications not to compensate them in some way or other. Apart from the question of remuneration altogether the experience got by the Executive and Minor Staff Officers doing this work will, to my knowledge, be a hindrance rather than a help for general service purposes later on and thus they will lose both on swings and roundabouts.

In conclusion I wish to place on record our indebtedness to Miss Stephens and Dr. Hayes for their advice and assistance in the organisation of the work. Dr. Hayes' services are invaluable as he is the only person in the Service with a knowledge of the Slavonic group of languages. In addition to handling correspondence in this group his assistance and advice is always available when difficulties have been met within other languages."

<sup>1</sup> Censorship Archives, Ministry of National Defence, Cathal Brugah Barracks, Dublin. File 3/?.

2 I have left the spelling as I found it, particularly of the language names, though it may not be as we spell languages today.

3 This may explain some of the delays encountered in the receipt of correspondence as shown on some of the covers in my collection.



## 1989-1990 JOHN J. CLARK AWARD

by Peg Zellers

The John J. Clark Award is given to a member who has performed some outstanding service to the EPA. The Committee consisting of the last three award recipients, Patrick J. Ryan, Sr., Peg Zellers and Robert Corless unanimously selected Bill as this year's winner.

William A. O'Connor has been unanimously selected to receive the John J. Clark Award for 1989-1990. He has served the Eire Philatelic Association as Treasurer for six (6) years. He took over the position in 1984, under very trying

circumstances. Since that time he has worked steadily and tirelessly to improve the reporting of the EPA income and dispersals and the accurate status of EPA funds.

However, this year, 1989-1990, has been one that has required extraordinary efforts deserving of recognition by the presentation of the John J. Clark Award for service to the Association. In order to save the EPA a large amount of funds, Bill researched his records and broke out the members who had not paid dues for 3 years, 2 years, and 1 year. These persons were notified of their delinquency and those who did not remit were then dropped from membership. This action kept these persons from receiving Revealers and other Association services free and gratis, at an untold cost to the EPA.

Bill has also analyzed accounts of the various EPA activities and services and determined their fiscal viability. He has been able to answer the questions - "Are these activities profitable?" "Are they cost effective?" "Are they self supporting?" "Are the dues that are charged, meeting the needs of the EPA?" "How much does one copy of the Revealer cost?" Some of these questions could never be answered before the analysis.

This year, Bill O'Connor has put and kept the financial aspect of the Eire Philatelic Association on a business like footing. His service to the EPA this year makes him worthy of the John J. Clark Award.



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