



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Irish Republic's President is forced to cancel her visit to Belfast's Shankill Road



Mrs. Mary McAleese

Mary McAleese was forced to cancel her plan to visit the Shankill Road in Belfast because of her slanderous statements against the Protestant people of Northern Ireland.

The cancellation follows controversy aroused by her statement in January that Protestant children in Northern Ireland were taught to hate Catholics in the same way as the Nazis taught theirs to despise Jews. Apart from the irony of the outrageous slander — the Irish Republic remained neutral throughout the Second World War and even flew the National flag at half-mast when Hitler's death was announced — the statement is an unmitigated lie. No community has borne such terror as the Protestant community in Northern Ireland

over the last 30 years and yet, to a remarkable degree, it has borne it patiently. Unlike the Roman Catholic community which has given support to IRA terrorism, the Protestant people, apart from a very small minority, eschewed paramilitary retaliation and terror.

Auschwitz

Mrs. McAleese made the comments before attending ceremonies marking 60 years since Auschwitz was liberated. She said the anti-semitism that existed for decades had been built upon by the Nazis. "They gave to their children an irrational hatred of Jews in the same way that people in Northern Ireland transmitted to their children an irrational hatred, for example, of Catholics," she said.

However, Mrs. McAleese later said she regretted her remarks.

She said she was "personally absolutely devastated" by the furore, that her critics had been "absolutely right" and acknowledged she had been clumsy and had hurt people. When it is remembered that Mrs. McAleese is a former Law Professor of Queen's University, Belfast, it is hard to believe that the statement came about as a result of verbal clumsiness. Mrs. McAleese was but giving vent to her native hatred of all things Protestant, if truth be told. Unionist politicians had called on her to call off the visit in the wake of the controversy.

A joint statement from the DUP, Ulster Unionists and Progressive Unionists said the apology had not undone the offence.