

## 7. The family Bayot.

*The relationship with the Filipino Bayot family. Aunt Cely. An unfaithful man with a world-famous grandson. What is the role of Louis Severijns in this story, and why does he suddenly disappear? The entire Bayot family moves to the United States and settles in Portland.*

In the family, Louis Severijns, the youngest brother of my father, is known as Wiet or Wietje. Louis was born on September 12, 1924, in Semarang. As previously mentioned, Louis Severijns was taken as a prisoner of war during World War II and forced to work as a laborer on the infamous Burma Railway. Louis Severijns remained in Indonesia after the war. He was also a “warga negara,” or Indonesian citizen. Louis entered into a relationship with Cely Bayot-Alfonso. Aunt Cely Alfonso (her maiden name) was born on July 9, 1925, and in 1941, before the war in Indonesia, she was sent by her parents (Filipino father Amadeo Alfonso and Indo-European mother Johanna Michon) to the Philippines along with her younger sister Natalia, where they attended a boarding school. During the war, her boarding school was bombed, and Cely went to live with her brother Pete in Manila. There, she later married the Filipino Eugene Harranz Bayot and had two children with him, Robert and Eugene Jr. Aunt Cely held Dutch nationality, but through her marriage, she became a Filipino citizen. However, the marriage did not last. The reason for the divorce was that Aunt Cely discovered her husband already had another wife named Soledad del Pedro (Sally).<sup>180</sup> That family moved to the United States and settled in Honolulu, Hawaii. With Sally, Eugene Bayot Sr. had seven children: six sons and a daughter, Bernadette (1957-2013). Bernadette Bayot was a dancer and singer but became especially known as the mother of the world-famous singer Bruno Mars.

Aunt Cely left her husband in 1950 and returned to her parents in Indonesia. Just a few doors down lived Louis Severijns, and they started a relationship. Together, they had four children: Hans, Loeky, Alexander (Andy), and Vicky. Uncle Louis and Aunt Cely never married. At that time, the Philippines—a strictly Catholic country—did not allow divorce. Because of this, Cely kept the Bayot name, and her children with Uncle Louis also carried the Bayot surname. Given the turbulent times in Indonesia, especially for Indo-Europeans, being Filipino may have provided Cely and her children with a greater sense of security. However, by 1961, the situation had become so unsafe that Cely and all six children moved to the Philippines. There, the children learned English, as up until that point, Dutch had been their primary language. The eldest children, Robert and Eugene Jr., even visited their biological father in his Manila apartment.

During 1965 and 1966, following a communist coup, President Sukarno was deposed, and General Suharto came to power. This marked the beginning of a major purge of anything associated with communism. Between half a million and a million people were killed. Not only communists but also personal vendettas were carried out under the guise of purging communism. Family feuds were settled, and financial and economic advantages were pursued using the excuse of ideological cleansing. The peak of these purges occurred around 1965, but violence continued in the following years. It remained unsafe for Dutch nationals and Indo-Europeans, who were frequently targeted. Street fights often broke out, sometimes even involving children. Robert Bayot, by his own account, often had to fight on the streets as a child.

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<sup>180</sup> Communications from children Cely Bayot-Alfonso and Eugene Bayot Sr. to the author.

During this period, Louis Severijns disappeared. No one ever heard from him again. What happened to him remains entirely unclear. One possibility is that he became a victim of the violence of that time. Rumors suggest that he may have been working for the government and was ambushed and killed while trying to collect his wages. Another rumor claims that he fled to the Philippines. What is certain is that he vanished without a trace, and no one in the family has ever received any word from him, despite efforts by the Red Cross to locate him.



*Aunt Cely Bayot and her then-husband Euge Bayot the grandfather of world star Bruno Mars  
Source: collectie familie Severijns.*

After the disappearance of Uncle Louis, Aunt Cely and her children returned to the Philippines. In 1970, she left for the United States with her youngest children. By then, her mother, Johanna Michon, and her four younger brothers and sister were already living there.

The eldest children, Robert and Eugene Sr., moved to the USA in 1971—both of them were of legal age by then. Eventually, the family settled in Portland, Oregon, in the United States. Aunt Cely passed away in Portland on July 20, 2014, at the age of 89.

Three of Aunt Cely's sons have also passed away. Hans died in the Philippines on August 10, 2018. He was 67 years old. His brother Andy passed away on December 24, 2020, due to complications from the coronavirus in a hospital in Las Vegas. Recently, in November 2023, Robert Bayot also passed away.

With the disappearance of Louis (Wiet) Severijns, the permanent presence of the Severijns family in former Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, came to an end. However, in the 1990s, a daughter of my sister Jeannette emigrated to Bali.

Carla Roozen still lives there with her Indonesian husband, Pipin Haryanto, and their four daughters. The Severijns family once again has a permanent presence there.

Notably, it is recorded that he was born at sea, which may explain his unusual name. Another remarkable detail is that the groom was 37 years older than the bride. Weijzig was born on 22 January 1883 and passed away in Venray on 4 February 1958. The couple and their children arrived in the Netherlands on 23 February 1957 aboard the ship Sibajak and were welcomed upon arrival by Queen Juliana.

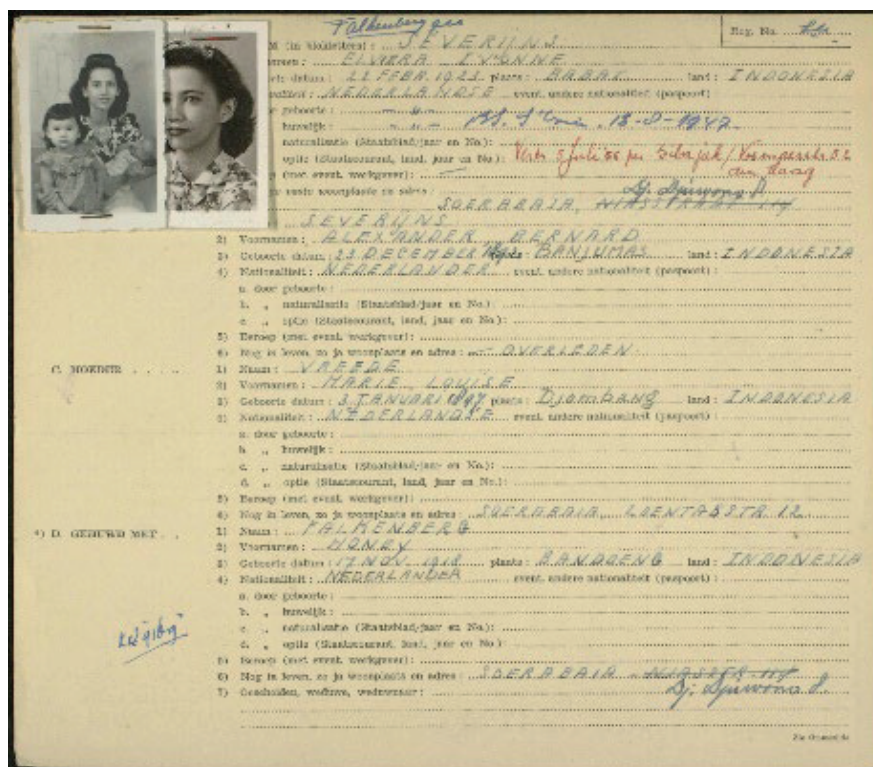


*Queen Juliana receiving Olga Weyzig-Severijns and Lichtjaar Janus Weijzig with their family on "Sibajak" upon arrival in the Netherlands in 1957.*

*Source: Severijns family collection.*

The couple had ten children, all of whom were born in Indonesia. Aunt Olga passed away on 22 June 1989 in Amsterdam.

Elvira Yvonne Severijn, known as El or Elly, was born in Babat, Java, on 22 February 1923, according to the Indisch Oud-Paspoortenarchief.<sup>182</sup>



*Dutch East Indies Old Passport Archive Elly Severijns.*

On 13 August 1947, she married Honey Falkenburg, and they had three children: Vicky, Remy, and Linda. The marriage was unsuccessful, and they eventually divorced. Elly could not tolerate the Dutch climate and emigrated with her children to Inglewood, County LA, California, USA. There, she remarried Jan Verkouteren, also an immigrant from the former Dutch East Indies. Elly passed away in Inglewood on 6 December 1991. Thanks to a letter from Aunt Elly, I received first-hand information about the capture and death of my grandfather, Alexander Bernard Severijns, at the hands of the Japanese occupiers of the Dutch East Indies during the Second World War.

Janet Grace Elionore Severijns, the youngest daughter of Alexander Bernard Severijns and Marie Louise Vreede, was born in Semarang on 1 November 1932. Within the family, she was known as Meithy. Meithy married Eugene Emile de Lannée de Betrancourt on 16 May 1952 in Surabaya, Indonesia. The couple had three children: Elvia (Lallie), Ronald (NjoNjo), and Frederic. Just like in the family Meithy came from, some of the children were given nicknames, while others were not. The family moved to the Netherlands in 1960 and settled in Leiden. Eugene passed away there on 9 August 1994, and Meithy died in Wassenaar on 28 May 2015.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Indisch Oud-Paspoort van Elvira Severijns archief CBG

<sup>183</sup> Extract of personal data from the Personal Records Database (BRP) as provided by the Central Bureau of Genealogy (CBG) foundation by the municipality of Wassenaar, last place of residence of J.G.E. Severijns

## A perspective on the Dutch East Indies and the War of Independence.

It was a very difficult time for the (Indo-) Dutch between 1942 and the 1960s.<sup>184</sup> The Severijns family belonged to the group of Indo-Europeans as they had both European and Asian ancestry. The Japanese occupation caused much suffering for both the "totoks"—full-blooded Europeans—and the Indo-Europeans. Europeans were interned in Japanese camps, while many Indo-Dutch remained outside the camps—"buitenkampers"—though some were later interned as well. KNIL soldiers were forced to perform hard labour as prisoners of war, notably on the infamous Burma Railway.

The liberation from Japanese occupation did not mark the end of the suffering. During the Bersiap period, the war for independence raged on fiercely, amidst a power vacuum. Although Japan had been defeated, there was initially barely any other military presence. The Malay words "Bersiap" and "Siap" mean "be ready" and "stand alert"—the battle cry of the Indonesian resistance groups. The fanatical freedom fighters (the pemuda), armed primarily with sharp bamboo spears, hunted anything that resembled the former colonial oppressors. Between October 1945 and early February 1946, European Dutch and Indo-Dutch people were not safe. Even former Japanese occupiers and later British soldiers were attacked by the pemuda. Thousands of Indo-Dutch, British, Chinese, and Japanese were killed during the Bersiap period. According to research, it is estimated that around 6,000 victims fell among these groups. How many casualties occurred among the Indonesian population remains unknown. This situation gave the Dutch government a convenient excuse to send troops to Indonesia, marking the beginning of what was euphemistically called "police actions." However, the decision to send troops as soon as the war ended had already been made by the government in London during the war years.

During the Bersiap period and the so-called police actions, tens of thousands of Indo-Dutch, as well as British, Chinese, and Japanese people, lost their lives. On 17 February 2022, the results of the research programme "Independence, Decolonisation, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945–1950" were presented. The research focused on the dynamics of violence from the proclamation of the republic on 17 August 1945 until the end of the war in 1949. It was conducted by a joint research team from the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH), and the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD). The research results were not surprising to those familiar with earlier studies on this period. Contrary to the official government stance until the publication of this research, there was not just occasional excessive violence but rather widespread, systematic extreme violence. This violence was tolerated, encouraged, concealed, and rarely punished by the military and political leadership.<sup>185</sup>

To put things in the proper perspective, it must also be noted that Dutch military actions between 1945 and 1949 are estimated to have caused over 100,000 deaths—many times more than the number of (Indo-) Dutch victims. Approximately 26,000 Indo-Dutch lost their lives

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<sup>184</sup> Reybrouck van, David, *Revolusi – Indonesië en het ontstaan van de moderne wereld*, ( De Bezige Bij, Amsterdam, 2020.

<sup>185</sup> Research results "Independence, decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia, 1945-1950" have been made public on the website since March 1, 2022 and are also available in various publications including "Over de grens" (Across the border), see bibliography.

ultimately, Sukarno was overthrown and replaced by General Suharto, who ruled Indonesia for the next 32 years until his own downfall in May 1998.

In an unprecedented collaboration, the US National Security Archive worked with the National Declassification Center (NDC) to make the entire collection available to the public by scanning and digitising the documents. These records will be incorporated into the digital search tools of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Once completed, researchers, journalists, and academics—particularly from Indonesia—will have unparalleled access to a unique collection of records related to one of the most significant periods in Indonesian history.<sup>186</sup> How to deal with this shocking period is primarily a matter for Indonesians themselves. In the Netherlands, it took 75 years before we could fully confront the reality of our own history.

The return to the former colonial world is an illusion. The world has changed irreversibly, and this certainly applies to the former colony of the Dutch East Indies. Some still believe that this situation is temporary and that, after some time, life will return to the way it once was. But the harsh reality is that it will not. Ultimately, all this violence led to the forced repatriation of around 300,000 (Indo-) Dutch between 1945 and 1965, including the Severijns family.<sup>187</sup> In fact, there were five waves of migration from Indonesia to the Netherlands. Between 1945 and 1950, around 100,000 people left for the Netherlands due to the war and the subsequent Bersiap period.

Between 1950 and 1957, many government officials left Indonesia following the transfer of sovereignty. Following the dissolution of the KNIL in 1950, many KNIL soldiers repatriated as well, including 4,000 Moluccans with their families. The third wave of repatriates was caused by the New Guinea issue, during which all (Indo-) Dutch citizens still living in Indonesia were declared a danger to the state, affecting approximately 40,000 individuals.

In 1962, around 14,000 people left New Guinea for the Netherlands due to its transfer to Indonesia, including approximately 500 Papuans. My own family repatriated to the Netherlands during the 1950s, with the exception of Uncle Louis Severijns, as discussed in the previous chapter. My father, Rudi Severijns, was already in the Netherlands at that time.

The final wave consisted of the "spijtoptanten"—those who initially chose Indonesian citizenship but later regretted this decision. Between 1957 and 1964, around 25,000 people regained Dutch citizenship and moved to the Netherlands. Most repatriates eventually integrated into Dutch society, although there were significant challenges upon arrival.<sup>188</sup>

The Moluccans formed a separate group—not technically repatriates, as they had never intended to live in the Netherlands. They were brought to the Netherlands as military personnel and were immediately discharged from the army upon arrival, which deeply wounded their sense of honour. The Moluccan soldiers and their families formed a distinct

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<sup>186</sup> <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/indonesia/2017-10-17/indonesia-mass-murder-1965-us-embassy-files>. De website is onderdeel van de George Washington University uit Washington DC USA.

<sup>187</sup> There are a large number of publications on this period of Japanese occupation, struggle for independence and the police actions. For an overview of this period see Van Reybrouck note 176. Also an extensive bibliography.

<sup>188</sup> Haas, de, Robert Armand, *Enkele reis Indië-Gemert, De vestiging en integratie van Indische Nederlanders in de Noord-Brabantse gemeente Gemert*, Stichting Laurentius Torrentinus, Gemert, 2001.

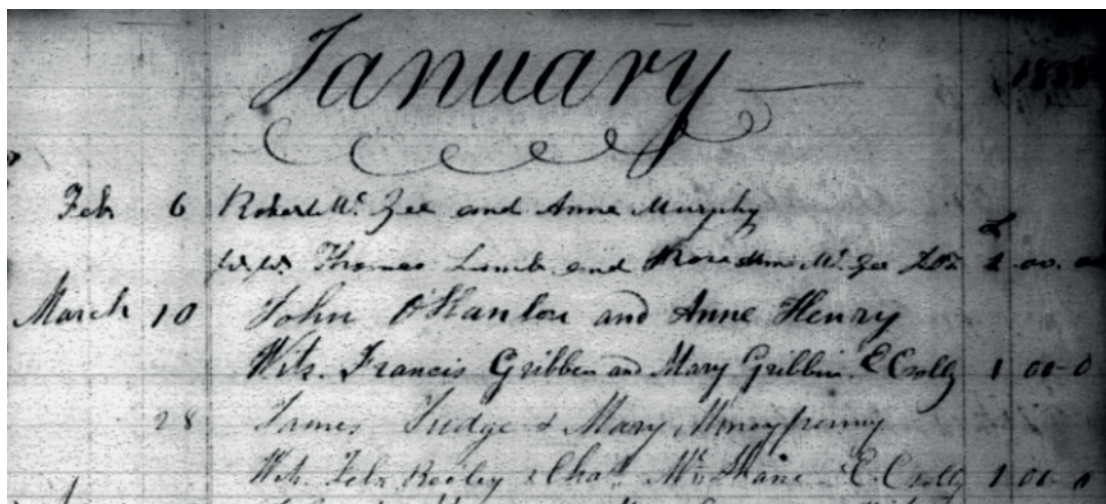
## 11. The family Judge in Portadown.

*How is the Judge family faring in Portadown? Have they also experienced violence and discrimination as a Catholic family? What role did Ireland and Northern Ireland play in both World Wars, and what role did the Judge family play in this? About deserters and military distinctions.*

My mother, Kathleen Judge, comes from Portadown, and family history shows that their roots in the area go back for generations. There are numerous connections with other families from Portadown. Official records, however, provide relatively little information about the Judge family in Portadown. The Census of Ireland from 1901 shows that the family of Henry and Catherine Judge lived at house 9 Curran Street with their three-year-old son James and (grand)mother Mary, who was 56 years old at the time. My grandfather Joseph had not yet been born; that would happen a year later. In The Census of Ireland from 1911, Joseph does appear, but his father Henry is absent from the records.

This absence does not necessarily hold special significance, as it was common for fathers to leave—often for England—to work and later return to Portadown. Family history reveals that this continued until the 1960s. Moreover, census records sometimes only include individuals who were physically present in the household at the time of the visit. Therefore, this registration does not offer a complete picture of the population.<sup>228</sup>

More information about the Judge family can be found in the parish registers of the Drumcree parish in Portadown, particularly in the Drumcree Catholic Parish Register. Until 1864, Roman Catholic residents of Ireland were not always officially registered, leaving us to rely on baptismal, marriage, and death records from the parishes. Records from the Catholic parish of Drumcree in Portadown are digitally available for the period between 1844 and 1881.<sup>229</sup>



*Marriage 28 March 1858 between James Judge and Mary Monneypenny in Portadown.*

<sup>228</sup> Census of Ireland from various years can be found in the National Archives of Ireland and can be consulted via the website: [www.census.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie)

<sup>229</sup> website: <https://registers.nli.ie/parishes/0213>.

armored car into a full stadium, Croke Park, where a Hurling match took place and started firing on players and public, killing 14 people and wounding many more. This day was given the name Bloody Sunday. The IRA wanted revenge and a week later they ambushed a patrol with Auxiliaries, killing all 18 officers, at Kilmichael near Macroom. One of the last actions was the arson of the prestigious Custom House in Dublin on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1921 by the IRA. It was both a success and a failure. The IRA lost many men, but it gave a lot of global publicity. Both parties became battle weary and England suffered under tilting global public opinion. It was time to talk and on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1921 a truce was agreed. The War of Independence came to an end.

In the months that followed a treaty was negotiated. Eamon de Valera, president, sent Arthur Griffith (founder of Sinn Féin) and Michael Collins to London as the Irish delegation. Britain realised that they couldn't forsake the loyal Protestants in Northern Ireland. On the December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1921 the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed. The three main aspects were: 1) Ireland will become a Freestate, not a republic 2) Six counties in Ulster will stay in the UK, and 3) Members of the Dáil need swear allegiance to the British Crown. The last aspect was very controversial. The Irish delegation knew this but they were threatened that the war would resume if they didn't sign. Michael Collins wrote home that he signed his death warrant that day. But Collins and Griffith were convinced that this was the stepstone to the republic. The treaty was brought to the Dáil for ratification on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1922. 64 voted Pro-Treaty and 57 Anti-Treaty; Sinn Féin was split. Eamon de Valera voted against the treaty; he would never swear allegiance to the British Crown. As it was a close call, it was decided that the people should decide and an election was organised for June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1922. The outcome was 58 Pro-Treaty Seats and 36 Anti-Treaty Seats. This opened the way for the Irish Freestate.

Many of the Anti-Treaty voters were armed ex-IRA men which didn't want to give in. They occupied key positions in the land and Dublin. The most prestigious position was the Four Courts in Dublin. On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1922 Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson was assassinated by Anti-Treaty IRA men after a wreath laying ceremony in London. This outraged the British government. Michael Collins, at that time commander of the newly formed National Army of the Freestate, was put under pressure. If he couldn't solve the situation the British would step in. He decided to open fire on the Four Courts on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1922 and by giving that order he started the Civil War. This Civil War mutilated the country and its people. The interior of the country was controlled by the Anti-Treaty IRA. The National Army could only reach places and towns by the sea. The National Army grew stronger and stronger because they were supported by weapon deliveries.

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1922 Arthur Griffith died of a stroke. He was buried at Glasnevin and Michael Collins gave a speech at his grave. About a week later Michael Collins travelled to Cork, his home county, lead the National Army there and to do a reconnaissance and speak with local Pro-Treaty leaders. On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1922 at the end of a long inspection tour through enemy country his convoy got ambushed. One person died in the ambush, it was Michael Collins. In ten days time the Pro-Treaty movement lost their highest leaders.

The Civil War became a war of attrition; at the end the National Army won leaving a traumatised and war weary country behind. The revolution eats its own children is especially true for the Irish Revolution. Many capable and energetic young leaders lost their life. The promise of a progressive inclusive Irish society as proclaimed during the Easter Rising was broken.



*Irish Sinn Feinn leaders in 1919. from right to left Harry Boland, Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera.*

*Source photo Wikipedia Commons.*



*2018 - Author Ruud Severijns at the scene of the ambush where Michael Collins was killed in 1922.*

The Irish Freestate grew into a very conservative Catholic society for decades. In 1937 the Dáil deleted the oath of allegiance to the British Crown from their institution taking the sovereignty over 26 counties.

Ireland leaves the British Commonwealth in 1949 and declares itself a republic.

In 1955 Ireland becomes a member of the United Nations.

Collins and Griffith proved to be right when they signed the treaty; it was a stepstone to full sovereignty.

In 1919, during the Irish War of Independence, Michael Collins sent Robert Emmet Briscoe to Germany to purchase weapons. Briscoe, a Jewish advisor to both Collins and De Valera, later advocated for Jewish refugees but was viewed with suspicion by Irish security services for potentially jeopardising Ireland's neutrality. After the war, he became an advisor to Israeli leader Menachem Begin and eventually became the first Jewish mayor of Dublin. Given the historical ties between Irish rebels and Germany, De Valera viewed Germany more favourably than Britain, despite being fully aware of the atrocities committed against the Jewish people during the Nazi regime. Adding to tensions was a trade war between Ireland and Britain prior to the Second World War, further straining relations.

Nevertheless, a significant number of Irish volunteers fought alongside the British Army against fascism during the Second World War. "Taking the King's Shilling" was in the blood of the Irish men. There has always been a complicated relationship between the Irish government and those who fought in the British Army during both World Wars. The victors of the Irish War of Independence had made a different choice during the First World War by fighting against Britain, while Irish soldiers in the Second World War fought against Germany, despite Ireland's official neutrality.

For the soldiers of the First World War, the silence surrounding their contributions to Irish independence came to an end with the unveiling of the Irish memorial in Menin, near Ypres in West Flanders, Belgium, in 1998. The Irish Peace Park was inaugurated by Irish President Mary McAleese, in the presence of Belgian King Albert II and British Queen Elizabeth II. The centrepiece of the park is the Peace Tower, designed in the style of a traditional Irish round tower.



*The Island of Ireland Peacepark at Menen (B) Source photo author 2018.*

This unveiling in 1998—the year of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland—symbolised a hope of putting centuries of conflict between the two communities behind them. In 2006, Irish soldiers who fought in the Second World War also received official recognition from the Irish government. The government granted pardons to approximately 4,500 Irishmen who had fought in the British Army against Nazi Germany and Japan and their

## Joseph Judge in London

In late 1939 or early 1940, Joseph Judge was in London. The exact date of his departure from Portadown remains unclear. Within the family, it was said that he had enlisted in the British Army, but no military records have been found to support this claim. It is more likely that he left for England in 1939 in search of work, as this aligns with the 1939 National Registration of Northern Ireland, which still lists him in Portadown—at least for ration book registration purposes.<sup>249</sup> What is certain, however, is that by the early 1940s, Joseph Judge was living in London, as his three youngest children were sent to join him there. He settled in East Ham, a typical working-class and immigrant district. After the First World War, many immigrants from British colonies—and from Ireland—had already settled there. This wave of migration continued after the Second World War. By today’s standards, the neighbourhood could be described as underprivileged.

In the late 1960s, London was plagued by escalating violence within its criminal underworld, marked by the rise of the notorious Kray brothers. The twins, Reginald (1933–1995) and Ronald Kray (1933–2000), established a reign of terror, becoming the undisputed leaders of London’s criminal underworld. They achieved a cult-like status and moved in the elite circles of Swinging London. The renowned society photographer David Bailey famously captured iconic images of the Kray brothers. Interestingly, Bailey later served as the inspiration for the character of photographer David Hemmings in the celebrated 1966 film *Blow-Up*, directed by Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni.

An article published in the *Daily Mirror* in 1969 reported on the trial of the Kray brothers, offering a vivid description of the neighbourhood where the Kray family had grown up—the same district where Joseph Judge and his children eventually settled.<sup>250</sup>

The *Daily Mirror* wrote:

*“They lived in a labyrinth of dark, grim streets of tenements, blackened by a century’s grime. It was the dormitory of London’s finest crooks and the home of poor families trying to earn an honest living.”*

Ronnie Kray, who died at age 62 of a heart attack, received a life sentence at the Old Bailey for the murders of George Cornell and Jack ‘the Hat’ McVitie in 1969. Reggie Kray was also sentenced to life imprisonment for McVitie’s murder. Their older brother, Charlie Kray, received a 10-year sentence for aiding and abetting the cover-up of Cornell’s murder. After his release from prison in 1975, Charlie profited from promoting the legend of the Kray family.

The *Daily Mirror* article also describes how, in those days, gangs of boys roamed the streets at night, finding entertainment in street fights. The three Kray brothers showed a natural talent for boxing, which was the most popular sport in the neighbourhood. After a stint as amateur boxers, all three eventually turned professional. However, they soon abandoned boxing when they realised that violent criminal activity was a faster route to wealth.

In this world, the line between working hard for meagre wages and chasing fast, illicit money was often blurred. My uncle, Jimmy Judge, was also a talented amateur boxer during this

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<sup>249</sup> Northern Ireland’s 1939 National Register.

<sup>250</sup> *Daily Mirror* dated March 5, 1969 – British Newspaper Archive.

period, and through the sport, he came to know the Kray family. Born in the same year as the Kray twins and living in the same neighbourhood, he shared a passion for boxing with them. He was a reasonably good amateur boxer. His nickname as a boxer was "One Punch Jimmy." Over time, Jimmy became part of the Kray brothers' entourage and later developed a close friendship with their eldest brother, Charlie Kray.



*Jimmy Judge and his wife Maureen Judge 1968 - Source photo Judge family.*

Jimmy Judge was known within the Kray organisation as a driver, though his activities also extended to theft and safe-cracking. He was no stranger to prison, having served time on multiple occasions. Family lore recounts a particularly infamous incident where Jimmy allegedly cracked a safe at the world-renowned Harrods department store. However, after successfully retrieving the cash, the gang discovered the loot consisted entirely of Scottish pounds, which, at that time, were not considered legal tender in London—rendering the stolen money worthless to the thieves. My cousin Ann vividly recalled an incident when Uncle Jimmy visited her in Portadown and brought her an expensive coat as a gift. Distrustful of her uncle's intentions, she took the coat back to the shop it had supposedly come from, only to discover that it had been stolen. She promptly returned it to the store.

When Jimmy Judge passed away on 15 January 1997, Charlie Kray attended his funeral. My cousin Lesley Haines, who was there with her mother Rhoda—Jimmy's sister—recalled:

*"It felt like a scene from The Godfather. Charlie Kray arrived last, wearing a long camel-coloured coat. He walked all the way to the front and approached Maureen, Jimmy's widow, and kissed her hand. Then he turned to my mother and kissed her hand as well before walking back to the rear of the church. We didn't see him again during the service."<sup>251</sup>*

Not long after, Charlie Kray was arrested by police in connection with a large-scale cocaine smuggling attempt valued at £39 million. In June 1997, he was sentenced to 12 years in

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<sup>251</sup> Announcement Leslie Haines in Portadown dated 27th August 2022.

possibly inspired by Pastor Van den Boogaard as a role model. In those days, there was no greater honour for Catholic parents than having one of their sons ordained as a priest.

At the time, I was by no means unique in my ambition. About six boys in my class actually took the step of entering the seminary, though ultimately, only one classmate became a priest. Theo Raaijmakers was always the top student in my class during my years in Moergestel. He joined the Mill Hill Missionaries and worked for many years as a missionary, spending his final years in Bolivia. The Moergestel community supported him and his work through the proceeds of an annual bike ride. Sadly, due to illness, he had to return to the Netherlands, and on 22 June 2023, after a long illness, he passed away.

Below is a photo from the 1964 Moergestel Marian pilgrimage to Kevelaer, Germany, where I took part alongside Theo Raaijmakers and my neighbour Lex Pape, temporarily serving as an altar boy.

At primary school in Moergestel, you were assigned a church role as soon as you entered the first year. One of the brothers who taught us was also the choir master. We had to sing the musical scale, and those who could carry a tune reasonably well were selected for the boys' choir. The others could become altar servers. For important Masses, such as funerals and weddings where singing was required, you were allowed to leave class—offering a brief reprieve from school.

In later years, you would automatically move on to the men's choir. I left the choir when I started at the MULO, using the excuse of having too much homework. But the real reason was that my musical taste no longer aligned with the Gregorian chants that dominated the repertoire at that time. Only much later did I come to appreciate that music again—mainly for the atmosphere and nostalgia it evokes.



*From left to right My boy next door Lex Pape, classmate Theo Raaijmakers and Ruud Severijns in Kevelaer 1965. Photographer unknown - Author's photo collection.*

Becoming a priest was never really in the cards for me. Firstly, my academic results at the end of primary school were not particularly outstanding. Additionally, hormones soon started playing their role, with singers like Françoise Hardy and France Gall providing ample stimulation—despite the fact that I didn't speak a word of French. Not long after, I had my very first girlfriend, Leni from Tilburg—an Indo girl who was even willing to cycle all the way from Tilburg to Moergestel just so we could hold hands. My foster parents both came from traditional Brabantian Catholic families. I can still recall how, every evening after dinner, we would turn our chairs around to face the crucifix on the mantelpiece and kneel together to pray the rosary. This daily ritual was common practice in our neighbourhood. As far as I remember, we continued this throughout our entire primary school years, until around 1963–1964.

My foster parents were devout and traditional Catholics, but they were not puritans. They clung to their customs for a long time, but when they realised they were falling behind socially, they eventually adapted. The 1960s saw rapid changes in both the Church and society. The Second Vatican Council deemed many rules and customs of the Catholic Church outdated. Latin was replaced by the vernacular in the liturgy, many priests left the clergy, and even beat Masses were introduced. Young people attended the mandatory Sunday Mass less and less, and by the late 1960s, my sister and I had also largely stopped going. My foster parents ultimately accepted this reality. Still, out of respect for them, I became what one might call a "Catholic on wheels." That means only attending church when wheels are involved—arriving in a pram for baptism, in a wedding car for marriage, and in a hearse for the funeral.



*Ruud and Tiny Pape - the girl next door*



*Ruud and Jeannette*

*Photo collection author.*

Throughout my childhood, I was surrounded by various types of Catholic educators. In primary school, I was taught by the brothers of the Congregation of Our Lady of Lourdes; at the MULO (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs), my teachers were the friars of Tilburg; and I obtained my shorthand and typing diplomas thanks to Sister Pia, a nun from the Sisters of Charity congregation. In daily life, of course, I also had to deal with the parish priest and his chaplain, as we were required to attend Mass every day during primary school. Our school reports meticulously recorded how often we attended and how many times we were supposed to.