

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILLEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 26



ÉIRE

Telefón 61018

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MÍLEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21).

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,  
(26 Westland Row),

PÁIP ÁTHA CLIAITH  
(Dubhlin)

DOCUMENT W.S. 26.

Statement by

Patrick Sarsfield (P.S.) O'Hegarty,  
Highfield House,  
Highfield Road,  
Rathgar,  
Dublin.

Dated 19 September, 1947.

On The I.R.B. 1902 - 1914.

42 pp. - MS. - F'scap.

File S. 49.

See Appendices C.D. - 47 - 48 - 49.

News ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 26

(1)

I joined the I.R.B. in London in the winter of 1902, being sworn in by Michael MacDonagh, who was the Section Master of the Section into which I was introduced. In London the words circle and centre were not used, but Section and Section-Master. Mr. very long afterwards MacDonagh, who was an Excise Officer, got a transfer to Ireland, and was succeeded by Tom Pebar (afterwards Advertisement Manager of the Independent). He also got a transfer to Ireland and was succeeded by Sean Forde, who also got a transfer to Ireland, and was termed well known here as Dr. Sean MacDonagh.

About 1905 I was elected Section Master. The membership of the Organization then was about about 100, sometimes a little under that figure and sometimes a little over it.

There were between 8 and 10 Sections normally, sometimes more when a Section split up, but there was constant transfer of members (Ireland) and this roughly balanced the numbers, so that 100 was a fair all round average.

The bulk of the members were young chaps from 20 to 30, others usually recruited. The older generation was represented by Dr. Mark Ryan, Dr. Anthony Mac Bride, and Dr. David Barry, and of the other nearly all were members of the Civil Service, mostly Dr. Egan, Dr. ...

Assistant Class, and PO Sorting Clubs, the latter  
Medominating. It was an intelligent, sober, and  
earned membership, recruited with very great care  
for Cummins was in Gaesthead, the SAA, and the  
Pacific League. The recruitment process was as  
follows :- Each Section met quarterly (special meetings  
might be held also but very rare), at the quarterly  
meetings the Section Master asked whether any member  
had any proposal for soundings = prospective member.  
A new member was not suggested until his Sponsor  
knew enough of him and his glaut and his way  
of life to be practically certain that he would be  
willing to join. Anybody who drank habitually,  
who unduly frequented public houses, who was  
loose-mouthed, or who kept bad company, was  
not considered. The name was put up at a  
meeting, and discussed. If no other member bore  
anything to his discredit, it was taken by the Section  
Master to the next meeting of Section Master,  
and read out there. Then it was read out at  
the next ordinary meeting of each Section, so that  
every member, in effect, gave verdict on it,  
and approval was not given to the initiation  
of the prospect unless the name passed without  
material objection. An odd time, somebody  
in another Section would know something.

doubtful or, perhaps, a bit of a prospect, as it had  
to be investigated. This cautious procedure kept the  
membership low but kept its quality high, and in  
fact members of the organization were the dominant influence  
in the various Nationalist organizations (in the formative  
period there were three, Cumann na nGaedheal, the  
Dungannon Club, and Sinn Féin) and in ~~the~~  
the combined organization of Sinn Féin, in the  
S.A.G., and was strong with the Gaelic League,  
though there was no attempt ever made either  
to promulgate separatist principles or to influence  
the organization in any way. Members paid 1/-  
per quarter, and practically all this was sent  
to Dublin when it was received, the main work  
was to be done. The Section Members themselves,  
and the Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer of the  
London group (W. H. H. H.), bore the  
expense incidental to meetings, save in very  
exceptional circumstances — as when a  
local Hall had to be hired for a general  
meeting of all the members for the purpose of  
being addressed by a home visitor, usually a  
member of the Supreme Council making an  
inspection. Meetings discussed everything in  
connection with the national movement. There  
were no military propositions or discussions,  
we being well aware that there would  
be in the then circumstances premature.

Every four years (I think, but it might have been every three) all officeholders went out of office and there were complete new elections. The Section first elected Section - Master, then the Section - Master elected an executive Council of five, and then the five elected a Chairman and Secretary and a Divisional Representative to the Supreme Council, so that only the five knew who he was. I do not recollect a Special Treasurer, I think the Divisional Representative who handed over the money at the next meeting of the Supreme Council, also acted as Treasurer, but I do not clearly recollect. When I became a Section Master in 1905 I was elected almost at once to the Executive. At that time Dr Mark Day was Chairman, Dr So - Magistrate Secretary, and Dr Anthony Montford Divisional Representative. Herbert C. De la about 1906 and was succeeded by (His Excellency) Michael MacWhite and when, early in 1907 I think, MacWhite left London, I was elected Divisional Representative, and retained that office until I left London in August 1913, when Dick Currier succeeded me. Dick, a PO clerk, resigned on the oath, was Editor of the Speiterson Eagle &c

while, was recruited in the PO after the Treaty,  
and which I knew about a year ago. I do not  
know his address, but he remained on the  
Supreme Council until the Resign, and should  
be a first hand source - regard to the Supreme  
Council and it.

Amongst those who were "members" of the  
Organization in the years I was in London, in  
addition to those mentioned, were Patrick Dillon,  
well known at home afterwards, Dr. Bryan Curran  
& Thomas O'Donoghue (afterwards T.D.), His  
Honour Judge John O'Hare; Sean Hurley,  
Bill Keating, and Michael Mulvihill (killed,  
with the Resign); <sup>Maurice Collins;</sup> Pat & Willie Brennan;  
and of course Michael Collins from about  
1909. Of the men I knew most of the  
at home of transfer and played a part  
later. Many of the transfer boys, after  
they got transferred home, I found, did  
not join up at home, though there were  
elaborate arrangements for transfer. The  
transferring member sent his new address  
to his old local Master, who passed it  
on to the local executive, and it was  
passed on to the Supreme Council of  
the Divisional Representatives. However,

was that most of the men were civil servants, and (6  
a sharper eye was kept on civil servants at  
home than in London. Don't make a  
large number did join up, and all worked  
in some of the national movements.

When I was elected to the Supreme Council  
in 1906/7 the members were

Leinster - Jack O'Hanlon (Cooperative  
Employee)

Munster. Michael Grove (of the  
S.A., Employed with S.S.R  
(I think))

Connaught. John MacBride

Ulster. Miss John Boyle (a  
farmer, of Strabane, Co  
Tyrone)

South of Ireland. P.S. O'Hegarty (PO Clerk)

North of Ireland. James Murphy,  
Liverpool (Shipowner)

Glasgow James Brighty  
(Tailor)

Co-opted Members, Four.

Fred Allan, Dublin  
(Cooperative Employee)

P.T. Daly, Dublin  
(Printer. Member of  
manager of An Ceo-Annann)

John Mulvolland, Glasgow (Iron Worker) (

James Baulett, Manchester (I do not  
know what he worked at, but I  
rather fancy he is still alive)

O'Boyle was President, Daly Secretary; and  
Scrappety Treasurer.

At this time (1906/7) the Organisation was  
in process of reorganisation, a rebirth, that is to say  
that it had had a nominal existence after the Parnell  
Split and probably for some time before it; as it was  
now rearing of the introduction of new, hot-blooded  
blood - the Parnell Movement had in effect taken  
it's life out of it, reduced it to a loose and nominal  
remnant of mostly, individuals and, in a few  
places like Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Liverpool, &  
Manchester, to very small groups, without any  
real contact with each other but still maintaining  
IRB principles - There was a small group in  
Cork, for instance, of whom J. J. Donigan (Captain  
of the Cupnatic Dredger) and Con (Doran)  
O'Keefe, were to be remembered, who ran  
a Young Ireland League that celebrated national  
anniversaries. And there were also in the  
Cork area but well-known Fenians as  
P. N. Fitzgerald, and C. J. Doran, who kept  
on as individuals but were not in touch

either with themselves or anybody else. There was  
Richard Johnston in Belfast. And when in  
the Sinn Féin Movement was found in the  
country some older men taking a prominent  
part - e.g. Joseph O'Rourke of Longhoro or  
William Sears of Binniserry, he was always  
a. lone I.R.B. man. There were odd  
people all over the country who had  
been former time members of the  
organization and who still remained members  
in spirit but the actual organization had  
developed around them and there was nobody  
to say who they were.

What I mean may be illustrated  
by three personal experiences I had in  
these years.

(1) About 1909 the Council asked me  
to call on P.N. Fitzgerald, to ask him to get  
into touch with the old members in  
Cork City and County, to write down their  
names and addresses, so that they could be  
put in touch again, and that he could  
be visited again in a few months time  
by the Secretary to the Council. I had a  
note of credentials to him from Daly,  
and three sovereigns to give to him  
for expenses, on the assumption that

He would make some journeys. I saw him in  
his pub in Francis St (I think it was  
pub) produced by accident, explained, and  
handed over the £3. He took the £3,  
and said he would see me daily in due  
course - not another word. The next day  
course fell by the wayside at being approached  
by a very young man - But he never  
did anything, and daily could get nothing  
whatever out of him. I then asked for  
and got authority to initiate my brother  
in law and to authorize him to initiate  
others, and this I did. My brother  
initiated Tom Curtis, Fred Cronin, and  
others. The older man was simply  
left alone.

(ii) About the same year I was  
asked, on another journey home, to  
get in touch with a man named  
Jerry Murphy, for somewhere between  
Crawston and Mourvoun, who was  
said to have a live circle in  
his area. I had some distant  
relatives near Mourvoun, whom I

10  
I small went to see one Sunday while I was  
home, and I wrote to Murphy to ask him  
whether he could come over there on the  
Particulars Sunday. It turned out that he  
was also a distant cousin of my distant  
cousin, who was also Murphy, and on the  
day appointed he turned up. He was  
a man about 35, a small farmer, but  
he was drunk, and looking about the  
number of men to be had "sworn in"  
and so on. I recommended the  
Council to cut him off altogether,  
which they did. Some of the younger  
chaps in the movement were taken up and  
sent for Cork and arranged them  
at Corby the 7th, who was found to  
have been an 'old' member, but  
left stranded.

(3) There was trouble in Liverpool  
about 1910 or 1911, 1911 I think, and  
Tom Clarke was asked to go over and  
look into it. Tom went, but he

was not temperamentally a good man to a  
job like that, and he came back and said  
that the younger chaps and the old chaps were  
at daggers drawn, and that they should both  
be cast-off. Murphy was off the  
course at this time, and Burrell, who  
then represented North & Lyell, did not  
know the Liverpool situation, but I  
knew there was at least one first younger  
man in Liverpool in the person of Stephen  
Langton (now Portland Secretary, I think,  
to the Revenue Commissioners), and I was  
able to pick up the firm in London. I found  
that they had three or four circles, and  
none of them full circles, and all of  
them mixed, i.e. the old fellows and the  
young chaps together. Meetings had been  
held from time immemorial in the  
snags of public houses, and the young chaps  
(Langton, Joe Peem, and a chap named  
Archer leading) wanted the meetings held  
elsewhere, but the older chaps wanted  
as interpreted as "keeping it in" reform.  
I know I pacified them both,  
and recommended that they should be separated

and grouped in separate circles, and had their meetings when they could, and this was done.

Shortly afterwards, from about 1908, when the reorganisation of the I.R.B. had been completed, in the form that it had, the Secretary, had visited all the local and drawn together what could be drawn together, the situation was this:

It was strong and vigorous in Dublin, in London, in Glasgow. In Dublin about 700-1000 members, in London about 100, in Glasgow about 150.

It was alive, but not very vigorous, in Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Liverpool, Manchester - two to three sections each.

It had a nominal existence in a great many other places, in individuals and small groups not really in active form, and in definite sections or circles which were in form and which had been unable to find active officers.

You would have expected that the counties adjacent to Dublin would have been well organised, but they were not, but numerous attempts were made. In Limerick there was nothing outside Dublin & Leech,

in Connacht there were nominal but<sup>(13)</sup>  
-involvement circles in Galway at Mayo  
only, in Ulster nothing outside Belfast,  
in Munster, nothing in Clare, Cork, Kerry,  
& Tipperary, and only a nominal  
circle in Kerry. There was a number  
of the Counties a County Centre, and some  
fragments of organization, but many of  
the County Centres were just ornamental.

Arthur Stace was County Centre for  
Kerry, & Limerick, in all these years,  
but neither alone, nor dearmid  
Lynd who succeeded him as Divisional  
Representative for Munster, could get  
them to do anything, and his removal  
from office for business was very long  
negotiated - but there was nothing else  
on offer. The regions and vital  
arms of the organization were Dublin,  
London, & Glasgow, and there were  
smaller important centres, not  
-present but not strong nor very  
active, in Cork, Belfast, Limerick,  
Birmingham & Liverpool. But, so far as

They were organized and active, they exercised a (14)  
disproportionate amount of influence because  
of their quality and their devotion and their  
dedicatedness. Davis's requirement of  
systematic men was even in the minds of those  
who directed W.R.B. and Swiss  
Fen.

Resolution held firm, broadly, until  
1914, until the outbreak of war in 1914. There was  
a meeting of the Supreme Council in July 1914,  
which was the last one which I was present, and  
after that it holds firm. Beyond that I  
cannot say from personal knowledge, though  
I remained a member of the Council till  
the Risip, because of my deportation in  
August 1914. My thought it wise not  
to notify me of meetings - But I know of nothing  
to warrant the supposition that the Organization  
changed materially between 1914 and 1916. It  
remains true for all the time I was an active  
member of it, that the vital and live districts  
were Dublin, London, and Glasgow, with  
small groups and individuals in other places,  
as described above.

For several years I was the only one of the younger (15) members of the organization who was on the Supreme Council, the others were, except P. D. Day and M. Cross, much older men, and all of them were imbued with an ~~open~~ outlook, or attitude, of "keeping the spirit alive" merely. One of the best of them, John Mulholland, a simple, genuine, lifelong Jew, expressed it once at a meeting, thus "I was handed on a torch by my father, and I want to keep it alive and hand it on to my sons" This phrase did not go beyond that, and it was natural enough. They had ~~been~~ taken hold in a period of depression, after various splits, and were content with making a framework and keeping it in being. They were particularly uneasy at any suggestion which sounded of an extension of activities, of any public action. The organization should be neither seen nor heard, but work through the open ~~work~~ organizations, strengthening their separated groups. The need of the younger men to come on the Council was seen by W. C. Sullivan, who was elected when Neil John O'Hyle's faculties were plainly failing, so that Neil's could in effect take over the direction of the work. I don't quite remember when that was, but it was in 1909 or 1910. And in 1910 and 1911 two things

occurred which had the effect of strengthening the  
"wage element" on the Council at first and then  
of eliminating them. ~~The first of these~~  
The first of these happenings arose in connection  
with PT Day.

(Here I had better explain about the Council's  
finances. These came from the divisions, and  
for the Clamshell. Of the 1/- a grant paid  
by members, local expenses (travelling, postage,  
stationery, and incidentals) was deducted and  
the balance paid in at the next meeting of the  
Council by the Divisional Representatives. I cannot  
tell any accurate record was what an  
average year, income from this source was,  
but a considerable balance was allowed to the  
divisions as to what they spent locally in  
necessary work, and I do not think the income  
for this source ever exceeded  
1500 per annum. The Clamshell paid  
£300 per annum as its affiliation fee  
to the Organization normally - the relations  
between the two bodies were simple - each  
was supreme in its own place, but all  
decisions on policy or activities were made by  
IRB, and each side sent representatives or  
accredited delegates to the other, to

the job that exactly was being done and what the  
projects were. Now the Clan had for some years  
been sending a special extra £300 per year  
for the purposes of reorganisation, i.e. £600  
per annum in all. Some time in 1908,  
I think towards the end of it, J.T. Daly  
had been sent over to the Clan's annual  
Convention as an I.R.B. delegate, and was  
away for some months. After his return,  
it was mentioned at a Council meeting that  
the sum of £300 for the period of a year  
was wanted. Now the question of sending  
money was this, the Clan Treasurer sent it  
to the I.R.B. Treasurer, he reported it  
accept at the next Council meeting, and  
the I.R.B. Secretary then acknowledged its  
receipt to the Clan Secretary. All  
communications passed between the two Secretaries,  
save for the sending of the money from the Clan  
(the I.R.B. the Treasurers did not  
communicate at all, and I think in fact  
that all our Income. never was that money  
came in to him. E.g. i.e. instructed, however,  
in a couple of weeks. In 1909, I think  
about the middle of £500, I think  
that he could get in reply, though he

had £300 for 1909 came in without delay.  
 He was very puzzled about it, and then, in  
 the Spring of 1910 I think it was, I received a message  
 that (I think) the meeting of the Union Executive was  
 coming over to meet the Council and talk about  
 affairs generally, and a special Council  
 meeting was summoned for a Sunday morning,  
 I do not remember the exact month, but it  
 was in the Spring of 1910, the Council (I think)  
 summoned a hall-horn before Col. Casey was  
 asked for, and the meeting was held in the  
 Central Provisional Library, by arrangement  
 of the Committee who were members of the  
 Organisation. I remember the following members  
 as having been present:

Walter D. Matthews (I think) (I think) (I think)  
 had now returned and he died soon  
 afterwards)

Leinster, John O'Hara

Leinster, Bill O'Hara

Connaught John MacBride

North Kerry J. Murphy, Liverpool

South Kerry P. O'Hara

Glasgow John MacBride

Capital members James Bonnell MacBride

J. Murphy, Liverpool  
 Fred J. O'Hara, Dublin

P. O'Hara, the Bonnell Capital members and

The Secretary to the Council was not present, (19  
but a letter was read for him, addressed to  
Allen, in which he stated that he had received  
the £300, ~~at~~ about which he had been notified,  
in person when he was in America, that when  
he came home he found his family in debt  
and some of his children sick, that he had  
used the money hoping to make it good, and  
couldn't and that he could only "throw  
up his hands" as the saying is. It was  
a complete bombshell and the last thing anyone  
could have expected. It is that day afterwards  
I saw a draft on his letter, but I saw it and  
read it - it was passed around - and at 1.00  
his handwriting and his signature and there  
is no doubt about the facts. I was with  
for a while in New York the previous evening and  
discussed to Allen that evening - that  
was the day when the public tennis were  
caused on for the benefit of the public  
rather than for the benefit of the staff and  
we had a Sunday delivery of letters -  
To say that everything was flatteringly would  
be pretty it mildly. It discussed it very  
thoroughly - we had only half an hour before

100-1000 would arrive. On the one hand, strictly speaking  
Daly ought to be expelled and blacklisted - that is, his name  
read out at every circle as that of one who had been expelled  
for misconduct and was not to be further reckoned as an Organizational  
man. On the other hand, Daly was known everywhere as one of  
the heads, and he was apprehensive of the reactions in the circles  
if they were told that he had manipulated funds. And it  
was felt that the Council itself had contributed to the  
thing by using Daly so much for organizational work. He  
was Managing An Co-Cumann, an early Irish National  
Funding undertaking, and his big on the road forment  
for the organization meant that he neglected the business,  
which went down. It was decided, then, to make him  
a grant of £300, to square the deficit, and to remove  
him from the Secretaryship and from membership of  
the Council, and to leave him as an ordinary member.  
In his place Tom Clarke was co-opted member of the Council, and  
Red Allen was appointed Secretary pro tem. This  
had hardly been decided when Keating arrived, and  
after having been introduced his first question was as  
to the £300. He said they in America had been  
rather mystified and disturbed about it, and he was  
told that the money had been received & that  
we understood that it had been acknowledged,  
and that no report had been made to us of any  
query for America. He said there had been  
several queries - about a number of cases, how far  
to Daly as Secretary - and he was then told  
that Daly had been having personal & family  
troubles and had resigned from the Council, and  
that he had co-opted Tom Clarke in his

place. He accepted all that without comment, though it  
was plain enough that the Colonel, who was Voluntary's friend,  
guessed that there had been an embezzlement. After the  
customary discussion about the state of the Organization  
and of the Club, he asked whether the special £300  
might not now be stopped, and he agreed, so that from  
this year 1910 the normal affiliation fee from  
the Club of £300 was reverted to. John Dewy in his  
recollections states that the normal <sup>amount</sup> ~~subscription~~ sent  
by the Club was £1000 per annum, but this is an  
error of memory. The amount was £300. What  
convinced him was the fact that after the start of the  
First Volunteers had in three special issues of  
£1000 was sent over to be used for purchases of  
arms and generally for purposes connected with  
the Volunteers. And here I may say that no  
members or officers of the I.R.B. received any pay,  
allowance, or gratuity for its own handling  
expenses, and that was based on expenditure.  
When I went on the Council, the London allowance  
for a meeting was £5, and I questioned it. They explained  
then that it was intended to cover a journey on  
two successive nights - Sat. and Sunday - and  
provided for lunches on the boats and sleepers on  
the trains. What I usually did was to travel  
North Hall from London, the return ticket being  
£20.6, by train leaving Euston at 6pm which was  
to get to Highgate Station at 12. It was not  
a boat train and you had to walk down to  
the pier, but there I used to take a bed  
in the first saloon, which cost 7/6 I think

and I used to come back by the mail boat from (22)  
Kington, as it then was, and take a cabin  
in it and a sleeper on the train, which meant  
paying extra for first class from Holyhead, so as  
to go to work on the Monday morning. Other  
Dublin members were followed somewhat similarly,  
corresponding to their variable expenditures, on the  
same basis of two nights travelling on two nights  
in Dublin of the proposed to board by day.

In connexion with the Dublin incident Dr. Murphy,  
of Glasgow, who was Treasurer resigned both office and  
the Divisional representation, and Tom Clarke was  
appointed Treasurer, and the appointment of John  
Mullholland as District Divisional Representative left  
a vacancy for a couple of months, which was filled  
by the election of Michael Cowley, then a  
bookkeeper in a Dublin Seed Merchants Office and  
now one of the heads in the National City Bank.  
He was one of the younger generation, and Tom Clarke  
at once lined up with us, Mullholland, with  
myself and Denis McCullagh, in a plea for  
something more of an active policy, though it  
is fair to say that the only positive proposal  
we had was for the starting of a paper which  
should be a separate paper, pure & simple,  
and towards the end of 1910 the Council agreed  
to this, and Irish Freedom was started as a

monthly paper. Mr. Carter and myself were appointed Joint Editors, by appointment being at the instance of O'Donoghue and O'Connell, who seemed to think that 'Pat' was a bit erratic and that I would be a steady influence. But anyway, although 'Pat' wrote a few leaders in the first months, neither he nor I was anything but nominal Editors. The actual Editor of the paper during the whole of its career, from November 1910 to December 1914 was O'Donoghue, and he and I between us wrote 75% of the paper. He died last, I think, edited the last number, or maybe the last two, because of the rumour <sup>that</sup> arose out of his voting in the first Volunteer Executive for the admission of Redmond's nominees, but I am for there he was the actual Editor right through, and from early in 1912 when 'Pat' Mr. Carter resigned his nominal editorship O'Donoghue was nominal Editor as well. The last number, or the last two, were put together by Tom Clarke and Sean MacDonogh. But Sean, who has often been put down as Editor, never wrote a line in the paper, I am perhaps a headline. He was actually the Manager, for which he was paid, if I remember right, 30s. a week. O'Donoghue was paid nothing.

Sometimes about this time, more or less, John MacWhite resigned the Divisional Representation of Connaught, and Neil John O'Shane took of Ulster,

a Sean MacBarron & Denis McLaughlin respectively were appointed. This left a vacancy for a co-opted member, as Denis was already a co-opted member, but for the life of me I cannot remember who was co-opted, and there was a further co-optee about the middle of 1911. Allan & O'Donoghue reported that Daly was not behaving himself, that he was spreading stories that he had been badly treated and was the victim of a plot, and that he was causing a lot of mischief. It was then decided that he should be formally expelled, and that the whole story should be laid to the credit, and this was done. Michael Curly, however, was so horrified that he asked to be allowed to resign not only his membership of the Council but his membership of the organization, and he was sworn out, but I cannot remember who was co-opted in his place. At the end of this year there was another resignation, which caused changes.

It's an odd thing, but I cannot remember about this resignation was about, save that it was in connection with his freedom, and Pat McKeenan. It was something about some public affair about Pat recommended in the paper, which embarrassed some decision the Council had taken either in connection with the paper or in connection with general policy, as Pat had refused to obey this decision, which was formally communicated to him by Allan. Allan O'Donoghue & Curly then, acting in what capacity I do not remember, removed Pat from the Editorship of his freedom,

but Pat refused to be removed, with the result that  
there was published, in December 1911, two issues (25  
of the paper, containing some common matter and some  
different matter, one edited by Pat and the other  
edited by Allen. The first news I had of it was

when Miss Gurne appeared with the blue at my  
London desk with a long letter from Allen about  
the business, ~~which I had~~ ~~sent~~ ~~to~~ ~~John~~

~~that I had~~ giving his side. On the facts, apart  
from any extraneous circumstances, it seemed to me  
that Pat was in the wrong, in that he had  
destroyed what was in fact a proper order

of the Council properly conveyed to him. I remember  
that clearly, though I do not remember what  
the facts were, but my chief concern then was

to prevent precipitate action, because Allen  
was proposing to expel Pat without waiting for a  
meeting of the Council. I told Gurne that

I would not stand for any disobedience to an  
order of the Council of any kind, but that I  
thought the proper thing to do was to call a special  
meeting of the Council, to hear everything concerned  
summoned to appear before it, and that  
the whole Council should listen to their  
various statements, ask any questions they  
wished, and then decide the culpability

involved. A couple of days later I had a long and  
violent letter from Pat, which I answered by  
recommending him to be reasonable or to seem to  
be in the wrong, and then received a much longer  
and somewhat more violent one from him. I did  
not keep any of the letters. Paul's suggestion that  
Crow was accepted, Allan and a special meeting was  
held, probably in December 1911, when everything  
concerned - Allan, Pat, Thom, Mac Dermott,  
their statements and were examined at great  
length. I remember that it did come out  
clearly enough that Pat had been in the  
wrong, but there was some brilliant dialectic  
by Thom, and some very clever leading questions  
by Tom Clarke, and some very clever answers  
by Mac Dermott, the upshot of which was to  
confess Allan and O'Donovan, so that at the  
end of the day they found themselves agreeing  
to withdraw everything concerned, on the ground  
that the whole business was a misunderstanding.  
They were, however, fully conscious that they had  
been outmanoeuvred and at the end of the  
or at the next following meeting, I am not clear what  
meeting it was, ~~was~~ resigned, leaving the  
Council practically entirely in the hands  
of the younger men.

Grove was succeeded as Minister Representative  
by Diamond Lynch, O'Donovan as Leinster Representative

By James O'Leary (Solicitor, 4) and O'Leary (27  
Ho.), and I don't really remember who was copied  
instead of Allan. Some little time later James  
O'Leary had to give up representing Leinster because of  
personal engagements and was succeeded by James  
Deakin (Chemist, shop in Dublin I think).  
This was some time in 1912, and at a  
shortly after the same time O'Leary (John) was  
on the Council, as a copied member, I think.  
MacDonnell was appointed Secretary in place  
of Allan.

1913 was hard on us, and with it the  
Red Volunteers, the first tentative beginnings  
of which was watched by the Council with the  
greatest anxiety. We were naturally anxious  
that the Volunteers should be started, but we  
were equally anxious that they should not be  
identified in the public eye with the Separation  
or physical force policy, but should be  
an all-party movement. The Council therefore  
issued an order that members of the Organisation  
while they were to join the Volunteers were  
not to take a prominent part in starting them,  
nor to be prominent in office amongst them,  
unless there was no alternative, but  
unless there were not enough men in

(28)  
The particular distinct to start and to fund the  
local company. We attached importance to this,  
because we felt that there was great danger that  
the British might suppress the movement at its  
start, if it were to be a physical force  
separated movement rather than an all party  
movement. People identified with the public  
eye with moderate patriotism was encouraged  
to put themselves forward. Later, when the  
movement was definitely on its feet, and the  
time for suppression had passed, that order  
was relaxed in practice, but at the beginning  
there was some anxiety amongst some members  
of the Council at the time accepting the  
honorary functioning of the Volunteers and  
at Liam Mellows and Arthur (John  
becoming Volunteer organizers. The next  
thing was Redmond's demand in May-June  
1914 for the co-opting on the Executive of  
the Volunteers of certain members of his.  
The Council, <sup>had already</sup> ~~decided~~ <sup>had approached</sup> ~~that~~ and decided that  
while any reasonable suggestion that would  
avoid a split should be accepted, it  
should not be such a suggestion as would  
maintain or violate the Volunteer constitution.

and organization. The corporation proposal was deemed  
not to be such a proposal, and an order was issued  
that all members of the Organization should oppose it.  
On the morning of the meeting, however, Holton told  
Tom and Macdonald that he was going to support it,  
as the only way to avoid a split in the Volunteers,  
and at the meeting he not alone supported it but  
he so arranged the meeting that he was the last  
to speak, and he was a very eloquent and persuasive  
speaker, and his speech carried the motion. It  
surprised four other members of the Committee who  
would normally have voted against it. I found  
it impossible at the time to get any clear  
picture of the reasons which impelled Holton  
in this. But, from the start of the Volunteers,  
he had had trouble with him. He was, and is, a  
man of very great ability, earnestness, single-  
mindedness, & patience, who made very heavy  
sacrifices for the cause, but he was never able, or  
at any rate he has never been known to, subordinate  
his own judgment to the combined judgment of  
his associates. He had to have everything and  
set his own way in everything. He was never  
cooperative unless when he was laying down  
policy and giving instructions. He had taken the  
view at the start of the Volunteers that he

Should confess that body, had taken prominent office  
in it himself and had put in Mellors and I don't know  
how many other men, in defiance of the  
Council order. He had been foremost in opposition  
to any compromise to Redmond. At the time, he  
resented being questioned about his action, and this  
characteristic of his temperament that the fact that  
he had, in well fact, played the organisational game,  
without explanation, and had actually defeated it,  
troubled him not at all. (All he would say <sup>was</sup> that  
he did it because he thought the country could not  
afford a split at that juncture. And at no time  
since has he been willing to give a normal defence.  
Tom Clarke and MacDonagh both told me that  
if he had told them in good time that he had changed  
his mind, and if he had argued it out with them,  
and if he had contented himself with voting and  
not attempting to influence others, they would not  
have thought of him about it. But it was the  
fact that he not alone voted for the <sup>the motion</sup> ~~the motion~~  
but took practical charge of it and so arranged  
the meeting that he was the last speaker that  
they felt was reprehensible. The motion opposing  
of the ~~the motion~~ was in his hands. He was  
to some extent influenced by Roger Casement,  
who declared his intention of resigning rather than  
have a split. But even now I can find

nothing to explain it. His relations with Tom Clarke  
and Sean MacDermott had been deteriorating for a  
couple of years, but this was something like throwing  
over all his friends. Even Denis McGuinness, who  
was his oldest associate, and I, who had hardly  
ever had a difference of principle or of action, with  
him, could get nothing out of him. It was, at  
any rate, one of the things which led, in 1916, to  
his detention in custody until the Rising had  
actually started.

It is only fair to say that, outside Dublin,  
the decision to accept Redmond's nomination was  
in general supported. Paddy Butler and Tom  
Curtain said however that it was all very well  
for Dublin but that a split would have killed  
them in Cork.

The immediate result of it, any way, so  
far as the D.R.B. was concerned, was that  
Hobson was removed from the Council and remained  
an ordinary member of the Association.

Then, at the end of July, 1914, came  
the Great War. On Saturday, Aug 1<sup>st</sup>, I, being  
then Postmaster of Queenstown, was asked to  
report at once for temporary duty in England, in  
Northampton to be exact, and it was followed  
up by a telephone message from Sir Andrew  
Ogilvie, General Secretary to the S.P.O., who had

been my chief for many years in London, assuming me  
that was a genuine business, and asking me  
to hand it over. It was, of course, true that  
motivation had called up many political  
opinions of the higher class, and there was in  
fact a staff deficiency in the financing  
establishment of the North Wales District, to which  
I was directed. I said to myself, that I  
could return if I found it was a fake, and  
I travelled to Dublin by the night mail  
on the night of Aug 1<sup>st</sup>; spent the Sunday in  
Dublin with Tom Clarke, and reached Shrewsbury  
some time on Tuesday (Monday was a Bank  
Holiday and traffic was disrupted by  
transport movements). On the Tuesday night  
declared war, and a few days afterwards  
I was told that I would not be allowed  
to return to Ireland until the war  
was over. The first chance I got I  
went down to London and saw Sir  
Andrew O'Brien. He told me that he  
did it to save me from being thrown  
into Spike Island, and he said that it  
was only a promise to take me  
out of Ireland because that he was

able to present the War Office for having me  
arrested and interned on the Saturday. (33)

The last meeting of the Council of the I.R.B.  
that I attended was held in June or early July 1914.  
None whom I remember to have been present were:-

John Mulholland (Scottish Division) Chairman

Sean MacDonnell (Connacht) Secretary

Tom Clarke (Cooped member) Treasurer

Seamus Deabin (Leinster)

Denis McCallum (Ulster)

Dr. Michael Lyndal (Member)

R. Connolly  
~~P.S. O'Hegarty~~ (Ireland & Lifford)

P.S. O'Hegarty (Cooped member)

Joe Gleeson (Ireland & Lifford)

whom I may <sup>miss</sup> ~~omit~~, and leaves other <sup>two</sup> ~~two~~ <sup>cooped</sup>  
members. One was

Jan Branniff (Glasgow)

who had just been cooped, but was unable to  
attend this meeting.

Seamus Barrett (Manchester) may have  
been a cooped member also. I am not certain.

~~None of the following were present~~

However, after this date I have no further  
I.R.B. knowledge, save these:-

(1) P.T. Daly. Charges against Daly of being

a spy were in the air from 1907 onwards.

Sir Henry Campbell, Tom Clark of Dublin,

who had the papers to the entry to Castle

Civils, made the statement freely and

privately in the Corporation, and, I think,

dropped broad hints in public also. But he was  
known to be personal enemy of Daly's. Daly did, when  
this campaign of Campbell's was at its height, apply to  
the Council for permission to tell Campbell, which  
was refused. From his demeanour, I gathered the  
impression that he was just blustering, and would  
have been a very enthusiastic man if permission  
had been given. I always felt that he was speaking  
not out of belief but for effect, even at propaganda  
meetings. There was something of the least desirable  
demagogue about him. And, at the same time,  
a Belfast friend of mine, whose father was  
a sergeant of the RIC there, was warned not  
to have anything to do with anything Daly was  
mixed up in, because he was "in touch  
with the authorities".

~~Suppose that a person who had been in touch with~~  
~~the authorities, and who had been in touch with~~  
~~the authorities, and who had been in touch with~~  
~~the authorities, and who had been in touch with~~

115576

I never saw Daly save at  
meetings of the Council, but the Dublin members  
(O'Donoghue, Allen, & Cross) were quite convinced  
of his integrity, and they knew him intimately.  
I must say, however, that I think he would  
have been quite capable of giving information

which was, I 90% of it, unless a misleading  
basis as there is the very strongest argument against  
the hypothesis in the fact that if he, Secretary to  
the IRB as ascertained with all its personnel, and  
its secrets, and much of the Clarendon Park personnel  
and plans also, had been giving information, he  
could never have needed to subvert the  
£300 he did subvert. But I always felt there  
was a flaw somewhere in his.

I met him some years before he died and  
suggested to him that he should write down  
an account of the IRB, circles, and centres,  
and members, in Ireland, Eire, & Scotland.  
He told me he had already written it all  
down, and that "certain gentlemen" would  
cut a poor figure in the public eye if it  
was ever published.

I don't know if Ned Allan left any  
memoirs or papers behind him. He knew  
a lot, having been a member since the  
late eighties I think.

(2) The late Thomas Mearns was placed  
in charge of The Castle by Michael Collins  
when it was taken over in 1922. He kept  
duplicate keys and also that he had office  
there, and was a sort of general overseer  
of things. I don't know whether there are  
any records - there should be - of what





machines guns and ammunition at selected places on the coast, to be held, and to be used only if the conspiracy should materialise. (3)

(4) In May 1915 Sean MacDermott came to see me in Wexford, on his way back from London, and told me on account of what he said to me on page 16 of The Unity of Sinn Féin. There was in contemplation then only a Dublin committee, as a first step to awaken the people, and I don't know what changed it to an all-Ireland plan. Also, it was originally fixed for September 1915, and, when nothing happened before then, I assumed they had given up the idea. I asked him whether any place on the Council had been filled and he said No. Well then, said I, I want to be recorded as against the Rising. I think the volunteers should be held intact against the possibility of conspiracy. I am sure of that opinion. The risk of the operation was so great that it should not have been undertaken, and it was only the stupidity of the British that saved us. However, I arranged with him to send me notice about the rising, if and when it was near, and we agreed that he was to send me a fortnight's notice.

But what I got was a cryptic message on a  
postcard saying that "Auntie" was sick and  
it was feared unless how to have an operation.  
I assumed that, as arranged, that meant  
a fortnight for the date of posting, and it  
reached me on Sat Friday. I suppose the  
significance of Eddie should have struck me  
but it didn't, so I wrote to Dick Connors,  
in London, asking him to cross me on Sat  
and look in on me on Sunday morning at  
Walthamstow and tell me what was up. He told  
me afterwards that he was not able to  
go, and that although he was a member of  
the Council he did not know that  
the Party was definitely fixed. Michael  
Collins told me afterwards that MacDonnell  
had intended not notifying me at all,  
and that it was he who, at the last moment,  
persuaded him to do so.

Everything above is written by my own  
personal knowledge and experience, it is  
all first hand. Where I am not quite  
certain about a date, or about who was  
on the Council at what time, I have indicated  
it. I enclose with it, for inspection and  
to be returned to me, two copies of the

1 RB Constitution. The printed one is the full one (40)  
of 1873. It was asked by the Council in  
1913 to revise it, and it will be seen that I had  
made a beginning, but the advent of the Volunteers  
and the War drove everything else out of our  
heads. This print was printed in Glasgow. I don't  
know who printed it but it was arranged by John Mulholland.  
The mimeographed Constitution is a shortened  
one, and was in use in London.

J. S. O'Keefe  
19 September 1947

Notes of those on the Council in 1914

Deakin  
McKullough  
Lynd  
Conroy  
Gleeson

and their living. I don't know Deakin's  
address. Lynd is in Cork County somewhere.  
Conroy lives somewhere near Gaeltacht Park.  
Gleeson can be reached at 10 A Clungui St,  
where he keeps a brother who has a hardware shop  
there. I don't know how long they  
stayed on the Council, but at any rate  
I do know that Lynd, McKullough, and  
Conroy, remained on until the Rising  
and that Patsy McCartan also came on  
some time after 1914 and was on until

No Rising. Between them they should be able  
to disentangle the business.

Sean McGarry ought to have a lot of  
information also. He was not on the Council  
but he was very close to Tom Clarke and to Sean  
MacDermott. He once gave me figures  
of the rollcall on Easter Monday morning,  
which he had, he said, compiled for Tom  
Clarke, and I remember the as under 800,  
including a small number of Citizen Army.  
But when I mentioned the figures to him  
later he had forgotten them.

Note Two James Connollys. There have been newspaper  
controversies about Connolly. There is no dispute  
about the fact that he was kidnaped about  
Nov 1915 and held until he had agreed to  
subordinate his notions to the D.I.B. plan.  
That MacDermott said Connolly in May 1915  
was "he'll have to do something about this  
bloody fellow Connolly. He's going about  
shutting out his mouth all over the place,  
and he's afraid he'll bring the British  
down on us before he's ready."

I was told that there was two Connolly  
disappearances. At the beginning of the war  
he had made a pact with Mallon and

the Countess that if any one of the three was arrested, (of 2)  
or disappeared, the other two would call out  
the Citizen Army. Then, one week later, he  
disappeared. Tom and Sean knew about the  
plot, so they told the other two that if they  
moved out alone and the Volunteers did  
support them but they would denounce them.  
It was on that occasion, I believe, that Connolly  
used the words, on his return, about having  
been in Hell, testified to by Willie O'Brien.  
I am almost, but not quite, certain, that  
it was Dick Connolly that told me  
this.

A.S. O'Hagan

19 Dec 1949

