

ORIGINAL

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| BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY | 1913-21 |
| BUREAU STAIRÉ              |         |
| No. W.S.                   | 29      |



Éire

Telefón 61018.

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

26 RAEDH NA NÍARTHARACH,  
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.  
(Dublin).

Document W.S.29.

Letter concerning

THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE RISING

from

MRS. GERALDINE DILLON

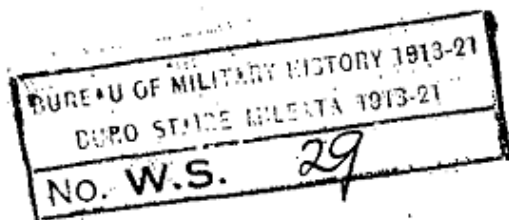
(nee Plunkett)

Dated 15/10/47.

With covering letter from Dr. R. Hayes,  
Chairman, Advisory Committee, to  
Director.

File S.60.

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17. X. 47

Mr. M. Mc. Dunphy  
Director  
Bureau of Mil. History

Dear Michael I got enclosed from  
Gerardine Dillon this morning in reply to my  
letter re all Ireland plans.

As you see, it is rather unsatisfactory  
- necessary so perhaps. But it has a certain  
value and should be added to the archives.

Re Maynooth, I myself heard a  
week before the Rising that, if ousted from Dublin,  
the Vol. Garrison was to fall back on Maynooth  
College and occupy it. I see that Mrs D. Corrob-  
orates this.

In 1920 when I was a prisoner  
in Griffiths Barracks for some weeks, I became

very intimate with an English army Officer  
there. In 1916 he told me he was on the H.Q.  
staff on the Western front, and news of the Rising  
created consternation there. For one thing, he  
said, the English army was never at any time  
during the War so hard pressed for men, and  
he stressed the fact that if we had held out  
for 6 or 8 weeks the British would be forced  
to withdraw every soldier from Ireland and  
would have made a settlement. Reading  
Mrs D's letter it looks as if her brother (who  
was evidently responsible for the plan of the  
Rising) foresaw this - a tribute to his  
strategic knowledge & efficiency, don't you  
think?

Regards  
Sincerely  
Richard Hayes

TELEPHONE  
GALWAY 309

TEN  
NEW LINE  
GALWAY

(1)

15.10.47

Dear Dr Hayes,

As you already know, the position was so desperate that it was very little use making plans for all Ireland until the measure of success of the Dublin plans could be ascertained. However, there were discussions ~~discussions~~ about plans, which depended <sup>almost</sup> entirely on what the enemy would do about Dublin & what happened there. For instance, if the English army, as soon as they heard about Dublin, occupied all ~~available~~ large buildings not in the possession of the I.R.A., it would not be any use for the I.R.A. to make future plans to do so & so on. The original plans for the whole country were, to occupy large buildings in strategic positions & the idea was that while these were in I.R.A. possession the English could not consider that they were occupying Ireland & would have

to attack these points, with all their defence advantages, before taking any other steps. The possibility of using the Shannon, not usually used as a means of transport & communication, was discussed, as it would have the element of surprise but all the <sup>large</sup> boats on it had been taken away at the beginning of the war. This was disastrous to the plan which would have had a particular point, the demonstration of intelligence & education & a knowledge of strategy, any evidence of which was known to have an upsetting effect on the English Army -

There was, of course, the plan to fall back on Maynooth & to defend the whole <sup>of buildings</sup> block, & to disregard the fury which this would provoke amongst the Bishops, who would undoubtedly denounce the I.R.A. (but they denounced them

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2

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anyway) The bother about this was that artillery could be used freely against Maynooth & so the advantages of fighting in the capital would be thrown away. You will remember that it was known that General Friend, the Commander in Dublin, had expressed the view that in no case was Dublin to be attacked & levelled as if it were an enemy city - he regarded it as a confession of failure of English rule in Ireland. Even though he was on holidays in England during Holy week, & that he never returned to his command, the change of policy involved a delay without which the G.P.O. would not have held out for a day. The official English view of an Irish Rebellion was of six bloody fools in a field surrounded by machine guns - If the Irish were not bloody fools, Ireland could not be held. Plans made on these premisses always look trivial.

at a later date & sometimes are also  
of <sup>such</sup> a character as that, once done, they  
are obvious to everyone. But they may  
not be obvious at the time to the enemy &  
it was known to the Military Council that  
in I.R. A Rebellion would be expected by  
the English Army to take the form of marching  
out of Dublin to take to the hills. Even  
high officers in the IRA had the same  
views & Joe had a job with some of them  
to argue them out of it. Connolly backed  
him & his backing settled the matter. The  
others were afraid of being caught like  
Rats in a trap amongst the streets &  
they had a fantastic idea of the accuracy  
of big guns - ~~of~~ machine guns, they  
thought that they mowed you down  
& when they found this was not so they  
were terribly surprised.  
In O'Connell St on Easter Monday, the

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manager of the Imperial Hotel telephoned to William Martin Murphy & was told that the military would put a big gun in the Dublin mountains which would blow up the G.P.O. & he was quite happy about it he ~~had~~ never thought his hotel would be hit. Generally speaking, this was public opinion, in the IRA & out of it & it required quite a bit of study of strategy to get rid of such provincialism. A Capt. Kinsman, an intelligence officer in the Castle, was a tenant of my mother's, & it gave Joe a good deal of courage in making his plans to know that it was against such hidebound & limited men as this, that he was putting his brains. He was also counting on being offered unexpected help, <sup>(transport etc)</sup> from both from sincere cowards (Nationalists) & from completely dishonest people, if the German attack



came off in May as planned & that in consequence the English were not able to attack in force. If this had been the case, he thought that ~~they~~ <sup>The English</sup> might even withdraw most of their forces from Ireland & that ~~so~~ it would require a reconquest. As an alternative to Reconquest he thought they might <sup>offer to</sup> repeal the Act of Union - It would require at least three months I.R.A. success to do this. As you also know, ~~even~~ on Easter Saturday, the Volunteers had no idea of how far Hobson had succeeded in sending out countermarching orders ~~with~~ ~~at~~ ~~no~~ ~~use~~ ~~the~~ ~~ing~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~act~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~day~~ but up to Friday they had no reason to suppose that they would not have the measure of success which justified their action. After that they either had to act or to run away & they could not run away. I'm afraid I've written too generally - but all laws depended on holding Dublin.  
See you sometime, I hope. Yours sincerely  
Gen. Tom Dillan.