

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 3

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 3

Witness

Liam O Briain,
Professor of Romance Languages

Identity

Member of I.R.B. 1916

Subject

Events of Holy Week and Easter Week 1916;
Conversations with Arthur Griffith.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

To be treated as confidential except where
permission is given by Professor O Briain
to the contrary.

File No. S.8Q.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

P. S. If you
are getting
typed copies
made of my
piece, would
you ever be so
good as to
send me a
copy? I would
like to show
it to P. S. O'H.
also I would like
to ask this cutting
from the Independent
- don't, if you don't
want it - L. O'S.

H. C. G. d'Arcy
20th April 1947

copy to
don. out

calling
that name
S. W. Hayes

ORIGINAL

Dear Doctor Hayes

Here at last is the stuff you asked me for. I am sorry for the delay but I came back here to a job of making out a pile of exam. papers which had to be imperatively done for the printers during the past week.

You asked me to give the smallest details and I have given them as well as I could. Don't get mad because I don't give the date early in the story, because I try to fix the date later on. I have put everything down very plainly with no thought of style, and the statement can be described as "badly written," but it is not good style that you are looking for.

I had two letters about this story not long ago. One was from P. S. O'Hegarty who said he couldn't see A. G. calling on the country to rise, as he was a physical force man in theory ~~but~~ but a pacifist in practice, and urging me to write down the "ipsissima"

verba" used by A. G. and John McN. This of course I can't do. I cannot go beyond what I have written here.

P. S. forgets the essence of the matter. The rising was on. Both A. G. and John McNeill were no longer concerned with their own opinions or grievances of the pre-rising period.

The other letter was a curious one from Mick Lennon, District Justice. Do you know him? He said he had tried to put McNeill's recollections together. He had interrogated him repeatedly as if he were a witness in the box before him and he had found him a slippery witness dodging all sorts of questions especially about these matters.

Concerning Easter Week. This was not so long ago and John was "failing" a good deal at the time. [The tone of Lennon's letter was "how the hell do you know that when I don't know it?" I answered him briefly]

I asked McNeill myself the last time he was here in Galway - about the beginning of the war - had he his memoirs written, and he said he had, but, pointing to the floor, he said: "I will be well underneath that before anyone sees them." I was very glad to hear that. For years I had been saying that we would never know fully about Easter Week until we had John's side of the story. When he died I enquired immediately of Michael Tierney what he had left Michael.

"tells me he left little and of little importance
what a pity!

Some of these days I must send you another long
piece about Easter Saturday night. You know I
still think that the story I tell in that article
in the "Voice of Ireland" about the events leading to the
Rising is true as far as it goes. Nobody has seriously
disproved anything I say there, so far as I know.
Details may be wrong. A great deal of the arguing is
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years ago by Desmond Fitzgerald. It was that
Maxwell had the support of the majority of the
Volunteers Executive for his cancelling order. The
O'Rahilly, Seamus O'Connor, Sean O Fitzgibbon, and
himself; four out of seven. [Were there really only seven?]
If true, it is a good point.

My trouble is that while I learned a little at
first hand, I learned a good deal more at second hand,
especially in Frongoch Camp and from Sean-T. O.K. by
poking round and asking questions. My mind was
concentrated on rejecting irrelevancies and picking
out the things that seemed to me important
and essential. These I can remember but, my
authority? From whom did I hear it? That
has in many cases, alas, entirely slipped my
memory.

Well, as the story-tellers say, *Sin e' mo s'geal-sa*
agus ma' ta' breag' ann, b'io'! Aic
ni' breag' ann.

With best wishes
Yours Sincerely
Liam O'BRIEN

20th April 1947

In the years between 1916 and his death I became very friendly, I may say intimate with Arthur Griffith. Although appointed professor in U. C. Galway in 1917, I used come to Dublin very frequently, once a month at least, to meetings of the *Comité* of the Gaelic League, as well as spending all the ~~whole~~ Christmas, Easter and summer vacations in Dublin. My meetings with A. G. were not at committees but social when, among friends, he used frequently become reminiscent and confidential. I often walked part of the way home with him. I used stay with my brother in Keinstor Avenue, 12th Strand, ~~where~~ on the city side of Annesley Bridge, ~~he~~ lived in St. Laurence Road, Clontarf and I often walked nearly the whole way with him. I was in his house of course, a number of times also.

notes 1947
and queries

contin.

I do not think these preliminaries superfluous. It was walking thus home with him one night that he told me of his connection with the Easter Rising and asked me to remember it, too, and perhaps be a witness to it some day when he would be gone. The essentials I have already told in my article "~~the~~" "The Historic Rising of Easter Week - 1916," published in "The Voice of Ireland" (Ed. William G. Fitzgerald) - Virtue and Co.) 1924. My article was written in 1922.

This in fact
prompted me to
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He told me how "early in the war" (that is of course, shortly after August 1914) he had been approached by the ~~members~~ Supreme Council of the I. R. B. They had asked him would he become a member of that council; if so.

they would make him a member (that is, as I understood, either co-opt him or arrange for his election.) They gave him to understand, in the most general and imprecise terms, that things might be happening during the war.

was the approach officially from the whole Supreme Co. or from the Military Co. or from certain members? I did not ask and don't know. Consult on the point; Denis McCullough, Sean Mc Garry, Sean T. O Kelly etc.

A.G. declined saying he preferred to keep his independence; his own open political (anti-Redmondite) action would of course, be all tending in their way. He asked to be kept informed of any significant or important developments on their part. They promised to ~~do~~ do so.

I have the clearest recollection that A.G. understood definitely from them that this definite promise was made to him.

He went on to say that this promise was not kept. He was not given any information by the Supreme Council of their negotiations with Germany; of the plans or date for the Rising. Like others, he only began to hear of what was coming off, shortly before Easter. As I (L.O.B.) was already aware, he had been with John McNeill on Easter Saturday night, had heard all McNeill's story, knew of his "Cancelling Order". He had gone home, accompanied by myself, on that Saturday night, and on the Monday morning following was taken completely by surprise by the news of the outbreak.

How did he spend Sunday? Probably at home as usual. ask Mrs. G.

His ~~pos~~ private position at the moment

was very awkward. His wife had gone away to visit friends or relatives (that morning, early, I think he ~~he~~ said, and to Cork, if I remember rightly) leaving him in charge of their two young children. His first idea was to get into the city to find out what was happening but an unexpected difficulty occurred. He tried to get his neighbours to take charge of the children but they declined! They were afraid to have anything to do with him. (It is well-known that the "rebels" were universally called the "Sun Feiners" from the very beginning of the Rising, and wasn't he the Sun Feiner par excellence?) This matter apparently took up quite some time and caused him some worry on Monday afternoon and I think also on Tuesday. However sometime on Monday ~~the~~ afternoon or evening he did manage to get a message to the G. P. O. in which he told the J. R. B. leaders: "what he thought of them" (I remember the exact phrase) for having broken their agreement with him; but stating also that now that they had started it, he would join in as soon as he could.

ask Mrs. G.

my recollection is not clear as regards when exactly he sent this message, nor as to whether it was written or oral. He didn't say and I was too absorbed to interrupt.

He got a message back from them, either on Tuesday or Wednesday (to the best of my recollection, he said Wednesday) saying that it was their desire

oral or written? Who was the messenger? I can't say. I never asked.

and request that he should not come to the G. P. O. or join the Rising any-where else; that they wanted him at least to survive; they wanted his pen to survive to carry on his own work and some day to defend and justify them.

[of this last part, I have no doubt whatsoever. It is the part of the story which most impressed me then, even more than the part I am about to relate now]

On Thursday when the fight was at its height, A. G. could no longer remain inactive. He got a bicycle [had he one? or did he say he borrowed one?

I cannot remember] and resolved to try and get in touch with John McNeill. [By then of course, the affair of looking after the children had been solved)

Navin's Griffith's recollection should be interesting here. His sister is I believe in England

He made a detour around the city (I seem to remember ^{very} vaguely his mentioning Blanchardstown) from Clontarf to the neighbourhood of Dundrum where John McNeill lived.

He spent the evening talking to McNeill. They agreed that a call should be issued to the country for a general rising to come to the help of Dublin. They agreed to draw up ~~and~~ such a proclamation and put their names to it and that Griffith should get it circulated to the country if and when

he could. A. G. then mounted his bicycle that same evening and got back home again in the dark. Of course any chance of publishing or circulating any such proclamation was out of the question between that meeting on Thursday night and the ~~surrender~~ surrender on Saturday afternoon.

The place of this conversation was along the road between Annesley Bridge and the corner of St. Lawrence Road. It started, I remember well, some distance beyond Annesley Bridge, near the Railway Embankment. It ended probably not far from A. G.'s own door. The time would be near midnight.

The date? That is the question. I cannot remember exactly. It was in all probability either in 1919 or in 1920. The possible period can be narrowed by excluding his imprisonments and mine. After being together in Wandsworth in 1916, during which time I had no conversation with A. G., we were never in the same prison again. I was in Belfast prison from ^{about} Nov. 12th, 1919, to about Feb. 20th 1920. I was arrested again on Nov. 22th 1920 until the signing of the Treaty released internees on Dec. 8th 1921. This above conversation took place probably between my release and arrest in 1920 - between February and November that year, but may

Wandsworth
Prison, London

Have taken place before my arrest in Nov. 1919. The ~~for~~ dates of A. G.'s ~~imprisonments~~ should be easily ascertainable. Although I saw a good deal of A. G. in the period between the Treaty and his death in 1922, I am ~~confident~~ sure the above conversation did not take place during that time. I am fairly sure that it was either in 1919 or in 1920.

There is one aspect of the story that I wish to be perfectly frank about. When I was writing the above-mentioned article for Mr. W. G. Fitzgerald's publication ~~some~~ sometime during the civil war, it occurred to me that I should hear John McNeill's version. I went to see McNeill accordingly one Sunday morning in Government Buildings, Merrion St. where I was introduced into a very large room. There I met Mr. Cosgrave and most of his ministers including John McNeill. They were at the time all living there ^{under guard} and were almost prisoners. The late Desmond Fitzgerald was present through a good deal of my conversation with John McNeill, the other ministers were scattered about the room. John McNeill confirmed that Griffith had come to see him on the Thursday of Easter Week, that they had had a long talk together and had agreed about issuing a

after A.G.'s death.

a ~ ~

proclamation signed by both of them calling on the country to help Dublin. A. G. was to undertake the task of trying to circulate it. But I asked John McNeill the question: "Did you both not actually draw up a document and sign it?"

He said: "no I don't remember the writing of any document or actually signing anything. Griffith was to write anything he thought fit, and put both our names to it." I said ~~that~~ that it was my recollection that A. G. had said that they had actually drawn up and signed a document. But McNeill was clear in his recollection that he had not actually signed any document.

There was therefore this discrepancy between my recollection of A. G.'s statement to me about three years previously and McNeill's recollection of what had happened, about six and a half years previously.

Had I misunderstood A. G.? Had my attention been less concentrated at that particular moment of A. G.'s narrative as we walked along Clontarf road? I had certainly gone to McNeill with the impression that A. G. had said that they had drawn up and ~~signed~~ signed a document. Had the story grown in my mind in the meantime? Or, as A. G. was clearer and more accurate in his memory than McNeill (in my opinion) had his version to me been

observe that these two men would have then known very clearly that such a document would be their death warrant. yet both narrated this with the utmost simplicity and as if it was the most obvious and ordinary act for them to do. what a period it was, all the same!

more exact than McNeill's recollection?

Subsequent events, his arrest and long imprisonment in England immediately after Easter Week, the whole rush of political events up to the moment of our conversation late in 1922, and also the resumption, at intervals, of his old Irish studies and writings, must have made many of the events of 1916 seem very remote to John McNeill. However poor Griffith was dead so there was nothing for it but to accept McNeill's modification of my recollection and so I expressed it in my article.

"that night these two men agreed that Griffith should issue a call to the country to rise and relieve Dublin. He was to attach their two names to it, and circulate it if he could. But of course it was too late."

McNeill's is the more likely. A.G. would hardly set out to go home with such a dangerous document in his pocket.

Looking over that article again after writing the above, I notice that I say that A.G. "made his way" to the house of John McNeill. It only strikes me now, in 1947, that there is a slight assumption in that Griffith ^{went} ~~was~~ around the city on a bicycle and got into contact with John McNeill and had a long talk with him. ~~That~~ That is the essence of the story. I assumed then and in 1922 and ever since that it was in McNeill's house. But maybe it wasn't maybe it was elsewhere. McNeill, I think, went to the House of the Holy Ghost order in the Dublin mountains on Easter Monday

(? Augustinian?)
K. Hayes

9
evening. Whether he was still there on Thursday evening or had returned to his own home I do not know. The recollections of the McNeill family on this point ~~are somewhat~~ would be interesting.

I see that I also stated in that article that it was on Wednesday of Easter Week that A. G. sent his message to the S.T.O and got his reply - a repetition of what Sean Mc Dermott had already said to him a fortnight before "that they preferred him to stay outside". That article was, as usual, limited to a fixed number of words and I had probably already reached my limit before I came to the paragraphs dealing with A. G. so I was being extremely concise. The story as I have told it in this statement is closer to what A. G. said.

Sean's Mc Dermott's words to A. G. a fortnight before the rising would have been deliberately uninformative: "in case of anything happening" or "we expect the Castle will attack us and provoke a fight anytime now" or words to that effect. This is not mere speculation. I remember that A. G. said that whatever Sean said to him did not prevent him from being surprised as he learned of the full extent of the plans much nearer to Easter week.

I have never met anyone to whom A. G. had also told the above

9
Sean Fitzgibbon
(Dublin Corporation)
Knows of McNeill's
movements of Easter
Monday afternoon,
after I had left
him myself at 54
Rathgar Rd (Dr.
Seamus O'Kelly's)
towards one
o'clock. So
also, I think, does
Bulmer Holson.

story but nevertheless I solemnly declare that, both in this statement and in the two paragraphs of my article in "The Voice of Ireland" dealing with Arthur Griffith, I am and was telling the truth as conscientiously as I could and as accurately as my memory could and can recall Arthur Griffith's narrative to me.

If Arthur Griffith was silent on this episode and never published his own version of it, I have for many years been of the opinion that it was because he was a proud man but the very opposite of being a boastful man. In 1917 and thereabouts there was a good deal of: "where were you in Easter Week?" "Why wasn't he out Easter Week?" etc, etc. and I believe ^{that} A. G. scorned to reply to such remarks and that they had the effect of making him keep to himself his own share in the events of that momentous episode.

May I remark finally that when the "Voice of Ireland" was reviewed in the Irish Independent of Thursday April 3rd 1924, the reviewer ("P. de B.") quoted in full my story of A. G. This was an occasion for John McNeill or anyone else to deny it at the time if they knew it could not be true but no one said anything.

(Signed) Liam O'Brien, M.A. Professor of Romance Languages ~~University of~~ University College Galway

W.S. 3

U. C. Galway,

20th April, 1947.

Dear Doctor Hayes,

Here at last is the stuff you asked me for. I am sorry for the delay but I came back here to a job of making out a pile of exam. papers which had to be imperatively done for the printers during the past week.

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I had two letters about this story not long ago. One was from P.S. O'Hegarty who said he couldnt see A.G. calling on the country to rise, as he was a physical force man in theory but a pacifist in practice, and urging me to write down the "ipissima verba" used by A.G. and John McN. This of course I cant do. I cannot go beyond what I have written here. P.S. forgets the essence of the matter. The rising was on. Both A.G. and John McNeill were no longer concerned with their own opinions or grievances of the pre-rising period.

The other letter was a curious one from Mick Lennon, District Justice. Do you know him? He said he had tried to put McNeill's recollections together. He had interrogated him repeatedly as if he were a witness in the box before him and he had found him a slippery witness dodging all sorts of questions especially about these matters concerning Easter Week. This was not so long ago and John was "failing" a good deal at the time. I asked McNeill myself the last time he was here in Galway - about the beginning of the war - had he his memoirs written, and he said he had, but, pointing to the floor, he said: "I will be well underneath that before anyone sees them." I was very glad to hear that. For years I had been saying that we would never know

fully about Easter Week until we had John's side of the story. When he died I enquired immediately of Michael Tierney what he had left. Michael tells me he left little and of little importance. What a pity!

Some of these days I must send you another long piece about Easter Saturday night. You know I still think that the story I tell in that article in the "Voice of Ireland" about the events leading to the Rising is true as far as it goes. Nobody has seriously disproved anything I say there, so far as I know. Details may be wrong. A great deal of the arguing is about whether such and such a thing happened. Such and such a meeting took place on Good Friday or Easter Saturday, on Wednesday evening or on Thursday morning etc., but I think, I am vain enough to think that I have the essentials of the matter there. A couple of points that have been put to me since, I would have put them in that article had I known them at the time. One was that McNeill, president of the Volunteers, had more and more frequently tended to absent himself from executive meetings, to slip back into the 10th century and The Book of the Dun Cow and to leave the chairmanship of the weekly meetings to Pearse; that therefore he had morally lost the right to be offended when he suddenly came back to modern times and found that things had been done unknown to him. The point would be worth verifying. The second was put to me some years ago by Desmond Fitzgerald. It was that MacNeill had the support of the majority of the Volunteer Executive for his cancelling order: The O'Rahilly, Séamus O'Connor, Seán Fitzgibbon, and himself; four out of seven. (Were there really only seven?)

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My trouble is that while I learned a little at first hand I learned a good deal more at second hand, especially in Frongach Camp and from Seán T. O'K. by poking round and asking questions. My mind was concentrated on rejecting irrelevancies and picking out the things that seemed to me important and

essential. These I can remember but, my authority? From whom did I hear it? That has in many cases, alas, entirely slipped my memory.

Well, as the story-tellers say, sin é mo sgéal-sa agus má tá bréag ann, bíodh! Ach níl bréag ann.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(SGD.) LIAM Ó BRIAIN.

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University College,

Galway,

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I do not think these preliminaries superfluous. It was walking thus home with him one night that he told me of his connection with the Easter Rising and asked me to remember it, too, and perhaps be a witness to it some day when he would be gone. The essentials I have already told in my article "The Historic Rising of Easter Week--1916", published in "The Voice of Ireland" (Ed. William G. Fitzgerald - Virtue and Co.) 1924. My article was written in 1922.

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Notes, 1947 and queries.

This in fact prompted me to write that article in 1922.

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He went on to say that this promise was not kept. He was not given any information by the Supreme Council of their negotiations with Germany; of the plans or date for the Rising. Like others he only began to hear of what was coming off, shortly before Easter. As I (L O'B.) was already aware, he had been with John McNeill on Easter Saturday night had heard all McNeill's story, knew of his "cancelling Order". He had gone home, accompanied by myself, on that Saturday night, and on the Monday morning following was taken completely by surprise by the news of the outbreak.

His private position at the moment was very awkward. His wife had gone away to visit friends or relatives (that morning, early, I think he said, and to Cork, if I remember rightly) leaving him in charge of their two young children. His first idea was to get into the city to find out what was happening, but an unexpected difficulty occurred. He tried to get his neighbours to take charge of the children but they declined! They were afraid to have anything to do with him. (It is well-known that the "rebels" were universally called the "Sinn Feiners" from the very beginning of the Rising and wasn't he the Sinn Feiner par excellence?) This matter apparently took up quite some time and caused him some worry on Monday afternoon, and I think also on Tuesday. However, some-

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time on Monday afternoon or evening he did manage to get a message, to the G.P.O in which he told the I.R.B. leaders: "what he thought of them" (I remember the exact phrase) for having broken their agreement with him; but stating also that now that they had started it, he would join in as soon as he could.

He got a message back from them, either on Tuesday or Wednesday (to the best of my recollection, he said Wednesday) saying that it was their desire and request that he should not come to the G.P.O. or join the Rising anywhere else; that they wanted him at least to survive; they wanted his pen to survive to carry on his own work and some day to defend and justify them.

(Of the last part, I have no doubt whatsoever. It is the part of the story which most impressed me then, even more than the part I am about to relate now).

On Thursday when the fight was at its height, A.G. could no longer remain inactive. He got a bicycle (had he one? or did he say he borrowed one? I cannot remember) and resolved to try and get in touch with John McNeill. (By then of course, the affair of looking after the children had been solved) He made a detour around the city. (I seem to remember very vaguely his mentioning Blanchardstown) from Clontarf to the neighbourhood of Dundrum where John McNeill lived. He spent the evening talking to McNeill. They agreed that a call should be issued to the country for a general rising to come to the help of Dublin. They agreed to draw up such a proclamation and put their names to it and that Griffith should get it circulated to the country if and when he could. A.G. then mounted his bicycle that same evening and got back home again in the dark. Of course any chance of publishing

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Oral or written? Who was the messenger? I cant say. I never asked.

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or circulating any such proclamation was out of the question between that meeting on Thursday night and the surrender on Saturday afternoon.

The place of this conversation was along the road between Annesley Bridge and the corner of St. Lawrence Road. It started, I remember well, some distance beyond Annesley Bridge, near the Railway Embankment. It ended probably not far from A.G.'s own door. The time would be near midnight. The date? That is the question. I cannot remember exactly. It was in all probability either in 1919 or in 1920. The possible period can be narrowed by excluding his imprisonments and mine. After being together in Wandsworth in 1916, during which time I had no conversation with A.G., we were never in the same prison again. I was in Belfast prison from about Nov. 12th, 1919, to about Feb. 20th 1920. I was arrested again on Nov. 22nd 1920 until the signing of the Treaty released internees on Dec. 8th 1921. The above conversation took place probably between my release and arrest in 1920 - between February and November that year, but may have taken place before my arrest in Nov. 1919. The dates of A.G.'s imprisonments should be easily ascertainable. Although I saw a good deal of A.G. in the period between the Treaty and his death in 1922, I am sure the above conversation did not take place during that time. I am fairly sure that it was either in 1919 or in 1920.

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prison,
London.

There is one aspect of the story that I wish to be perfectly frank about. When I was writing the above-mentioned article for Mr W.G. Fitzgerald publication sometime during the civil war, it occurred to me, that I should hear John McNeill's version. I went to see McNeill accordingly one Sunday morning in Government Buildings, Merrion St. where I was introduced into a very large room. There I met Mr. Cosgrave and most of his Ministers including John McNeill. They were at

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death.

the time all living there under guard and were almost prisoners. The late Desmond Fitzgerald was present through a good deal of my conversation with John McNeill, the other Ministers were scattered about the room. John McNeill confirmed that Griffith had come to see him on the Thursday of Easter Week, that they had had a long talk together and had agreed about issuing a proclamation signed by both of them calling on the country to help Dublin. A.G. was to undertake the task of trying to circulate it. But I asked John McNeill the question: "Did you both not actually draw up a document and sign it?" He said: "No. I don't remember the writing of any document or actually signing anything. Griffith was to write anything he thought fit, and put both our names to it." I said that it was my recollection that A.G. had said that they had actually drawn up and signed a document. But McNeill was clear in his recollection that he had not actually signed any document. There was therefore this discrepancy between my recollection of A.G.'s statement to me about three years previously and McNeill's recollection of what had happened, about six and a half years previously. Had I misunderstood A.G.? Had my attention been less concentrated at that particular moment of A.G.'s narrative as we walked along Clontarf Road? I had certainly gone to McNeill with the impression that A.G. had said that they had drawn up and signed a document. Had the story grown in my mind in the meantime? Or, as A.G. was clearer and more accurate in his memory than McNeill (in my opinion) had his version to me been more exact than McNeill's recollection? Subsequent events, his arrest and long imprisonment in England immediately after Easter Week, the whole rush of political events up to the moment of

Observe that these two men would have then known very clearly that such a document would be their death warrant. Yet both narrated this with the utmost simplicity and as if it was the most obvious and ordinary act for them to do. What a period it was, all the same!

our conversation late in 1922, and also the resumption, at intervals, of his old Irish studies and writings, must have made many of the events of 1916 seem very remote to John McNeill. However poor Griffith was dead so there was nothing for it but to accept McNeill's modification of my recollection, and so I expressed it in my article: "that night these two men agreed that Griffith should issue a call to the country to rise and relieve Dublin. He was to attach their two names to it, and circulate it if he could. But of course it was too late."

Looking over that article again after writing the above, I notice that I say that A.G. "made his way".. "to the house of John McNeill". It only strikes me now, in 1947, that there is a slight assumption in that Griffith went around the city on a bicycle and got into contact with John McNeill and had a long talk with him. That is the essence of the story. I assumed then and in 1922 and ever since that it was in McNeill's house. But maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was elsewhere. McNeill, I think, went to the House of the Holy Ghost order in the Dublin mountains on Easter Monday evening. Whether he was still there on Thursday evening or had returned to his own home I do not know. The recollections of the McNeill family on this point would be interesting.

I see that I also stated in that article that it was on Wednesday of Easter Week that A.G. sent his message to the G.P.O. and got his reply - a repetition of what Seán McDermott had already said to him a fortnight before - "that they preferred him to stay outside." That article was, as usual, limited to a fixed number of words and I had probably already reached my limit before I came to the paragraphs dealing with A.G. so I was being extremely concise. The story as I have told it in this statement, is

McNeill's is the more likely. A.G. would hardly set out to go home with such a dangerous document. in his pocket.

Augustinian?

Seán Fitzgibbon (Dublin Corporation) knows of McNeill's movements on Easter Monday afternoon, after I had left him myself at 54 Rathgar Rd. (Dr. Seamus O'Kelly's) towards one o'clock. So also, I think, does Bulmer Hobson.

closer to what A.G. said.

Seán McDermott's words to A.G. a fortnight before the rising would have been deliberately uninformative: "in case of anything happening" or "we expect the Castle will attack us and provoke a fight anytime now" or words to that effect. This is not mere speculation. I remember that A.G. said that whatever Seán said to him did not prevent him from being surprised as he learned of the full extent of the plans much nearer to Easter Week.

I have never met anyone to whom A.G. had also told the above story but nevertheless I solemnly declare that, both in this statement and in the two paragraphs of my article in "The Voice of Ireland" dealing with Arthur Griffith, I am and was telling the truth as conscientiously as I could and as accurately as my memory could and can recall Arthur Griffith's narrative to me.

If Arthur Griffith was silent on this episode and never published his own version of it, I have for many years been of the opinion that it was because he was a proud man but the very opposite of being a boastful man. In 1917 and thereabouts there was a good deal of: "where were you in Easter Week?" "Why wasn't he out Easter Week?" etc. etc. and I believe that A.G. scorned to reply to such remarks and that they had the effect of making him keep to himself his own share in the events of that momentous episode.

May I remark finally that when the "Voice of Ireland" was reviewed in the Irish Independent of Thursday April 3rd 1924, the reviewer ("P. de B") quoted in full my story of A.G. This was an occasion for John McNeill or anyone else to deny it at the time if they knew it could not be true but no one said anything.

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