

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 99

Witness

Dr. Patrick McCartan

Identity

I R.B. and I.V.

Subject

Comments on Bulmer Hobson's statements.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. S/

ORIGINAL

W.S.
99
/

Mount Pleasant
Newtown Mt. Kennedy
G Wicklow



April 5th 1948

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRA MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 99

A Caps:

Return Mr. ~~Stobson~~

Typescript with a few corrections
& some additions which may not
be important but Bulmer's statements
reminded me of them & I scribbled
them down. They may be useful to
the future historian.

Yours sincerely
Patrick W. Caron

P.S. Nothing I have scribbled

→ Confidential
P.W.C.

King's Visit & Loyal Address (1)

In writing of above last night I forgot to mention a large meeting in Dorchester place to protest against Loyal Address. The speakers at that meeting were Major Melbidge & Lawrence Binell & myself. As usual I preached open Republicanism. Mr de Valera in America told me that was the first time he heard an Irish Republic advocated & that he went home thinking it was a fine ideal but one not likely to be attained.

Page 2

ORIGINAL

1

Re Griffiths resignation from the I.R.B. the story I heard is as follows but I cannot vouch for it personally. I forgot even from whom I heard it but I think it was from a brother of Helen Malone's Mrs Maude Louise MacBride may be able to verify it as she was the only woman who was ever a member of the I.R.B. I understood she partly financed Griffiths' United Irishman. She left the I.R.B. for another reason which she told me but which I only half remember.

When Queen Victoria was coming to Ireland to drum up recruits to go to fight the Boers an article was published in the United Irishman entitled "The Famine Queen" ^{by Margaret Home} for

this article the issue of the United Irishman was suppressed by Dublin Castle & Madame Goune hung out a black flag from her house which caused the police some trouble.

As was stated by Hobson's instalment on the I.R.B. Fred Allen was an important man in the I.R.B. & during Victoria's visit he was secretary to Lord Mayor Pile. He went out with the Lord Mayor to meet Queen Vic. at the entrance to the city. O'Leary Burbis, a minor poet, walked along the Lord Mayor's carriage shouting: "Mock Fenian" at Allen

Alice Milligan wrote an article on this in the United Irishman and it appears Allen did not like it. On this account Griffith resigned.

110

Allen & his friends contended that there was a plot to blow up the Mount St Bridge (I think) where the Queen was to enter the city & that Allen's presence was in connection with that conspiracy. The bridge was not blown up & I never believed the Allen version of the story.

Page 4 - National Council

Hobson is a bit mixed regarding dates I think. The Dungannon Club was founded in Belfast before 1905 & the "Students' Dungannon Club" was not founded by me but by Dr Dan Sheehan & John Elwood who were members of the I.R.B. also. It was started in 1904 & I joined it in 1905. I attended the Conference in the Rotunda in 1905 - It must have been Nov - ~~and~~ ~~elects~~ of the National Council

and was elected a member of the Executive
 At the first meeting I was appointed
 to two Committees on ^{at least} one of which Dr
 Oliver St John Gogarty was a member.
 It meant two meetings a week for
 at least five or six months when the
 majority of the members dropped away.
 Andrew Byrne was a whole time
 Secretary. It was the failure of the
 North Leitrim election in 1907 where
 Thomas J. Bolan of Manorhamilton
 resigned from the House of Commons
 & contested his seat as a Sinn Fein
 Candidate that was partly responsible
 for the collapse of the National Council
 to my mind. The failure of the
 Sinn Fein daily also contributed.
 That at least is my opinion

Dennis McCullough had an uncle
 in Philadelphia who had a shooting

match with the police during the riots of 1886 I think. When returning home in 1905 he told me to get in touch with his nephew. Whether he wrote to Denis or not the O'Holowon got in touch with me or I got in touch with them I don't remember but I met both during the Christmas holidays of 1905.

During the Christmas Summer Holidays of 1906 both came down to speak at a meeting in my native parish. We preached open Republicanism and 40 men joined the Dungannon Club after the meeting.

The Hibernians were all powerful & at the next meeting we had only the half dozen that brought into the I.R.B. previously. Later it was rumoured among the Hibernians

that I was in the pay of Dublin Castle & got a salary of £400-0-0 a year. Perhaps some believed it & some pretended to believe it.

When the Dungannon Club appointed Sean McDermott as organiser he went to Tyrone & worked round Colboe (if that is the spelling). He stopped with George Norris (an I.R.B. man) at Tullyrone, booked down free of charge. He got good meetings until the Hibernians began to get after him & in the end of three months so he had no members but those already in the I.R.B.

Page 9 King Harold's Column

I don't remember this declaration by the National Council. Griffith was never hostile to a Republic nor Republicanism but a Republic did not appeal to the masses as they considered its attainment impossible.

Hence Griffith in 1913 demanded
 Repeal of the Union & took his stand on
 the Renunciation Act. He believed this
 policy would appeal more to the people
 as an alternative to Parliamentarianism
 though the Dungannon clubs openly
 preached Republicanism I was
 associated with both. The immediate
 aim of both was to withdraw the M.P.s
 from Westminster & meet in Dublin.
 Outside the I.R.B. there were few
 Republicans & Griffith knew it & so
 did we. We were mere propagandists
 & we realized it

Page 12

Irish Freedom was started in 1910

I was ^{almost} in weekly communication with
 Devoy & hence the invitation to know
 to go on a lecture tour to the U.S.

April 5th 1918

Patrick McCartan

General Statement

by

Delmar McGinnis.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 98

In 1900 I started, in Belfast, the first national organization with which I was connected. It was a Nationalist Club for boys, called the Ulster Debating Club. It held both private and public meetings and lectures, but its principal value to me was that it brought me in touch with a number of like-minded people. One of these, William McDonald, helped me to start another Society called the Protestant National Society, the object of which was to try and convert young Ulster Protestants and to recruit them into the National Movement.

I had long known Alice Milligan, the poetess, and, as a schoolboy, had subscribed to the "Shen Van Vocht", the paper which she and Ethna Carbery conducted in Belfast.

I was tremendously influenced by Ethna Carbery (Johnston) and met at her house the local leaders of the Gaelic League, as well as many well-known people, like Douglas Hyde, Kaud Gonne and John O'Leary.

I joined the Tir na nÓg Branch of the Gaelic League in Belfast, which at that time consisted of a lot of young people working very enthusiastically together.

Michael Cusack came to Belfast to spread the Gaelic Athletic Association in Ulster, and, representing the Tir na nÓg Hurling Club, I became a member, and shortly afterwards Secretary, of the first County Antrim Board of the Gaelic Athletic Association. I left this position because the Board refused to do anything for the junior Hurling Clubs, a refusal which induced me to

leave them and start na Fionna Aireann. Also as a representative of the Fir na nG Branch I became a member of the Ceiste Countair of the Gaelic League in Belfast, and after some time I took on the Secretaryship of that as well.

At this time, between 1901 and 1903, I was employed in a Belfast printing house from 8.30 a.m. until 6.30 p.m., and so had only the evenings, and sometimes a good part of the night, to attend to these various activities.

The Protestant National Association had a brief and unimportant life, but it did bring in a group which subsequently formed the Ulster Literary Theatre, a body which exercised considerable influence on the mental development of the North of Ireland. It was started by David Parkhill and myself, with the definite intention of writing and producing distinctively Ulster plays, which would be a commentary on the political and social conditions in Northern Ireland. In the meantime I had also joined Cumann na nGael in Belfast. This body was founded by Arthur Griffith and William Rooney in 1901 in Dublin, and largely became an open propagandist movement for the I.R.B. For some years Griffith was a member of the I.R.B., but resigned from the organisation over some point of difference with which I am not acquainted. That all happened before I came to Dublin.

As representing Belfast Clubs I went to Dublin to annual Conventions of Cumann na nGael, and became a member of the Executive of that body.

From 1904 onwards a series of annual Faiscanna was held in various parts of the Glens of Antrim. At

the first of these I met Roger Casement (1864) and formed an intimate friendship with him, which lasted until his death. He was not a member of any of these bodies, although he supported the Gaelic League generously with funds.

At this time Casement was a distinguished member of the British Consular Service, and was home on holidays in the Glens, where his people had lived since the middle of the eighteenth century. He spent his boyhood at Ballynascally, outside Ballycastle, County Antrim.

Casement was much away from Ireland in the succeeding years, but, in whatever part of the world he was, we corresponded regularly and frequently, and I still have many of his letters.

On March 4th, 1899, Arthur Griffith started the "United Irishman" and it was read by all the younger Nationalists and profoundly affected them.

Griffith was an excellent propagandist, but was extremely dogmatic and I found him difficult to work with. He did not appear to want co-operation, but obedience. I had many differences with Griffith, but there was no man more sincere, or more completely and disinterestedly devoted to the country than he.

About 1896 Griffith published in the "United Irishman", and later as a pamphlet, "The Resurrection of Hungary", in which he described the Hungarian National movement under Kossuth and Deak. The Hungarians had refused to send representatives to the Imperial Parliament in Vienna, and, by means of an abstention policy and active agitation at home, had succeeded in getting the restoration of the Hungarian Parliament.

Denis McShillough and I started the Dugannon Club and were shortly joined by two men who played a prominent part in the National movement in the following years. One was Dr. Patrick McCarten, then a medical student in Dublin, and soon after he got in touch with us he started a Dugannon Club in Dublin among his fellow-students. The other was John McEernott. McEernott was a native of Glenties, in County Leitrim, and he began his career as a pupil teacher in the local National School. A quarrel with one of the clergy led him to emigrate to Glasgow, where he worked as a bar-tender. Shortly afterwards he came to Belfast, where he first worked as a bar-tender, and then as a conductor on one of the city trams. When I first met him he was an enthusiastic member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and he never quite got over their habits of intrigue and wire-pulling behind the scenes.

About the end of 1906 I started a small fund, mostly subscribed to by men who could only afford a few pence per week, and made McEernott the whole-time organiser for the Dugannon Club. He established a number of Clubs in various parts of Ulster. P.J. O'Hegarty also started a Club in London, of which the other principal members were Robert Lynd, Herbert Hughes, the musician, and George Cowan Duffy.

In the Dugannon Clubs we advocated the policy of abstention from the British Parliament, on the same lines as Griffith in Dublin. We were violently attacked by Tom Kettle and other parliamentarians, who accused Griffith of falsifying Hungarian history. I was much too busy to find out whether Griffith's account was entirely accurate or not, but I declared at public

the three of us going for a walk just before the first meeting, and it must be admitted that we were frightened out of our lives. We borrowed a four-wheel cart from a small coal merchant called John Quigley, who had been a Fenian all his life. He was willing to lend us the cart but not the horse, for fear the latter should receive injury. Consequently we had to pull the cart ourselves down the Falls Road to the place of meeting. I went up and persuaded Francis Joseph Digger to part with his magic lantern and we prepared a number of slides containing statistics about emigration and the general decline of Ireland, and some made from cartoons drawn by Jack Heron and other artists among our friends. We put up the lantern at one end of the cart and a screen at the other, and putting statistics and cartoons alternatively on the screen we spoke on these subjects. The lantern was often battered with stones thrown by hostile crowds, but was never put out of action. When one has learned how to handle a hostile mob in Belfast, other audiences seem pretty easy.

McCartan, McCullough and I addressed many meetings in various parts of Ulster, and on one occasion when the three of us were spending the night in McCartan's father's house at Carrickmore, County Tyrone, McCartan suddenly said "What about arranging an American tour for Hebeent?", I did not take this very seriously, but said I would certainly go if I were asked. I was greatly surprised, however, to get a wire at the end of 1906 from John Devoy in New York asking me if I would be ready to sail in a week. A week later I started off on American tour.

In the beginning of 1907 I set sail for New York

to introduce the Sinn Fein movement to America. On my way through Dublin I called to see Griffith and was surprised at the coldness and hostility of his attitude. When I told Devoy in New York about this he showed me a letter from Griffith, suggesting that he himself should be invited to America, and I regretted that I had inadvertently spoiled his chance.

At this time Griffith and his National Council had declared as their aim the Repeal of the Union and the Establishment of the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland as the Irish Government, on the lines of 1782, and he laid great stress on the Act passed by the British Parliament in 1782, in which they formally renounced their right to govern this country.

In the Dunganon Clubs we were not so impressed with formal renunciations by the English Government, which, in any case, had not been carried into practical effect, and we set as our aim an Independent Irish Republic, not because we were doctrinaire Republicans, but because we did not see how complete independence could take any other form in Ireland.

This difference, of course, added to Griffith's annoyance that I had been asked to explain the Sinn Fein policy to America.

In New York I addressed a meeting of about four thousand people in the Grand Central Palace, and then followed a series of meetings in Brooklyn, Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Boston and many other towns. These meetings were reported in "The Gaelic American" at the time.

After three months Devoy wanted me to lecture

in the Pacific slope tour, but I was anxious to get back to work in the Dungannon Clubs and to prevent "The Republic" from collapsing. It was always in financial difficulties, and was financed by the shillings and pence of our members, by a few pounds from Roger Casement, and several larger sums which were presented to me personally in various American cities.

In America I renewed my acquaintance with O'Donovan Rossa, became friendly with Devoy, and met many others who had taken a prominent or active part in the old Fenian Movement. Amongst these was Richard O'Sullivan Burke, who, at that time, was Harbour Master in Chicago. Burke was the organiser of the Manchester rescue in 1867. I also met P.J. Tynan, who was connected with the Invincible Movement. I would have liked to have talked to him, but saw at once that he was not persona grata with Devoy and the others who were acting as my hosts, and I had no further opportunity.

While I was in America the Sinn Féin League of America was started, although it never grew to any size or importance. Our friends in America felt strongly that it was absurd to have three small organisations in Ireland all advocating the Sinn Féin policy, and, as I agreed with them, I endeavoured on my return to arrange for an amalgamation.

We arranged a meeting in Dundalk in the autumn of 1907. Arthur Griffith and Walter Cole represented the National Council, Denis McCallough and I represented the Dungannon Clubs, and I do not now recollect the representatives of *Cumann na nGaedheal*.

Cumann na nGaedheal were quite ready to join in

an amalgamation, but Griffith and Cole would not agree on any conditions. As a result, the Cumann na nGaedheal and the Dungannon Clubs amalgamated and became the Sinn Fein League, and in the following year we out-voted Griffith in the National Council and the resultant union of the three organisations became known as Sinn Fein. As far as I recollect, the membership of the different organisations overlapped a good deal. For instance, P.S. O'Hegarty and I were members of the governing body of all three and Denis McCallough of the Dungannon Club and Cumann na nGaedheal. John O'Leary was not a member of any of these organisations. Edward Martyn was President of the Sinn Fein Organisation, and John Sweetman and Griffith the Vice Presidents. Shortly afterwards, Martyn, who was really not very much interested in politics, retired, and Sweetman became President, and Griffith and I the two Vice Presidents.

In the following two years we were busy with meetings in various parts of the country, forming new branches of the Sinn Fein organisation, and had endless Committee meetings which went on night after night, but a good many of us were very dissatisfied with the progress we were making, and we felt that many of the Committees in Dublin were far more interested in winning a few seats in the Dublin Corporation than they were in getting the country organised. In 1910, feeling that these endless Dublin Committees were becoming more and more futile, a number of us, including O'Hegarty, McCallough and myself, decided to quietly drop out of the Sinn Fein organisation, and as we could not run it with Griffith we thought he had better try and run it alone. When

we left there were about 135 Branches in the country, in the following year there were six, and a year later there was one.

Gumann na nGaelchad and the Dungannon Clubs were frankly separatist, but although most of the members were republicans and many were members of the I.R.B., their stated aim was to win the independence of Ireland, and they did not want any narrow definition that would exclude anybody. Griffith and the National Council, on the other hand, definitely wanted the Repeal of the Union and the re-establishment of the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, and they were very reluctant to give this up, but in the Sinn Féin organisation we kept the winning of the independence of Ireland as the stated aim and left the Repealers and the republicans each to take their own meaning out of it.

After we had left the Sinn Féin organisation, I devoted my energy to the I.R.B. and the Fianna, and formed a number of Clubs, which were called Freedom Clubs, and subsequently, at the end of 1911, started the paper "Irish Freedom". I have dealt with "Irish Freedom" in a separate statement.

(Signed) BULMER HERRICK.

28.1.48.

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRA MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 99