

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 100

Witness

Dr. Patrick McCartan

Identity

Member of Supreme Council, I.R.B.

Subject

Comments on Bulmer Hobson's ~~Statement~~

Statement W.S. 30 on I.R.B.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. S. 530

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE. MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 100

W.S.
578



Mount John
Newtown Mr Kennedy
Co Wicklow
April 5th 1948

Dear Sir:

I enclose additions to Eugene
Hobson's first instalment which I now
enclose. I got the second & have not
yet read it but will do so to-morrow
night forward to you at an early
date.

I suggest you submit what I have
written to Eugene, Denis Mallon
& P. S. O'Shearty, & if you care to
also to Mrs Clarke

Yours sincerely
Patrick McCartan

22 814

* attached

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The Feeling Circle Page 3.

When I came to Dublin in Oct 1905 with a transfer from John Devoy of New York I was assigned to the Feeling Circle by the late P. J. Daly to whom my transfer was addressed. The membership was then about fifty to seventy. About 1908 or 1909 its membership reached the hundred mark & it was divided & the new Circle was called the Blanevee Mangaw Literary Club or Society. I was not therefore a member of the Feelings when Hobson became Centre.

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My recollection is that Tom Clarke returned to Ireland in 1907. Le Roux in his life of Clarke says he returned in Dec. 1907. It is a slight error only. Clarke spent some time in Limerick & then came to Dublin presumably in 1908

Page 5 I don't think the shilling
subscription was from each member
of the organization but from selected
members who volunteered that amount.
The normal subscription for each
member was one shilling a month.

I was qualified in Oct. 1910 I was
House Surgeon in the Mater Hospital, as far
as I remember, when the first issue ^{of Irish Freedom} was
published. The arrangement Hobson
speaks of may have taken place previously,
when the publication was ^{being} discussed.
If the first issue appeared in Nov. 1910
I certainly was House Surgeon in the Mater.

While I did not write much for
the paper - In fact I wrote very little -
I did edit it without consultation
with anybody as to what I accepted
or rejected. At the time I believed Mr
Allen assumed I would be nominal

editor & he the real editor. It was Mr Allen & Mr O'Stanlow informed me I was to be editor & the appointment was made by the Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee which was the public organisation under which the I.R.B. held any public function.

Allen sent me an editorial for the first number & Hobson sent me an article. I put Hobson's article as the editorial & Allen's editorial as an article. I don't think Hobson was in Dublin at the time. If he were I did not see him nor discuss the editorial with him but I may & probably did tell Tom Clarke what I was doing with both contributions.

I read all the MSS & proofs while House Surgeon in the 'Mates from Nov. until the following May when I left.

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I remember blue pencilling an article by P.S. O'Shearty with great scruples as he was a constant contributor & I was afraid he might be angry & refuse to write any more.

I went to the Coombe Hospital as clinical clerk & remained there for at least two months. Then I went as House Physician to Cork St. Peter's Hospital & I forget when Hobson took up the actual editorship - probably after I went to Cork St.

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Hobson obviously forgets the incident in 1911 which caused trouble with regard to the paper & in the organisation. I had been accustomed to the meetings by the *blan-na-Gael* to celebrate the birth of Robert Emmett & the *laccation* of the Manchester Martyrs ^{being} to be used for

the purpose of adopting resolutions dealing with current Irish topics. In the February, ¹⁹¹¹ issue of Irish Freedom I wrote an editorial stating that resolutions dealing with the ~~visit~~ proposed visit by the King of England would be submitted to the meeting to be held in the Roburda to commemorate the birth of Robert Emmet. Some time later Tom Clarke told me that the Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee decided that there would be no resolutions as such would be political. Both Tom & I were disgusted.

The orator on the occasion was Patrick Pearse & Mary MacBride presided. Only these two were allowed on the stage. As well as the oration there were concert items

In the course of his speech Pease said "Dublin would have to do some great act to atone for the shame of not producing a man to dash his head against a stone wall in an effort to rescue Robert Emmett". I was thinking of the lost chance of dealing with the coming royal visit & the above sentence gripped me. I took an official envelope from my pocket & scribbled out a resolution. Countess Markievicz was sitting beside me & I showed it to her & told her I was going to propose it. She said: "For God's sake do & I'll second it" I advised her ^{I knew} not to unless nobody else did do, she was not popular with the heads of the R.B. St James'

Band was playing a selection on the stage & I went to a front seat where Tom Clarke was sitting with a Mr Corbett from San Francisco I gave Tom the resolution & told him what I was going to do. He had pretense to read it & say he "could not advise me" as he was a member of the Wolfe Tom Memorial Committee. I jumped up on the stage as the Band was leaving it & proposed my resolution. I know I ^{was} dashing my head against the stone wall of discipline of the I.R.B. but Leavis's words were still ringing in my ears. After I read the resolution Tom Clarke to my surprise jumped up on the stage also & seconded it. It, of course, was passed with a whoop.

The March issue of the paper was
nearly set up & I had the page proofs of
same. I think it was the printer
told me he had orders to accept no
more copy, from me as I was no
longer editor. Clarke & I discussed
the situation & so did Clarke & Hobson
Hobson wanted to reprint what
was already set up & bring the
paper out under another name. Tom
Clarke & I wanted to retain the name
& Severn & Newth were asked to
print our issue of Irish Freedom &
volunteered to do so. They were then
threatened with legal proceedings &
would not proceed unless we lodged
£100-0-0 with their solicitors. I
had about £20 in the bank & Clarke
who kept the I.R.B. money in his
personal account found he could not

just then sign a cheque for £80-0-0
 without using some of the J.R.B. part
 of the account. He was afraid to issue
 the cheque lest he might be called upon
 any minute to produce the total
 J.R.B. funds. After some discussion
 we agreed to risk it & I went for my
 cheque book. When I returned Tom
 had changed his mind & I begged him
 to give me the money & I would go
 ahead alone & that I was cabling
 to Joe McGarity of Philadelphia
 to cable me £100. If necessary I
 said I would go to Tyrone & get it
 from my brother. When I said I would
 go ahead alone Tom said "that
 hurts fat" & lifted the key of his
 shop from a nail & came out & got
 the £80-0-0 which with my £20
 made the hundred which we

deposited with the collector. On the way back I stopped at the G.P.O. & cabled Mr. Garity for £100 which I received next day. The result was two issues of Irish Freedom were published. On our issue my name for the first time was published as Editor.

In that issue I asked for those against Loyal addresses against the King of England to communicate with me with the object of forming a Committee. I forget how many letters I received but countless Markievicz, The O'Rahilly & I canvassed the members of the Corporation & Townships in O'Rahilly's motor car which were not common at the time. Countess Markievicz, Helen Maloney, & I went to Waterford and addressed a

a large meeting there. Major MacBride
canvassed personally several members
of the Corporation of Dublin. The result
was there was no loyal address
from the Corporation of Dublin.
I forget what happened elsewhere.

A streamer was put across
the street at the foot of Grafton St
on two poles a day or two before
the Royal visit. On the streamer
was: - "Thou art not conquered
yet, dear Land." The streamer was
taken down by the police. To his
work night & day round these days
Sean McDermott's attack of infantile
paralysis was attributed by us. Ever
after he had to use a stick.

My breach of discipline was raised
at the next meeting of my circle & I
indirectly said it was strange that

a member who had mispent some of the Organisation's money, was immune while I was to be censured for opposing a loyal address to the King of England. By the way I learned later that a great part of the money was spent on my ^{in 1908} election to the Dublin Corporation. Even if it had been otherwise it would have been a small thing for the man who gave his young life & boundless energy to the movement. He had used his position as a member of the Corporation to preach real nationalism & at the time seemed a voice in the wilderness.

It was assumed I got my information from Tom Clarke who was a member of the Supreme Council & he had sworn to divulge nothing regarding that body to anyone not initiated to the knowledge & that was confined to members of the Council

I was a member of the rank cycle. I was therefore summoned to appear before the Supreme Council & asked where I got my information & replied from Joe McManis who was a member of the Executive of the plan na sail. Allen, O'Sullivan, and some others resigned & with Tom Clarke they gave me for control of both the paper & the organization. A short time afterwards Paddy Pearse was taken into the organization though previously we had been told he was more useful outside even though he accepted our tenets. From this until suppressed Irish Freedom was financed from I.R.B. funds

For my resolution at Debunda meeting I had letters of congratulation & among these was one from Paris from Mrs Maude Bonne MacBride who with Edward Martin & Seamus MacManus had done something similar during a meeting of the under the auspices of the Irish Party.



Eire

Telefón 61018.

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21).

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21	15 Samhain, 1947.
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21	
NO. W.S. 100	

A Chara,

I am desired by the Director to enclose copy of a statement on the "I.R.B." which the Bureau has received from Mr. Bulmer Hobson.

Mr. Hobson is concerned that nothing should go on record except what is in accordance with the facts, and for that reason it is his wish that the enclosed copy of his statement should be sent to you for your observations.

The Director would be glad to hear from you at your convenience.

You will appreciate that this document is confidential and that this applies to all statements and other documents given to the Bureau.

Mise, le meas,

M. Newman
RÚNAÍ.

Dr. Patrick MacCartan,
Newtownmountkennedy,
Co. Wicklow.

THE I. R. B.

After the failure of Fenianism the I. R. B. were re-organised in 1873, and I hold a typescript copy of the constitution of that body as adopted in that year. It is copied from a print in the possession of P. S. O'Hegarty. I have given a copy, certified by me as correct, to Mr. M. McDunphy, Director of the Bureau of Military History 1913-1921.

As far as I am aware, that constitution remained virtually unchanged until 1917, when, I understand, it was revised. I have never seen, however, a copy of the revised constitution of 1917, if, in fact there was any such revision.

I do not think there were more than a dozen copies of the constitution in existence at any one time, and copies were only in the possession of officers of the Supreme Council or occasionally an organiser appointed by them. When copies were worn out or disappeared there was a fresh printing from time to time and the copy which I most frequently saw and of which I subsequently made a typewritten copy was, I understand from P. S. O'Hegarty, printed about 1910 in Glasgow, at the instance of John Mulholland, who at that time was chairman of the Supreme Council.

Although the numbers of the copies of the constitution were so restricted, members were entitled, on request, to have the constitution read at their Circle meetings, and in practice this took place fairly frequently. The members were thus familiar with the constitution.

It should be noted that the constitution specifically forbade an insurrection such as had taken place in 1867 when there was no ^{public} possible support, no adequate organisation and no

chance of success. In swearing in men into the I.R.B. I was often asked if there was any assurance that their oath of obedience would not land them into a futile insurrection, and I frequently had to assure men that the constitution specifically forbade such a development.

I joined the I.R.B. in Belfast in 1904 as an ordinary member. I was introduced by Denis McCullough and sworn in by the then Belfast Centre, Patrick Dempsey.

At this time, 1904, the I.R.B. in Belfast consisted mainly of older men and it was quite inactive. McCullough and myself tried to infuse new life into it by recruiting young members, and in this we were fairly successful.

About 1908-1909 Denis McCullough became Ulster Centre in succession to Neil John O'Boyle of Randalstown, Co. Antrim, who had held that post for years, probably back to 1873, and became ex-officio Ulster representative on the Supreme Council.

In 1908 I came to Dublin, went back to Belfast in 1909, and back again to Dublin in 1910, where I was transferred to the Teeling Circle of the I.R.B., the Centre of which was Michael Cowley.

In 1911 I succeeded Michael Cowley as Centre of the Teeling Circle, and when I attended the Dublin Centres Board ^{shortly after} ~~the same week~~ was elected Chairman ~~as Dublin Centre~~. ^{thus} I became a member of the Leinster Council, and at my first meeting was elected Chairman of that body and ex-officio member of the Supreme Council.

This followed the disappearance of Allen and O'Hanlon from the I.R.B. to which I refer in another part of this statement.

The membership of the whole I.R.B. at this time, 1911, was, I think, about 600-700 in Dublin and about 300-400 elsewhere, the total being probably about 1,000 and certainly not more than 1,

The Teeling Circle, of which I was a member and subsequently Centre, was very active and had among its members many who were very active in the Gaelic League:

Micheál Ó Foghludha,
 Diarmuid O'Hegarty,
 Fionán Lynch,
 Micheál Ó Loingsigh (now dead),
 Patrick McCartan,
 Seumas Deaken (later co-opted member of the
 Supreme Council).

Deaken resigned from the Supreme Council and from the I.R.B. about August, 1914.

A Circle went on recruiting and the practice generally was that when it exceeded fifty members it was divided, and a new Circle started.

The method of recruiting was as follows. When a member became acquainted with someone who was likely to prove a good member he was not at liberty to approach him until he had obtained permission. He proposed the name at his Circle meeting. The names proposed were taken by the Secretary of the Circle to a meeting at which all the Secretaries of other Circles attended. The Secretaries exchanged the names and came back and read the list of men proposed in all the other Circles at their next Circle meeting so that every name proposed was open to comment in every Circle meeting, and any opposition which was not frivolous was sufficient to prevent the matter being proceeded with in any particular case. Only after a prospective candidate's name had survived this scrutiny, was permission given to the man who originally proposed him to speak to him on the subject. This made recruiting slow, but it also made it virtually certain that undesirable people did not gain admission into the I.R.B., and it ensured that the police had not the remotest chance of getting people introduced into the organisation. We never had any worry about police spies which in any case were always more important in Irish fiction than in Irish political organisations.

After the co-optation of the Redmonite nominees on the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers in June 1914, and owing to the violent hostility expressed by some members of the Supreme Council, particularly Clarke and McDermott, regarding my action in connection with that development, I resigned my office as Leinster Centre and, of course, as a member of the Supreme Council, but retained the position of Dublin Centre.

I insisted on my resignation as Leinster Centre in spite of the protest of all the County Centres who had elected me, and any statements that I was at any time deprived of office by the Supreme Council or anybody else are not true.

I retained the chairmanship of the Dublin Centres Board until after the insurrection in 1916.

In 1911 the I.R.B. in Dublin was practically controlled by three members of the Supreme Council - Jack O'Hanlon, Fred Allen, who was Secretary of the Supreme Council, and P. T. Daly, and their influence almost stifled all activities. Other members of the Supreme Council were, P. S. O'Hegarty from London, South of England representative, and Denis McCullough from Ulster. John McBride was representative for Connaught, in which capacity he was later succeeded by Sean McDermott. Tom Clarke returned from America to Ireland in 1908, and was co-opted a member of the Supreme Council some time after. He always demanded a more active policy and supported the younger men.

There were no representatives from the U.S.A. The Glan-na-Gael organisation, the American prototype of the I.R.B., was an entirely separate and independent body, although there was a close connection between the two - the Clan being a source of funds for the I.R.B. The association between the two bodies was indicated by the fact that a delegate from the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. attended the annual conventions of the Glan-na-Gael in America, but the latter body made it clear that the policy in Ireland was a matter for the men in Ireland.

Clan-na-Gael contributed about £1,000 a year to the I.R.B. and that with the subscriptions of the members constituted the whole income of the I.R.B.

Towards the end of 1910, in order to infuse new life into the Organisation, I proposed that the I.R.B. should publish a paper, but was opposed by Allen, O'Hanlon and other conservative leaders in the Organisation. *On my insisting, stating that if they would not start a paper I would start one myself, they gave way, however, they allowed me to go ahead;* the result was that in November, 1910, the first issue of "Irish Freedom", a monthly, appeared.

The paper was the property of the I.R.B. and was financed by a monthly subscription of one shilling collected from ^{each} members in each I.R.B. Circle. It was printed by Patrick Mahon, Yarnhall Street, Dublin.

Allen and O'Hanlon, while being forced to agree to the publication of the paper, would not agree to my acting as editor. They were, however, prepared to accept Patrick MacCartan, but as he at that time was doing his final year as a medical student, he had no time to undertake work of this sort. I arranged with MacCartan that he should take the nominal editorship, and that I should carry out the work.

Seán McDermott was manager of the paper until he became ill, but he never wrote anything for it.

P. S. O'Hegarty, who was then in London, contributed a great deal, and the work was shared between us.

"Irish Freedom" continued up to December, 1914, when it was suppressed with other national journals by the British Authorities.

I continued to edit it up to May, 1914, when I resigned owing to the hostile attitude of Clarke and McDermott, my fellow members on the Supreme Council, following the admission of

Mr. Redmond's nominees to the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers.

In 1911, on the occasion of a Royal visit to Ireland, I published in "Irish Freedom" an open letter to King George V in the hope that the authorities would suppress the paper and thereby give a fillip to national feeling. I did not succeed, however. All that happened was the prevention of display of the posters by newsagents under pressure by the police.

In 1912 "Irish Freedom" in an article written by P. S. O'Hegarty, welcomed the formation of the Ulster Volunteers by Sir Edward Carson, because P. S. O'Hegarty and I realised that if Carson succeeded in his organisation, it would soon be possible to establish a Volunteer movement for the rest of Ireland.

"Irish Freedom" represented the militant left wing of the Irish national movement, and advocated the independence of Ireland by every practicable means, including the use of physical force.

As already stated, the paper was financed by a subscription of one shilling per week collected from members of the I.R.B. Allen, who was Treasurer, and therefore in a key position on the Supreme Council got and kept control of this money, and delayed placing it at the disposal of the paper, of which he did not approve. The conflict was the recurring one between an older generation who wished to go slowly and quietly and the younger generation eager to get things done.

Finally, about the end of 1911, there was an open breach. Allen and O'Hanlon, and others who sided with them, got out a separate paper of the same name, so that for one issue there were two separate papers both entitled "Irish Freedom" for the month of December 1911. The original paper can be distinguished from the new one by the fact that it bore the imprint "Editor - P. MacCartan". The issue of a second paper brought

matters to a head. The Supreme Council met, and although I was not a member of it, I was present at their invitation. The result was that Allen and O'Hanlon resigned from the Supreme Council and from the Organisation.

Michael Cowley also resigned office and I succeeded him as Centre of the Teeling Circle.

Apart from myself and P. S. O'Hegarty, who between us, wrote all the editorials and a good many other articles, others who contributed from time to time were :-

Terence McSwiney, whose "Principles of Freedom" first appeared in "Irish Freedom",

Pádraig Pearse, Ernest Blythe, Pierce Beaslaf,

Pat Devlin, Fred Cogley, J. W. Good, Roger Casement,

and others whose names I do not recollect.

A selection of the articles which appeared in "Irish Freedom" were subsequently published in 1919 in a book entitled "The Voice of Freedom". It was promoted and financed by the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. and the material for it was selected by P. S. O'Hegarty and myself. It was sold for 1/- per copy.

Some years ago at the request of the National Library I wrote the names of the authors at the end of each article in their copy of the "Voice of Freedom".

(Signed) BULMER HOBSON.

17 October, 1947.

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY

BH
9/11/47

ADDENDUM

The re-organisation of the I. R. B. took place on St. Patrick's Day, 1873, at a meeting held in the Brazen Head Hotel, Bridge Street, Dublin. This old Dublin Posting House was, I believe, much used as a meeting place for United Irishmen in the last years of the eighteenth century. I have met a number of men who were present at the meeting in 1873 and I am giving my recollections of things they told me.

Members of the I. R. B. were free to leave the organisation at any time. Few did so, and they were mostly men who developed religious scruples after hearing the annual denunciation of secret societies in the pastorals of some Irish Bishops. We made no effort to retain such men and their resignations were encouraged rather than impeded. They were tendered an oath on resignation, which pledged them not to reveal anything which they had learned as members of the organisation.

(Signed) BULMER HOBSON

17 October, 1947.

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY

B. 9 ¹¹/₄₇

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRA MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 100