

ORIGINAL

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 285.....

Witness

Captain Eamon O'Connor,
Harbour Villa,
Dun Laoghaire,
Dublin.

Identity

Member of I.R.B. Liverpool 1902 - ;
President Sinn Fein Club Liverpool 1906 - ;

Subject

- (a) Propaganda in favour of Ireland 1906-1921;
- (b) Procuring and transferring of explosives to Ireland.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ...S.1044.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 285

STATEMENT BY CAPTAIN ÉAMON O'CONNOR,

Harbour Villa, Dún Laoghaire, Dublin.

I joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Liverpool in 1902. At that time there were about six circles in Liverpool. I was attached to a circle in the South end of the city of which a man named Pat Larkin was Centre. After Larkin's death I was transferred to a circle in Central Liverpool. The Centre of this circle was W. A. Geraghty. At that time Dan McCarthy (since deceased) was Centre for the North of England. He was succeeded by Pat Lively.

In July, 1906, I was present at an I.R.B. meeting in Liverpool. During the meeting the Centre informed me that they were starting a Sinn Féin Club the following Sunday in the South end of the city, and as I resided in that area I was to be President of the Club and hold control of it. The Club was started as arranged, and we carried on the usual propaganda. We advised the young men not to join the militant forces of England, and to buy goods of Irish manufacture. The Club purchased articles of Irish manufacture and sold them to the members and their friends. We also used the Club as a recruiting ground for the I.R.B.

In 1908 I went back to the sea and eventually took command of my first ship in February, 1914. In 1910 I was temporary third officer in the City of Dublin Steamship Company. I carried dispatches from the

Centre of the I.R.B. for the North of England -
Dan McCarthy - to the late Major McBride and Fred Allen.

In 1913 - I was then first officer of the S.S. "Faithful" - on a Wednesday we were about to sail, our first port of call being London, when Joe Gleeson, who at that time was the Centre of the I.R.B. for the North of England, came to me with a letter of introduction to P.S.O'Hegarty in London. On the following Monday we arrived at London. In the evening about 8.30 p.m. I called at the address which Joe had given me, and met two young men who at that time were working or running a paper called the "Irishman". I told them that I arrived from Liverpool that day and wanted to meet Mr.O'Hegarty. They were very polite and evasive and could not tell anything about him. After a few minutes talking I told them that I was first officer of the S.S. "Faithful" and would feel obliged if they came across Mr.O'Hegarty to tell him I would like to see him - I did not mention anything about the letter. I said "Good evening" and went for a long tramp around London.

I arrived back to the entrance of the dock where my vessel was lying and rung the bell, was waiting to be admitted when a young man passed by saying "Good night". He was one of the two I had met in the evening.

When next I met the Centre I told him that I did not contact Mr.O'Hegarty. Joe told me it was all-right. O'Hegarty had arrived in Liverpool on the Saturday after I left Liverpool. No wonder I was followed.

On several occasions we obtained explosives at the Lancashire Coal Mines and at Widness and brought them to Liverpool for transfer to Ireland. At the request of the I.R.B. I agreed to go in command of a gun-running ship from whatever part of the world a ship-load of arms could be procured. I "stood by" for three years, 1918 - 1921, waiting for the ship but it never materialised. After being in command of ships for seven and a half years, having helped in the work carried out in Liverpool, having procured arms and explosives, and my home open to men "on the run", I was arrested in 1921 and interned in Ballykinlar, and I was not released until 9th December of the same year.

SIGNED

Garron O'Connor

DATE

29th July 1949

WITNESS

Sean Brennan Comdt.

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