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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

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Witness

Miss Helena Molony,
226 North Circular Road,
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Identity

Honorary Secretary of
Inghini na hEireann 1907-1914.

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STATEMENT OF MISS HELENA MOLONY

226 North Circular Road, Dublin.

Membership of Inghínídhe na h-Éireann

Various activities of the Society

I joined Inghínídhe na hÉireann in 1903, three years after its foundation. It was my first active interest in Irish politics. The Inghínídhe had come into being in the year 1900, at the time of the last Royal visit of Queen Victoria. There are many of the foundation members still living, for instance the Misses Meagher, Mrs. Perolz Flanagan, Mrs. Ó Brolaháin, etc., who could tell of the circumstances which led up to its formation. It came into being as a counterblast to the orgy of flunkeyism which was displayed on that occasion, including the exploitation of the school children - to provide demonstrations of "loyalty" on behalf of the Irish natives. The leading spirit of anti-British activity was Miss Maud Gonne, who became the first President of Inghinidhe na hEireann. She had been much in the public eye for some years previously, owing to her work for evicted tenants, with the more active spirits of the Land League, and with the Amnesty movement, and in 1898, with the Nation-wide celebrations of the Rebellion of 1798, which in my opinion marked the starting point of the resurgence of real National idealism. So in 1900 she gathered around her some kindred spirits, and decided to have as a counterblast to the numerous children's parties (under the Union Jack) a monster Patriotic Children's Treat, which was a great success, and in which some 30,000 children took part.

The Inghínídhe grew out of that, and formed itself into a permanent Society, of Irishwomen pledged to fight for the complete separation of Ireland from England, and the re-establishment of her ancient culture. The means decided

upon for the achievement of this object was the formation of evening classes for children, for Irish Language, Irish History - Social as well as Political - the restoration of Irish customs to every-day life, Irish games, Dancing and Music. The chief work of the Society was the teaching of children's classes in the above subjects. The children were mostly recruited from the poorer quarters of the city, where, at that time, the British Army got its most valuable recruits. Our first headquarters was at 196 Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street). Afterwards we rented a whole house in North Great George's Street. Our President paid the rent for the first year, and we subsequently paid it by sub-letting rooms to various Societies, such as Gaelic League branches, etc. That extra house-room gave us more scope for our work with the children. We had more classes and oftener.

As well as the work of teaching children, the Inghinidhe were always active in opposing any expression of the loyal flunkeyism which was so rampant at that time - it was a sort of hang-over from the visit of Queen Victoria, when, in spite of all the efforts of our people who held National views, and who were then dubbed "Extremists" , Queen Victoria got an official "Address of Welcome, on behalf of the Citizens of Dublin" from the Corporation, many Parliamentary Nationalists voting for it. However, this disgrace was wiped out in 1903 when King Edward VII came, and no address was presented by the Corporation. This was in no small measure due to the very active canvassing by Inghinidhe of the Aldermen and Councillors, at their homes, their places of business, and by their attendance in force at the Corporation meetings where a Loyal Address was mooted. The senior members can give a better account of these activities than I can.

Another important work of the Inghinidhe was the continuous anti-recruiting campaign, which was carried on year

by year up to the first world war. Our President was always very keen that we should keep up this work, and was mainly responsible for the many leaflets we issued. They were in all cases addressed to Irish girls appealing to them not to consort with the armed and uniformed enemies of their country, telling them that we were at war with England, and that all our political and social ills were due to her occupation of our country.

It is difficult for people to-day to realise the atmosphere of our capital city in the early years of this century. The uniformed soldiery were not then the pampered darlings they are to-day. They were considered (even by the English) good enough to fight, but not fit to mix with civilians in peace time. In Dublin, for instance, they were confined to one side of O'Connell Street, i.e. G.P.O. side. No respectable person - man or woman - would dream of walking on that side of the street after twilight. But many thousands of innocent young country girls, up in Dublin, at domestic service mostly, were dazzled by these handsome and brilliant uniforms, with polite young men with English accents inside them - and dazzled often with disastrous results to themselves, but that is another side of the matter, and we were only concerned with the National political side. These young girls had not the faintest idea of the moral, social, or political implications of their association with the "red-coats".

Of course the publication and distribution of these bills was illegal, in fact any statement derogatory to the forces of the Crown was regarded seriously by the authorities. There may be some of these hand-bills in existence, but unfortunately I have not got any, as my dwelling was raided many dozens of times in the following years, and all my

belongings scattered from time to time. The danger of distributing these bills was not only from the Police, but from the troops themselves and their sympathisers. A group of us would set out about eight o'clock in the evening and start from the Rotunda Hospital, walking rapidly as far as the Bank of Ireland. We walked in two's, some twenty or thirty yards apart, and managed in that way to "paper" the whole promenade, before these young people had time to grasp the contents of their hand-bill. Sometimes the girls thought they were religious tracts, and would display some hostility. The soldiers, when they became aware of this campaign against them, were, of course, offensive and threatening. The leaflets had to be concealed in hand-bags or hand-muffs (which were then worn) and delivered surreptitiously. Any hesitation or delay would lead to a mobbing, and soldiers at that time had the habit of taking off their belts and attacking civilians with them if they thought there was any hostility to them. This was a very crowded thoroughfare at this time, but only by soldiers and their girl friends. Ordinary civilians did not walk on that side of the street. If they managed to locate any of us we would have got a rough passage, so naturally it was considered dangerous work for the Inghinidhe, and many of our friends disapproved, as it was not thought "becoming". At that time the military "Suffragette" movement had not been heard of and women and girls were still living in a semi-sheltered Victorianism. The hurly-burly of politics, particularly the kind which led to the risk of being involved in street rows, was certainly not thought "becoming". However, we managed to avoid any real unpleasantness. Only on one occasion did we come near it. Misses E. O'Farrell and Sighle Grenan and myself were spotted by police. We took to our heels, and were chased through Henry Street, Mary Street and right up to

the Markets in Capel Street. We got away clear, as we were young and swift, and the police were hampered by long heavy overcoats. On the whole we feared more the soldiers with their canes. We desired above all to avoid any fracas, and we succeeded. This campaign led to a prolonged newspaper controversy which showered us with abuse and called us all sorts of names, and we individually got a constant supply of anonymous letters of the foulest nature. It was not pleasant, but it did raise a volume of opinion and we had our defenders too.

But I anticipate my narrative. In August 1903, on the evening when I went to join the Inghinidhe at their offices in 196 Great Brunswick Street, I found a notice on the door, which read "All come up immediately to 26 Coulson Ave. Raid on the house. (Signed) Dudley Digges". I immediately repaired to that address. It is a little house in Rathgar, where Madame Maud Gonne lived at that time. George Russell was her next door neighbour. When I arrived in this quiet avenue, I saw a double line of police on the path outside and a similar one on the opposite side. The little front lawn was crowded with the Inghinidhe and many young men (who, I think, were spoiling for a fight). There was a large black flag flying from one of the front windows. The police were hesitant, it seemed they had no warrant, or at least they had no legal authority to remove the flag, or to enter private ground. At that time there was still great respect for the letter of the Law. However, the police just stood staring at the crowd and at each other, awaiting apparently "further instructions", but they did not enter the gate. Of course the authorities wished to avoid any publicity for disloyal demonstrations. The gate was opened for me, and I timidly entered. I had some trouble

explaining to one of the Misses Meagher that I wanted to join the Society. I was not known to any of them, and they were somewhat suspicious of a girl who wanted to join in the midst of this excitement. However, my enthusiasm was not to be damped, and I was told of days and hours of meetings, its work, rules, etc., so I felt I was received. After eleven o'clock that night I walked home on air, really believing that I was a member of the mystical Army of Ireland. I was at once given work to do, and plunged into it with the greatest enthusiasm.

Introduction to a Stage Career.

Miss Mary Quinn (afterwards Mrs. Dudley Digges) was Hon. Secretary. She introduced me to the "National Players Society" which was an outcrop of Frank Fay's group and the origin of the Abbey Theatre. The avowed object of the National Players was to give dramatic expression to National political propaganda, as distinct from the "Art for Art's sake" school. Their chief work of the year was the production of plays for the festival of Samhain. This lasted a week, and consisted of a series of concerts, at which the prize-winners of our children's classes, choirs, etc., performed, as well as the dramatic performances. In this year, 1903, a centenary play, "Robert Emmet" by Henry Connell Mangan, was produced by Dudley Digges, who took the lead. I was given my first small part in a reproduction of "Caitlín ni hUalicán" - that of Delia Cahill. It was a liberal education to act in a play, produced by Dudley Digges, and it was an entirely unexpected joy to me to be introduced to the stage and literary drama under such auspices.

The following year Dudley Digges and Miss Quinn and

several other members of the National Players went to San Francisco with a party of entertainers, and, alas, did not return to Ireland again except as visitors. On Miss Quinn's departure I was elected Hon. Secretary of Inghínídhe na hEireann, which post I held for upwards of seven years, when having gone to live outside Dublin, Miss Mary Perolz succeeded me in the Secretaryship. We carried on our work without interruption during all the years leading up to the war of 1914, till the foundation of Cumann na mBan.

Foundation of Bean na hÉireann

In the year 1907 we decided to start a woman's journal. I think that we Irishwomen, in common with the women of the rest of the civilized world, felt that the time had come when the point of view of women on the many aspects of Social and National life, had to be expressed definitely. But we had another reason for wishing to do this. Arthur Griffith had founded Sinn Féin, based on the entirely new idea of achieving freedom by passive resistance - a policy of extreme non-cooperation, and obstruction of foreign governments. It gradually captured the imagination of the country, and certainly overshadowed the old Physical Force party, as Sinn Féin was definitely and explicitly against physical force. Thousands of young Irishmen profoundly disagreed with this policy, or rather with the repudiation of any idea of physical force. Of course Inghínídhe na hÉireann emphatically disagreed. While we encouraged and carried out the Sinn Féin policy as far as supporting everything Irish - Language, Games, Manufactures, etc., - and sabotaging and obstructing British Government whenever opportunity offered, we could not see any virtue in

joining a mere Repeal Movement, for the original object of Sinn Féin was to restore the Irish Parliament of 1782. We considered that the ideals of Tone, Davis, Mitchell and Fintan Lalor were being pushed into the background. We thought that Sinn Féin was a movement to attract the "Moderate" Nationalists, and the Anglicised or more peace-loving section of our people.

The Social ideals of Sinn Féin did not appeal to us. They wished to see Irish society (as their official organ once expressed it) "a progressive and enlightened aristocracy, a prosperous middle-class, and a happy and contented working-class". It all sounded dull, and a little bit vulgar to us, and certainly a big come-down from the Gaelic Ireland of Maedhbh, Cuchullain, and the Red Branch Knights, which was the sort of society we wished to revive. Well, we did not quarrel, and Arthur Griffith made the unique and paradoxical achievement of compelling tens of thousands of people, who disagreed with his object, to carry out his policy with the greatest enthusiasm. All this made it imperative that we should have a paper to express our views. There was at that date no paper expressing the view of complete separation from England, or the achievement of National freedom by force of arms, if necessary, and of course no woman's paper at all, except the British "Home Chat" variety of sheet. We had no money, and our sympathisers had very little, so we could not finance it in the ordinary way, and the following plan was suggested to me by a friend (Bulmer Hobson). We circularised a number of people whom we knew to be favourable to an Irish Ireland, asking them to help in the publication of a Woman's National paper, by subscribing one shilling per month for six months, by which time we hoped to cover our printing bill by our

advertisements. The plan succeeded, and "Bean na hEireann" (as we called our little paper) lasted just three years, and paid all its debts. By that time there were other National journals published (notably "Irish Freedom", Editor Seán MacDermott, also a woman's paper "The Irish Citizen" published by the Irish Women's Franchise League") and the need for our paper was not so urgent and the strain of getting it out was too much in the midst of other activities. Its publication brought us many new friends, and brought many into the movement who had previously been outside it, at least outside the "extremist" end of it. One of these was Countess Markievicz, whose first bit of work for us was the design for the title page. Later when by request we reduced the size of the pages, Jack Morrow (the artist) adapted her drawing to the smaller space. No one except the printer and the Post Office got any money out of our paper. Our contributors themselves would have thought it fantastic to expect payment. I look back on the list of their names with pride. It includes P.H. Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, Arthur Griffith, Roger Casement, A.E., Susan Mitchell, James Stephens, Maedhbh Cavanagh, Eva Gore Booth, Countess Markievicz, Katherine Tynan, John Brennan and others of equal stature. At first, acting on the advice of Mrs. Dryhurst - a well known London Irishwoman and Journalist - we had an Editorial Committee. She helped with the first number. Afterwards this was not found satisfactory, and I was pitchforked into the Editorship, much against my will as I had no experience and no desire for such a responsible post. However, I carried on and the foregoing list of contributors makes me feel that I cannot have been quite a failure, as Editor. Looking over some old copies in after years, one cannot help thinking that it was an odd kind of woman's paper. It

was a mixture of guns and chiffon. The National position, and International politics was front page news. But we also had fashion notes (written in the interest of Irish manufactured fabrics), Gardening Notes, written by Countess Markievicz, and a Children's Corner, with a serial fairy story, anti-recruiting articles (some from Arthur Griffith) and good original poems from Pearse, J. Plunkett, MacDonagh, James Stephens, Maedhbh Cavanagh and Susan Mitchell. It was a funny hotch-potch of blood and thunder, high thinking, and home-made bread. We were the object of much good-natured chaff. Friendly newsagents would say "Bean na hEireann? that's the woman's paper that all the young men buy". It was well worth all our effort. It was through this little paper that Countess Markievicz came into the National movement. She had been for some years interested in the Irish literary movement, through George Russell and his circle, and she was deeply interested in the Agricultural Organisation and the work of Russell and Sir Horace Plunkett in that direction. She had discovered that Ireland was her country, and wished to work for it. She was entirely ignorant of Irish history, and (as she told me afterwards) had been looking around for some years for activity in which she could take part. She sought the advice of Arthur Griffith. He advised her to join the Gaelic League. She did so, but she felt the need of something more active, more revolutionary. Owing to her ignorance of Irish History, she had not the faintest idea of the atmosphere that surrounded the hated "Castle" and everyone connected with it. She was already a staunch Feminist, and she eagerly accepted our invitation to attend a Committee meeting dealing with the forthcoming publication of "Bean na hEireann". She came down one evening in an elaborate Court gown, having come direct from some Castle function, which she left early in order

to attend "this important Committee meeting". None of us knew her personally, and I had no idea that she belonged to "the Castle lot", or I might not have so light-heartedly sent her an invitation. At that time there was a good deal of social patronage being exercised by the Aberdeens, and their influence was much resented by Nationalists. Inghínidhe na hEireann did not like any of "the Castle set" coming into our affairs. They asked each other "what does this Countess want coming here? Coming to do a bit of Lady Aberdeen's propaganda, most likely". My reply was, "If we find her insincere, we can soon get rid of her". She got a very cool reception - almost cutting. The result was funny. She very soon told me, "You know I simply love your Inghínidhe meetings. It is the first place in Ireland that I entered where I am not kow-towed to as a Countess!" She found what she had been seeking for some years, a real revolutionary spirit.

Organisation of School Meals for Children.

As a matter of fact Inghínidhe na hEireann during those years were doing a good deal of active anti-British work. Our President, Madame Maud Gonne, was responsible for inspiring it, as well as constructive work, such as the Children's school meals movement which we started. Through unhappy private affairs, Madame Gonne MacBride had to spend most of her time in France, as her son would be likely to pass out of her care if she brought him to Ireland. She never lost touch with the work, weekly correspondence passed between her and the Society, and she paid lengthy visits two or three times a year. She was responsible for getting us to agitate for school meals. We started a double-sided work. Agitation to legalise payment for these meals by local bodies, such as the Dublin Corporation;

and giving practical demonstration of how to do this by starting ourselves giving school dinners. Thanks to our President's tireless energy and influence, we got help and co-operation from many quarters. In the National Schools in High Street and John's Lane (districts which sorely needed such an innovation) we got the sympathy and help of both Managers and Teachers. The cost of this was provided by Inghínídhe. We insisted from the first that a "School Meal" should be a proper dinner, consisting of meat and vegetables every day, except Fridays or fast days when rice (cooked in milk) and jam was served. The Ladies Committee who ran the Penny Dinners in Meath Street supplied the food (and excellent it always was) in large containers, delivered every school day at the schools. Volunteers from Inghínídhe served it out and did the washing up afterwards. The meal was good Irish stew made with meat and vegetables, or milk puddings and jam. The teachers in those schools were splendid. All idea of pauperism was kept out of the scheme, as every child who could pay paid their penny to the teachers (and sometimes it was only a halfpenny) but no one was allowed to know who paid and who did not. Those teachers took a great interest in their pupils and knew their family circumstances, insisted on payment where it was possible, and relaxed where necessary, but payments were not made publicly. It was amazing the amount we got in pennies and halfpennies from the children in that very poor district. It was necessary to take Parliamentary action to legalise payment from local rates for this purpose, and one of our members - Miss Helen Laird- and Mr. Con. Curran were mainly responsible for this part of the work. Of course people of all political parties were sympathetic to this work, and it was in a few years successfully accomplished. The fact that any School Manager or Local Authority in any place in Ireland can

supply children with a decent warm meal is entirely due in the first instance to the work of Inghínídhe na hEireann. It is a sad commentary on our feeling for children, that even now there are no proper refectories or cloak-rooms attached to National schools, particularly in rural areas where children often travel many miles in inclement weather to school, and are without food for many hours, except some bread - eaten in a cold wet yard.

Association with Anna Parnell.

During the winter months, we, in common with other National Societies, held weekly or fortnightly lectures on subjects of National or historic interest. One of the most notable of our lecturers was Miss Anna Parnell. I had heard that she was staying in Bray, and I wrote - as Secretary - to ask her to give us a lecture on her experiences with the Ladies' Land League. She consented, and came one cold rainy November evening although suffering from a bad attack of tonsilitis, of which disaster she informed me by two telegrams, and ordered a succession of blackcurrant drinks to be made ready. We were all terribly excited, and we had a very large audience, as the name of Parnell still had some magic although it had been in the shadow for nearly twenty years. She was a frail elderly figure of a woman. She had an intense quietness - an impassive steeliness about her that was almost repellent, but on the other hand queerly attractive. She spoke for three hours, but no one grew impatient, her story and method of telling it were so fascinating. Frank Sheehy Skeffington was present, and at question time asked her, "What is your opinion of the Kilmainham Treaty, Miss Parnell?" rather thinking he had put an awkward question to

her. She answered, looking at him coldly, "Oh, I just think my brother found himself in an uncomfortable position, and he did what men usually do - got out of it in the easiest possible way for himself, regardless of the consequences to others". Frank looked very blank. He afterwards said to me smiling, "I thought I was asking her a difficult question, but I confess she floored me". Of course he thought (as we all did) that she would defend the Kilmainham Treaty. As a matter of fact Miss Parnell had not much use for the Home Rule Party, nor indeed for the Land League as she knew it, for, as she shows in her "History of the Ladies' Land League" many of the branches throughout the country used the funds which were collected to fight landlordism - to pay their rents with costs! She was interested in the work of our Society, and I paid many visits to her at her rooms in Bray. She finally gave me the MSS. of the History, to have published if possible whenever opportunity offered. No publisher would take it at that time. It is a very well written work, and throws an interesting side-light on the working of the Land League, and the state of the country immediately preceding the Kilmainham Treaty, when it was hoped by Dublin Castle that the release of the political prisoners would quieten the country, which had become ungovernable. Unfortunately this manuscript was seized in one of the many raids to which my home was subjected, after the Rebellion, and I was never able to trace it. However, luckily it is not completely lost as it was published in William O'Brien"s paper in Cork some time in 1915-1916. It was published serially, with Mr. O'Brien's caustic rejoinders week by week, to Miss Parnell's strictures on the Land League and its working during the Land War. I am at present transcribing that work, so that it will again be available should an opportunity occur to publish it.

Arrest during demonstration of Protest against Royal Visit.

In 1911, a royal visit by King George and Queen Mary was thought desirable for the further pacification of Ireland. Inghinidhe na hEireann felt they would have to follow the precedent of 1903, and smash any proposal for an official Royal Address. We, in common with the whole extremist movement, got busy fanning up a wave of opposition to such a project. Counter demonstrations of protest were arranged, and many constitutional Nationalists and Parliamentarians were sympathetic to this opposition, on account of the continual shelving of Home Rule. We had a very large all-Party meeting in Smithfield, at which Mr. D.J. Nugent, M.P., spoke, as well as speakers from the Separatist ranks. The city was swathed in Union Jacks and Royal Standards - the Unionist element and Big Business being in possession of all the main thoroughfares then as now. Remembering the "regrettable" incidents of previous loyal occasions, when decorated premises were wholly or partially wrecked, we thought a repetition of this would have a wholesome effect on loyalist opinion. Somewhere on the road to Smithfield from the City, the streets were being repaired, and in neat heaps were conveniently sized broken stones. We thought it a splendid idea to collect quantities of these and distribute them amongst the more ardent of our young men sympathizers. This was duly done. At that time no well brought up girl would dream of throwing stones in public, for any purpose whatever. The Suffragettes had not yet gone into real action for their cause, and we all would have thought it undesirable - if we had paused to think at all. On the way back from that meeting, I was in a waggonette with some of the speakers, including Mrs. Wyse Power and Countess Markievicz. We passed through Parliament Street, Dame Street and Grafton

Street. To my amazement and deep disappointment not a stone was thrown, although hundreds of our followers from the meeting were walking behind. Some three or four stones remained in my hand-bag (which I never had any intention of using) but passing the corner of Grafton Street an illuminated screen displayed the portraits of King George and Queen Mary smug and benign, looking down on us. It, coupled with the absence of stone-throwing, was too much for me. I produced my stones and let fly, without any warning. The police tried to close in but Madame Markievicz seizing the reins, whipped up the horses, and we reached the top of Grafton Street - where we intended to disperse - in safety. As we descended from the brake a policeman emerged from the darkness and said, "Will I take her now, Sir?" to a nearby Inspector. I was brought to Store Street Police Station, with crowds following. At that time it was terribly humiliating, no one but rowdies went to the police stations. Mr. Cruise O'Brien accompanied our party, and after a fierce quarrel with the local police, got me out on bail. I was subsequently charged at the Police Courts with "Throwing stones, and disorderly conduct". Crowds of our young men of the I.R.B., who were all in sympathy with our aggressive action, attended the Court on the morning when I was tried, and there was a wild scene in the court, when I was sentenced to "40/- or a month". It is not my business to comment on the control of the I.R.B. at that date, either here or in America, but our anger and disgust were aroused, then and in the period immediately following, by the inactivity of our young men friends, whom we knew to be in sympathy with our anti-British demonstrations. On the actual day of the Royal entry to the City, the young men (of the Wolfe Tone Clubs) were ordered to make a pilgrimage to the grave of Wolfe Tone - twenty miles away - as a protest to the Royal reception! We regarded it as being too tame even for a

group of anti-loyal old maids, and even now as I write (an old woman of sixty-six years) I think it contemptible. I would like if I were able to record the name of the man or men who were responsible for curbing the patriotic ardour of the young men of my time. "John Brennan" (one of our members) wrote a lampoon on the incident, but out of kindness to our young men we did not give it wide publicity.

The 1913 Strike, Association with James Connolly, Citizen Army and Labour Organisation.

In 1913 Dublin was convulsed by the big strike, organised by Jim Larkin. All the sympathy of the Irish Ireland movement was with the strikers but not all of us were in sympathy with James Larkin, or his outlook, which was that of a British Socialist. He attacked the "Nationalist" outlook, which he dubbed "Capitalist". There was some foundation for this. The Irish working class were shamelessly underpaid. Unemployment was widespread. The dockers had to hang around the docks, waiting for work which mostly was not to be had. He dragged the unskilled workers up off their knees and did a great work, but between himself and James Connolly there was a bitter feud. It was only a battle of temperaments, and I was on the side of James Connolly, with whom I had been in correspondence from 1908 in America. He edited a little Irish paper called "The Harp" in America and we exchanged views, as a result of a letter to William O'Brien about the "Bean" asking "Who is this lady? Find out about her and let me know". William sent me the letter. Connolly came home to Ireland, and was absorbed into "the Irish Transport and General Workers Union" which James Larkin had founded. After the 1913 strike, which profoundedly affected the whole country owing to the new (to Ireland)

technique of "tainted goods", there was a sort of social and intellectual revolution. The Citizen Army was founded, and the Irish Volunteers came into being soon after.

I spent the whole of 1914 in France, and was - on the sudden outbreak of war in August 1914 - held there until December of that year. I still had a contract with the Abbey Theatre, but the political situation had a bigger attraction for me than a theatrical career. 1914-1915 were eventful years in Ireland, and the anti-enlistment movement provided plenty of work for us. The British propaganda regarding the attack by Germany on Belgium was exploited to the fullest degree, and "Catholic Belgium" was trotted out to us as an irrestible inducement to our young men to join the British forces.

About this time I joined the Abbey Theatre Company. A second Company was formed to carry on when the Abbey Company went for the first time to America. Captain John Connolly and myself were selected to "strengthen" the Company at home. This was due to a success we had both made as "the Finnegans" in Canon Hannay's play "Eleanor's Enterprise", which was produced at that time in the Gaiety Theatre. It was very stage-Irish when we got it first but I deleted a good deal of it and it made a great hit. We often played one scene of it as a concert item. This work, of course, absorbed my evenings, so I had to resign my secretaryship. While those years preceding the first World War are now regarded as quiet years, the Inghínídhe kept up its work of teaching, anti-enlisting, and anti-British propaganda. For instance, about this time a young Indian revolutionary, Madar Lal Dhingra, was captured and hanged for complicity in the assassination of a prominent Indian Police official. From the dock, when sentenced, he declared, "I am proud to lay down my life for my country".

We got printed immediately, and fly-posted through the City, posters stating "Ireland honours Madar Lal Dhingra, who was proud to lay down his life for his country". There was nothing insular about Inghínídhe's political outlook. We reproduced this poster in "Bean na hEireann", and it resulted in the loss of some advertisements and subscriptions.

About this time, Labour as an organised force was beginning to be felt. Jim Larkin had galvanised that most under of under-dogs - the unskilled labourer - into a consciousness of his rights and dignity. The Inghínídhe had always been conscious (thanks to the leadership of Maud Gonne) of the social implications of Irish Freedom, so I was naturally attracted to the Labour Movement, although I could not take any part in it owing to my professional work. But from the beginning "Bean na hEireann" had its column of Labour Notes.

When Connolly came back to Ireland he was, after a time, made organiser for the Irish Transport Workers Union in Belfast. About the Strike period he came to Dublin and when James Larkin at the conclusion of the Strike went to America Connolly took his place as General Secretary. James Connolly and Captain Jack White really made the Citizen Army into the National body that it subsequently became. The original idea was to form a workers' Defence Corps. They needed defence at that time against the brutality of the Dublin Police. But Connolly always had a wide National vision.

The Countess had taken a very active part in the Strike, and in the various activities of Liberty Hall, and with her flair for military organisation she naturally was absorbed into the Citizen Army and given high rank. Her knowledge of firearms was an invaluable asset, as the time

had not yet come when ex-British Army men were completely trusted, as they afterwards were when some splendid such men came over to our ranks. Connolly - staunch Feminist that he was - was more than anxious to welcome women into the ranks on equal terms with men, and to promote them to such rank and position as they were suited for.

As already stated, I had been in France until the end of 1914 (having been held up there owing to the sudden outbreak of war). I returned to Ireland just before Christmas, and resumed my work with the Abbey Theatre. James Connolly had performed a superhuman task in reforming and building up the broken ranks of the Irish Transport Union, and the handful of girl strikers which was all that was left of the Irish Women Workers Union (the latter having been formed in 1913, by James Larkin, out of a strike in Jacobs biscuit factory). The 1913 Strike was a complete rout. Ninety per cent. of the workers of Dublin were swamped in debt, and many had not a bed to lie on. The only thing left that was not smashed beyond repair was the workers' spirit, and lucky they were to have a man of Connolly's stature to lead them. The ideal of National as well as Social freedom, which he held up to them, gave them a spiritual uplift from the material disaster and defeat they had just suffered. A small co-operative store had been established in Liberty Hall by Miss Delia Larkin during the Strike. Miss Larkin had gone back to England when her brother went to America. There was a little shirt-making factory as well as the shop. It specialised in a workman's shirt, the "Red Hand", which retailed at 2/6d. The concern gave employment to 8-10 girls, none of whom could get employment as they were "marked men" on account of their strike activities. Eventually they all fought in the Rebellion, and, as far as I know, not one of them is a penny the better for her

part in either fight. They served their country without desire or hope of gain or reward. In such manner is the real aristocracy of a country born.

James Connolly asked me would I come down and help with the Co-op. and organise the girls as a unit of the Citizen Army, First Aid classes, etc. I gladly did so as it left me free to play at night in the Abbey Theatre. The Co-op. had been started as a Strike emergency measure, but Connolly thought it should be carried on permanently. The property known as Liberty Hall extended up Eden Quay. In one of those, No. 31, the Co-op. shop was carried on, with workrooms upstairs. At the back of this shop there was a well equipped printing office, where the "Workers' Republic" was printed and published. By the way, I am proud to recall that I was (at Mr. Connolly's request) the registered proprietor of that journal. At the back of the printing works there was a way into the Liberty Hall premises, and other exits into Old Abbey Street. The whole building was admirably suited for secrecy, rapid movement or defence. Connolly could move at ease into the public offices of the Hall. In a little office at the back of the shop, and leading to the printing works Connolly, after hours, could be free of Union business, but available for private visitors. As Secretary to the Co-op. I was always on hand to identify such callers. Pearse called many times, also Joe Plunkett and Tom MacDonagh. These men were all intimate friends of mine, so it seemed quite natural for me to encourage them to buy socks and ties from us. Eamon Ceannt came once, but I do not remember seeing Tom Clarke. Of course Tom Clarke was easily available at his own place of business.

The "Workers' Republic's" criticism of the Irish Volunteers.

For at least six months before the Rising there was a great feeling of tension. At every hour of the day we half expected a raid for arrests of individuals, or for seizure of the paper "The Workers' Republic". As I said, I was the registered proprietor of that paper, and occasionally wrote for it, but the practical activities of those days left little time for writing except it was really necessary. James Connolly edited and almost wrote the whole paper. It was eagerly waited for each week. It was rightly regarded as the real voice of the "extremist" side of the Volunteer movement. The official organ of the Irish Volunteers, "The Irish Volunteer" - edited by John MacNeill and controlled by Bulmer Hobson - had taken on a curious and intangible tone of caution. We were to be cautious, we must not play the enemy's game, we must have no more forlorn hopes, "our children's children would vindicate Ireland's right to freedom", etc., etc. This provoked a storm of angry sarcasm, at least from us women. Our unfortunate young men friends were greeted with, "Hello, here come the leaders of posterity, how were they when you saw them last?", or, "Are your children's children punctual at their drill?" Mary Perolz dubbed them the "fan go fóills", which name became general. Of course all this badinage only intensified the impatience of the young Volunteers who meant business. We in the Citizen Army felt very proud and confident in our leadership. We, in common with the Volunteers, had orders to resist any arrest or disarmament and to resist with force any raid on our premises. We knew that in our case there would be no backing down on the part of our leaders, but we were not so sure about the leadership of the Volunteers. Judging by this half expressed caution of some of their leaders (those

in the highest position) we thought they would let the great opportunity of the World War pass, and would fade out, like their great prototype of 1782, of whom, I think, Dr. Drennan wrote:-

"How died the Volunteers
They mustered and paraded
Until their laurels faded
Thus died the Volunteers".

My own political experience told me that the Irish Volunteers were dominated by the I.R.B. I remembered being told that the loyal Address to Queen Victoria had been connived at by some of their more fire-eating members. I had had experience in 1911 of the desires of our young men being thwarted and their plans scuttled, and under a contemptible discipline being sent off on an excursion when a foreign monarch entered the City to receive the homage of the mongrel Irish of that date. I feared the same thing might be repeated with the Irish Volunteers. I knew that only a year previously John Redmond had sprung a claim for complete control of the Volunteers, by a demand to flood the Executive Committee by twenty-five nominees of the Parliamentary Party. To everybody's amazement, Bulmer Hobson had voted with Redmond in this, and yet after the split he had remained with the Irish Volunteers, and was their General Secretary. He was a representative of the I.R.B. Otherwise, of course, this would not have been possible. There was a good deal of silent anger among the Volunteers at this "go slow" atmosphere. Their discipline, loyalty and trust in their leaders kept them silent, but these young men knew what they had enrolled for, and one hundred per cent. of them were resolved to "strike a blow" and live up to their maxim - "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity".

Disappearance of James Connolly.

All this time while we were waiting for something to happen the atmosphere was like a simmering pot.

An event that created considerable excitement and consternation among his friends was the disappearance of Connolly in January, 1916. We thought he had been arrested and William O'Brien was in a terrible state. He got a car and for three days he, Madame Markievicz and myself went around the country to various places where Connolly had been seen last. I remember going to Chapelizod or Lucan and discreetly asking questions. Somebody told us he said he was going out there. I thought we might come across him in some cottage, or find someone who had met him. Bill O'Brien might have a better memory. He got an address from someone in the Union and we went there. We were very uneasy when we could not find him. We thought that the police authorities had arrested him and that they would not hold him, but that he would be found drowned in a drain or something. It was well known that he was the spearhead of the National movement. He was a man of character and brains - not a blatherskite like Larkin who was all froth. If he had to go out fighting alone, he would have done so. Therefore Connolly was recognised as a danger by the enemy authorities who knew what he wanted. That is why we thought "he will be put quietly out of the way". We never thought it was the Volunteers.

I think what transpired was that the Volunteer leaders wanted to talk seriously to Connolly, to get him to stop his propaganda in the "Workers' Republic". Of course Connolly never would; he would rather die. He would never have stopped unless they convinced him - as I think they did - that they were not "Fan go fóills" and that they did not share the ideas held by Bulmer Hobson, who, I think,

exercised a great influence over Eoin McNeill. Bulmer was a very convincing man, a spellbinder, and I think that had a bearing on all the countermanding orders. Tom Clarke and Seán McDermott, who were men of character and great patriotism, probably convinced Connolly that they were not "Fan go fóills" and that they did mean business. (I remember frequently discussing with Connolly the "go slow" policy of the Volunteer Executive, of which Eoin McNeill was Chairman, as well as being a man of influence. Their paper was full of it). They must have satisfied him that they were going to have a rebellion. At that time the temper of the Citizen Army and of certain Volunteers was such that you could not hold them back.

At the time of Connolly's disappearance, I was staying in Madame Markievicz' - Surrey House. One evening I went into the kitchen and there was Connolly. The Fianna boys were all round the house as scouts. When they went to bed Madame said, "Where have you been, in the name of Heaven?" He smiled and said, "I have been through hell!" "But what happened?" said we. "I don't like to talk about it. I have been through hell, but I have converted my enemies". We did not pursue the conversation, as he did not seem to want to. Madame and I collogued together about it afterwards. We got some good information that it might have been the Volunteers who had taken him. Probably he was bound to secrecy by Pearse, Joe Plunkett, Tom Clarke and those. They knew they could trust each other. The attacks on the Volunteers in the "Irish Republic" ceased immediately, because Connolly knew they meant business. He was not the type of man to upset their plans.

We never discovered where he was taken to, but Bill O'Brien might know, he might have got something out of him. Mrs. Ceannt and Seán Lester wrote letters to the papers

about it and I wrote a reply, a copy of which I am handing in to the Bureau.

The motive for arresting and detaining Connolly was probably that the Volunteer leaders wanted to get to grips with him, recognising him as a sincere man and fearing that he might take some action on his own and upset their plans. The articles in his paper were alarming them, and Connolly and the Citizen Army needed some convincing proof of the sincerity of the Volunteers.

I have no knowledge as to whether Connolly went voluntarily or was taken forcibly by the Volunteers, but I have no reason to doubt that if he was convinced they wanted a serious talk with him he would go.

Following on that and my more or less intimate conversations with him I tried to get from Connolly a hint as to the date when we were going "out". His answer was, "I can't tell you that but it won't be long".

Police Raid on the "Workers' Republic".

In the early months of 1916 there was a raid on the "Workers' Republic". The police came into the shop to seize the paper. Jinny Shanahan and I were there. I always carried a revolver. (About 1910 shortly after the Fianna started, Madame had taught me to shoot, and it was the Fianna taught the Volunteers to shoot). Connolly happened to be in the little office between the shop and the printing place. Jinny went in to him while I held up the revolver and said to the police, "You can't seize the paper". Then Connolly came out and drew his revolver. The officer said, "We have come to seize the paper". Connolly said

"You can't". "But I have my orders", said the officer. "You drop that", said Connolly, "or I'll drop you". If the officer had persisted Connolly would have fired and I would have fired on the other man. However, they walked out saying they would report back. But they did not come again and we carried on the paper, which came out the following week as usual.

I imagine the authorities did not want the publicity that would result from armed resistance, as there was a lot of recruiting going on for the war, and they did not want to show to the world that these people were "disloyal".

Connolly's Military Tactics.

The intensive training continued. Connolly's military tactics were unique. There was a certain amount of bluff in them. There was a huge blackboard outside the door of Liberty Hall, and each Saturday there were flamboyant notices on it, such as, "Citizen Army, Attack on Howth tomorrow. Such and such a Company to assemble here. Arms to be carried". I remember saying to him, "Why put up a thing like that and bring the police on us?" He said, "You know the story of 'Wolf! Wolf!", so naturally I saw the wisdom of it. Each week there would be something worse than the last on the board. "Dublin Castle to be attacked at midnight" - this notice was put up several times. We often had midnight marches. Therefore it became a commonplace to hear that the Citizen Army was showing off. Another time we would see the notice: "Assemble at 11.30 p.m. to encircle the village of Chapelizod. Cavalry not to turn out". "Encirclement of Howth". "Killiney to be advanced on from the West". All that was part of the "Wolf Wolf" plan.

When Easter Monday came, there was bound to be whispering, "We are having a rebellion". The comment was "We are having it every week for the past six months".

Mission to England before the Rising.

About February, 1916, I was sent over to England. That was the only mission I was sent on, either abroad or at home. I was sent by Seán McDermott to arrange the return of Ernest Blythe who was in open arrest in Abingdon, England. I did not see him on the morning I arrived there. When Blythe went to report to the police that morning, he was kept by them. I was rather glad it was the morning I arrived there and not the following morning that this happened. I would have been afraid that his arrest might have been due to some indiscretion on my part. I never saw Blythe at all on that occasion.

That must have been the time I brought home a number of guns in a suitcase. The man who gave them to me was a London-Irishman, Dermot O'Leary, who afterwards married Philomena Plunkett. I knew the ropes in London then and I stayed in theatrical lodgings, which I had been in before as a member of the Abbey troop, so I was away from the Irish set and quite safe. On the morning I was going to Euston to come home, a nice young lad - an Army recruit - carried my suitcase filled with revolvers and gun parts to the boat train. The perfect gentleman! There was no question of any "G" men spotting it, and in that way I was a safe person for delivering the arms.

About March 1916 Connolly gave me a hint of the date of the Rising. He said: "If you were arrested now and got the same sentence as you got before, maybe you would be out in

time to take part in the rebellion". I said, "I got a month's sentence". The next time we were discussing it I said to him, "Do you mean to say it will be a month before we are out. You will have the police and soldiers on us before it happens and it will be all over without firing a shot". He said, "Maybe that won't happen" - a tacit admission that he knew the date but could not tell us.

Preparations for the Rising in Liberty Hall.

The activity in Liberty Hall increased. Every Saturday and Sunday the men would be there all day. Dinner would be served for them. The Citizen Army was a very unmilitary looking body of men; very free and easy from a military point of view. Those who could not go home would have their meals there. They had two big halls where they stacked their arms. Some of them kept their arms at home. There were guards at Liberty Hall all the time, as a precaution against any attempt at a seizure of arms. We always expected a massed raid by the British authorities, and I never could understand why it did not come off. There was a general order issued that no man was to be arrested with his arms and that any raid on the Hall was to be resisted. Therefore the men did not come and go to the Hall carrying arms.

For a fortnight before the Rising the activity was such that I felt there was something definitely coming. At one o'clock on Saturday the Citizen Army would begin to crowd in. The men would pay their subscriptions to the Unions and congregate around the Hall. The Trade Union activities would be proceeding in the lower hall, which was used as cellars and was always crowded.

Those manoeuvres to "take Chapelizod", etc., were all

dead serious. The girls would bring first-aid outfits and the men would have rations, so that bandage-making and similar activities were practised as a matter of routine. For the last fortnight before Easter, Jinny Shanahan and I were actually sleeping at night on a pile of men's coats in the back of the shop. I had all my clothes there, including my spare underclothing, with the result that when I was arrested on Easter Monday night at the City Hall I had not a thing to change into, and had to borrow from Nell Ryan and Dr. Lynn who were in prison too.

I did not get any definite instructions more than usual in Holy Week, 1916. The Rising might take place any day as far as I was concerned. Our little group of women were on the alert practically the whole time. There were eight girls in the work-room over the shop. Jinny Shanahan and two others around the shop. Rosie Hackett travelled for collections and I was checking up accounts, etc. There would be no need to tell us to be there.

One of our best women members was a young widow, Mrs. Shannon. She was the mother of two young children, whom she had to support, and did not normally go on route marches or other displays, but actively took part in every other activity of the Citizen Army. It was she who made the tri-colours for the various positions, and was always available for every kind of service - carrying arms or ammunition, storing such in her home, or doing any other dangerous duty she was called on to perform. She was not, technically speaking, a member of the Irish Citizen Army, but certainly was as valuable to that body as their most active members.

I do not know whether Pearse and the other leaders came into the shop that week. They might have been there

for a meeting. They never went into Liberty Hall, but into the shop and through the back of it.

Dinny McCullough and Agnes Ryan, afterwards his wife, came into the shop one day during Holy Week. I think it might have been towards the end of the week, Holy Thursday or Good Friday, my memory is not too keen. I had not seen him for years. They did not come on business and they discussed nothing with me except the times in general, as I could not boast that I was in the centre of things or could get any secret information.

On Holy Thursday or Good Friday I think, Marie Perolz went on a message but I do not know where she was sent. Nothing unusual happened on those days except that large quantities of provisions were ordered in to make rations for the men - meat, bread, butter, tea and sugar.

About 6.30 or 7 on Holy Saturday evening, while the shop was still open, I went out for half an hour to give a letter to Ella Young. I knew I was going to fight the next day and I wanted to hand it to her, so that I must have then known the Rising was to be on Easter Sunday. I should think I knew it a week beforehand, although I cannot now say how I knew it. I do not remember being told definitely. I intended to race to where Ella Young lived, and leave the letter, not telling her anything about the coming fight. I was closely associated with her and she was very much with us but was more of an artist.

When I returned to the shop Connolly was there and I never before saw him so angry as he was. I think he thought I was gone for the evening. I did not tell him where I had gone; I was so hurt that he should think I might desert the place on that Saturday evening.

The Countermanding Order.

What happened on Easter Sunday overshadowed everything else. At last we had definite knowledge. If there was talk I either did not hear it or pay attention to it. My mind was preoccupied with the one thought, "I can't believe this will really happen. I know we can depend on the Citizen Army, but what about the rest?".

I saw Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order in the paper and heard the discussion in Liberty Hall. Connolly was there. They were all heartbroken, and when they were not crying they were cursing. I kept thinking, "Does this mean that we are not going out?" There were thousands like us. It was foolish of MacNeill and those to think they could call it off. They could not. Many of us thought we would go out single-handed, if necessary.

That Easter Sunday was a day of confusion, excitement and disappointment in Liberty Hall. I stayed there all day and all night. There was a lot of work to be done preparing food upstairs for the men who came from different parts of the city and had brought no rations. As a result of the calling-off of the fight, there was plenty of food. Large joints were cooked and all the Coöperative girls were busy cutting up bread, butter and cooked meat. They were killed working. One of them that I remember was Brigid Davis. Dr. Lynn went home, but Jinny Shanahan and I slept again on the overcoats in the room behind the shop.

The Rising on Easter Monday.

On Easter Monday morning twelve o'clock was the hour for mobilisation. The women had no uniform, in the ordinary sense - nor the men either. Some of the men had green coats. They wore an ordinary slouch hat, like the Boer hat.

and mostly a belt. They insisted that they were citizen soldiers, not military soldiers - at the same time regimented and disciplined. I had an Irish tweed costume, with a Sam Browne. I had my own revolver and ammunition. At the last minute, when we were going off at twelve o'clock, Connolly gave out revolvers to our girls, saying: "Don't use them except in the last resort". There were nine girls in our party, going to the Castle. We were instructed to go to Dublin Castle, under Captain Seán Connolly. We were to attack the Castle. It was a very wise move. It was expected that the psychological effect of attacking Dublin Castle, the citadel of foreign rule for seven hundred years, would be considerable when the news spread through the country. By the way, it was at the Castle that the first shot was fired.

I did not know beforehand what was to take place. I did not know to which place I was going. I remember being rather surprised at not going to the G.P.O. with James Connolly. Winnie Carney acted as his secretary all through. She was a good shorthand-typist. I remember I wondered at his saying to me: "You go with Seán". As I said already, Seán was an old friend of mine, and acted in the Abbey Theatre along with me. He was a very good actor. He was a Citizen Army Captain - and Dr. Lynn's Captain too. She came with us on Easter Monday to Dublin Castle and the City Hall.

On Easter Monday we advanced up Dame Street towards Dublin Castle. I could not say how many there were altogether. We went out in detachments. Seán Connolly and, I think, about twenty men perhaps, walked up Dame Street; and I, walking at the head of my nine girls, was, I believe, perhaps two or three ranks behind Seán. We

simply followed the men. I can only remember the names of a few of the girls, the two Norgroves, Jinny Shanahan and, I think, Brigid Davis. Seán turned left and went towards the Castle Gate. I think there may have been other detachments behind us. I will check this up with some of the Citizen Army men. Some of the men drifted into Henry & James, Tailors, at the opposite corner of the City Hall. Others went to the "Evening Mail" premises. One party went to attack the front gate of the Castle. The orders were, I presume, to each Sergeant: "Take your men to the "Mail" office". "Take your men to Henry & James". Perhaps someone got orders to go to the City Hall.

Failure of attack on the Castle.

I, with my girls, followed Seán Connolly and his party. We went right up to the Castle Gate, up the narrow street. Just then, a police Sergeant came out and, seeing our determination, he thought it was a parade, and that it probably would be going up Ship Street. When Connolly went to go past him, the Sergeant put out his arm; and Connolly shot him dead. When the military guard saw that it was serious, he pulled the gates to. It may be an interesting point, in connection with the secrecy of the arrangements for the Rising, that it appeared that the men behind Connolly did not really know they were to go through. Connolly said: "Get in, get in" - as if they already did not know they were to go in. That guarded secrecy, not to let it look like anything other than the manoeuvres which were taking place for weeks before, may have been the reason; but certainly there was hesitation on the part of the followers. Seán Connolly shouted: "Get in, get in". On the flash, the gates were closed. The sentry went into his box, and began firing. I thought no one had succeeded in getting in.

It breaks my heart - and all our hearts - that we did not get in. We would have captured the Under Secretary, who was having lunch in the Castle. We went into the City Hall, and at once manned it. Probably, if all the men in the party at the Castle Gate had known they were really to get through the gate, they would have rushed. I would conclude from that, that they did not know what the action was to be. I would say that the men were not certain that they were not to pull up Ship Street. Connolly said, in an excited voice, "Get in, get in". He was excited because he had shot the policeman dead. We were all in excitement. When I saw Connolly draw his revolver, I drew my own. Across the road, there was a policeman with papers. He got away, thank God. I did not like to think of the policeman dead. I think there were a couple of soldiers killed later. I think the policeman at the gate was killed instantly, because they were quite close. The police did not think the Citizen Army were serious. Seán Connolly veered round his gun, and said, "Get into the City Hall".

Occupation of City Hall

We met with no opposition at the City Hall, because it was a Bank Holiday, and the place was empty. Some of the men must have broken in the door. I have no recollection of having any difficulty except walking in with the girls. There was not much delay. It is possible that Seán Connolly might have had a key, because he was a clerk in the City Hall. I cannot remember any smashing in of windows or doors. I remember we climbed over the railings; but I don't remember any difficulty at the doors. Of course, they might have had to do something about it before we arrived.

We took up various positions when we got in to the City

Hall. My idea was to find out where there was a kitchen, and where there was a suitable place for a hospital. There was a kitchen upstairs. The building is like a pepper castor set on Cork Hill. In the kitchen we discovered a large dish of fruit - oranges and apples. I said: "Nobody is to touch these, because there will be wounded probably". We got ready for the wounded. We "sat pretty" for a couple of hours. I and Jinny Shanahan went to the roof and talked to the men there. The firing had opened, and there was a return of fire from the Castle. It was very heavy for the first hour. There was one young British soldier killed in Ship Street. I could see him lying wounded. I remember saying to Jinny Shanahan: "I wonder should we do something for him?" Connolly said: "No. Some of his own lads will come". And they did.

At about half-past one, Connolly sent me over to the G.P.O. for reinforcements. When I was going out to the G.P.O., a man named Halpin said to me, nearly in tears: "Miss Molony, give that note - it is a note for the ould mott" - his wife. I gave the note to some of the men in the G.P.O. But Halpin was as brave as a lion. He did not surrender.

On my way to the G.P.O., I met Sheehy Skeffington in Dame Street, looking very white and dispirited. His job was to mobilise a police force, and stop the looting. When I met him, he was really looking distressed. He was standing in the midst of the bullets, as if they were raindrops. He was a fighting pacifist. He believed one had to suffer for peace - not to inflict peace, but to suffer for it.

I had no difficulty in getting in to the G.P.O. There was great excitement there. At the G.P.O. I simply gave

the request of Seán Connolly for reinforcements. I saw James Connolly himself. He said: "We will send them as soon as we can".

I went back again to the City Hall. Soon after that, at two o'clock, Seán Connolly, who was on the roof, was hit by a stray bullet and killed. Dr. Lynn was still there. She came up and attended him. She said: "I'm afraid he is gone." He was bleeding very much from the stomach. I said the Act of Contrition into his ear. We had no priest. We were very distressed at Seán Connolly's death, I particularly, as I had known him for so long and acted with him. His young brother, Matt, who was only 15, was also on the roof and cried bitterly when he saw his brother dying.

Jack Reilly took over command. I did not know him very well. After Connolly's death, there was nothing to do, only sit. The men in the main positions fired desultory shots all day. They fired at anything they saw. I was busy with food. As things were fairly quiet, the men came up according as they wanted food. There was, apparently, no enemy in sight. We got the shots at odd times. I had noticed the one hitting Connolly fatally, and, foolishly, watched one taking a chip out of the chimney stack. I said to myself then: "I'd better not stand looking at the scenery". I remember that, because later that night a young officer asked me: "Were you on the roof any time during the day?" I said: "I was - once or twice". He said: "Yes. I thought I got you one time".

Towards evening, we saw a large company - probably a hundred men - going into the Castle. I believe they got troops in rapidly through Ship Street too. There was now a large garrison in the Castle. At about half-past eight or nine o'clock, when nightfall came, there was a sudden

bombardment. It came suddenly on us. On the roof level, on which were glass windows, and through the windows on the ground floor of the City Hall, there were machine gun bullets pouring in. From the ceiling the plaster began to fall. It was dangerous.

At that time we had one wounded boy. I think Coughlan was his name. He was wounded in the arm and was in great pain. He was only eighteen. We put him sitting in one of the porters' chairs, so that he was almost enveloped in it. This bombardment went on and on. By this time it was dark. I had gone upstairs on a couple of occasions to see that the girls were attending to the three or four wounded we had there - perhaps more. After I came downstairs for the fifth or sixth time, I found that Dr. Lynn had put a bandage on this lad's arm. We put his chair in to face the wall, so as to safeguard him from the falling ceiling. I remember saying to myself: "I would not mind being shot, but I would not like to be crushed". There were big cornices falling. We said to the wounded boy: "We are all here. It is allright".

Surrender and Arrest.

At this time, the firing was very intense. A window was smashed at the back, and then we knew they were pouring in - and they did come in at the back. A voice said: "Surrender, in the name of the King". At this point I felt a pluck on my arm, and our youngest girl, Annie Norgrove - there are three or four sisters of them - said to me: "Miss Molony, Miss Molony, we are not going to give in? Mr. Connolly said we were not to surrender". She was terrified, but there was no surrender about her. The call for surrender was repeated: "How many are here? Surrender".

There was no reply. I heard Dr. Lynn quite close, over near the window. She apparently was near them in the round circular hall. "Surrender", was called out again. Then we were taken. They produced lights. They did not know how many were opposing them. I and Dr. Lynn and Group 3 were on the ground floor; but there were men upstairs, men on the roof, and on the top storey. A large number of the British had poured in through this window.

Those of us who were on the ground floor were taken out, one by one, through the window, and we were brought into the Castle, through the Castle grounds, and into Ship Street Barracks, where we were put into a very old, dirty room.

After two or three hours, Jinny Shanahan was brought in with all the people who were in the kitchen and top floor. Perhaps the roof men were taken later. Apparently, as Jinny and the other girls told me, the troops poured up the stairs and came in to where the girls were. It would never occur to them, of course, that they were women soldiers. Actually, the women in the Citizen Army were not first-aiders, but did military work, except where it suited them to be first-aiders. Even before the Russian Army had women soldiers, the Citizen Army had them. The British officers thought these girls had been taken prisoner by the rebels. They asked them: "Did they do anything to you? Were they kind to you? How many are up here?" Jinny Shanahan - quick enough - answered: "No, they did not do anything to us. There are hundreds upstairs - big guns and everything". She invented such a story that they thought there was a garrison up on the roof, with the result that they did delay, and took precautions. It was not until the girls were brought out for safety and, apparently, when they were bringing down some of the men, that one of the lads said: "Hullo, Jinny, are you allright?" The officer looked at

her, angry at the way he was fooled by this girl. I think that is important, because that may have delayed them, by some hours, from getting to the men on the roof. It was very natural for the British officer to take her story, and to think there were hundreds of men along the roofs of the City Hall and Dame Street, as she told them. I would not blame him for being taken in, when she said: "There are hundreds of them with big guns". I thought that was something for which Napoleon would have decorated her.

Detention in various Prisons.

We were kept for eight days in the dirty room in Ship Street barracks. It was a disused room at the back of the building, on the west side. There were old bits of mattresses in it, used by the soldiers. They were covered with vermin; and before a day had passed we were all covered with vermin too. I did not get rid of lice until I went to Lewes Jail; and even the baths in Lewes Jail did no good. Dr. Lynn used put us through a de-lousing drill every day. She said it was necessary. Of course, all sorts of girls were put in this room - a couple of poor devils out of the streets too. It was a small room, with one window. Through the window, I was able to ask a girl to change a five-pound note for me. This window was in Ship Street, spanning a narrow area. One of our girls lived in Stephen Street, and her family came around to see her. They were able to camouflage themselves coming down. The soldiers were decent enough to us. The Dublin Fusiliers were there. They would bring us in a dish of fried bacon and bread. On Friday, we got nothing except hard biscuits and dry bread. We were glad when the sergeant said: "It is bad stuff, but that is what we are getting ourselves". We were delighted that they were cut off from supplies. They were

only getting bully beef. That caused us more joy than anything else.

After eight days, we were brought to the Richmond Barracks, and then to Kilmainham. We were not kept for long in the Richmond Barracks. It was just to sort us out. I think the men were there. We were put in a disused wing at Kilmainham. It was a condemned wing. That part of the building had not been used for generations. I think it was B. Wing. It was in Kilmainham the executions were carried out. I heard the shots every morning at dawn, and knew that that meant they were executing our men.

After some time, I was brought to Mountjoy. We were there quite a while. They carried on a general weeding-out process there. Some of the girls' families and men's families got them out. A number of women were released from Mountjoy, among them Kit Ryan.

Myself, Nell Ryan, Marie Perolz, Brighid Foley and Winnie Carney - five of us - were sent to Lewes Jail, England. We were there for a bit. Then there was another weeding-out, after questions had been asked in Parliament, and Brighid Foley and Marie Perolz were released.

Nell Ryan, Winnie Carney and myself were then sent to Aylesbury. While in Aylesbury Jail, I wrote an article, describing the conditions of some of the prisoners there, who were foreigners. It required great finesse to get it out. Mrs. Larry Ginnell succeeded in getting it out. This article was given to Sylvia Pankhurst. She published it, and said it was got through Mrs. Ginnell, which spoiled our plans altogether. Mrs. Ginnell was very indignant. The regulation of the prison was: the visitor sat in one part, and the wardress sat watching. I had the paper

paper hidden in one of the house-slippers which I was wearing. During our conversation, I held out my foot and showed it to Mrs. Ginnell. She leaned over from her corner and, while talking intimately, got it out of my shoe, without being seen by the wardress. Then Sylvia Pankhurst gave it this journalistic splash in the newspapers. We were in Aylesbury Jail until the general release - Christmas Eve, 1916 - when we came home.

Return to Ireland. Commemoration of the Rising at Easter, 1917.

After our release, our activities were more or less routine. For us, it was only a matter of taking up the gun again. That feeling, I should say, found its first expression at Easter, 1917. We decided to have a demonstration to commemorate the rebellion - "The Republic still lives. A Republic has been declared, has been fought for; and is still alive". We had a lot of discussions. There were concerts arranged, but what I was concerned with most was our decision to beflag all the positions that had been occupied in the 1916 Rising. We intended to run up the flags again in all these positions and to get out the proclamation, and proclaim it again, and to try to establish the position that the fight was not over and that the Republic still lives. That was very much left to the extremist group in Liberty Hall, who were indeed the women, including Jinny Shanahan and Winnie Carney.

We made the flags - three, measuring six feet by four and a half feet. There was a very nice sailor from Glasgow called Morran, who looked at the flagstaff in the G.P.O. and said: "We could get a flag on that. I will do it, and they won't get it off in a hurry". He did it, along with a

Fianna boy, Baby Murray, who is still living and is in the Detective service, I think. They actually got this big tricolour out on the large flagstaff, which was out in a horizontal position in the front of the G.P.O. This sailor managed to get it so far out, that it was out of anyone's reach, and there was no rope coming in. This was all done with deliberation, so that it would not be taken down quickly. So well was it done that the authorities did not get it down until six in the evening, and the very thing that we were playing for happened. They had a cordon of police - while some men climbed up to this flag and started to fiddle with it. Eventually, they had to saw the flagstaff; and they had to cordon off the people as the staff was falling. The place was crowded.

Madeleine French Mullen and I went to the College of Surgeons for the purpose of hanging out a flag there. Our difficulty was to carry the flag, without being noticed. Madeleine had a loose tweed coat on her, and, being rather slim, she wrapped it round and round her. I was rather slim too, but had no loose coat. As we were coming by Clarendon Street, Madeleine thought she felt the flag getting loose. I said: "Hold on. We will go into the Church" - Clarendon Street Church. We went in, and, with a few safety-pins, we made it secure. I think it was a false alarm anyway. As she was always rheumaticy, she had a stick, and was walking very slowly. I said: "Don't disturb it. You have only a few paces more to go" - Clarendon Street is only a short distance from the College of Surgeons. Someone, observing her outline, remarked: "God help her. Doesn't she look very bad". I said: "Madeleine, your reputation is gone forever". We decided we would call the flag "Madeleine Eimir". We could not get into the College of Surgeons. We went into a lady's flat in the house opposite, and put the flag out. She was one

of our sympathisers, but I forget her name now. We did not take the same precautions with that flag. If we succeeded in putting it out the window, and if it hung for an hour, we felt it would be all right.

Having decided to post up the proclamation, we got facsimiles of it made. We got that printed by Walker, the Tower Press man. I did all the ordering for that. When Walker was printing the proclamation, he was a bit short of type, and he came to me. As is well known, the proclamation of 1916 had been printed in Liberty Hall. In the subsequent destruction of Liberty Hall, the type had been all smashed up, and thrown about. Nobody had cleared it up. I said to Walker: "There may be some type in the corner here". He came down with his son; and he picked up a number of letters that he was short of. They were actually used in the 1917 proclamation. An interesting point about that is that when Mr. Bouch of the National Library - he is now dead - was afterwards giving a lecture on the document of 1916, he came to me, asking me to throw some light on a copy of the proclamation that, he said, looked like the one he had. He thought it might be a forgery. He produced magnifying glasses. What was it but a reproduction of the 1917 proclamation. He asked: "Why are some letters exactly the same, while others are totally different?" I said: "It is a reproduction". I explained how this miracle occurred - because I had supplied the letters from the heap to Walker. Mr. Bouch said that there are far more copies of the 1916 proclamation extant than the 1917 one. He said: "The copy is more valuable than the original. We have three copies of the 1917 proclamation and fifteen of the original".

We had the 1917 proclamation printed in two sizes. We made a special pot of paste for the smaller ones, which

we were putting on gateposts and pillars. We made flour paste with glue, and gave jam pots full of it to girls and boys to do fly posting in the streets. I remember one poster in Grafton Street stayed up for six or eight months. Paste, mixed with glue, dries like china. That is what we did in 1917. When I say "we" I mean a group of us - Cumann na mBan, the Plunkett girls and boys, well-known extremists. All the extremists gathered together for this.

These posters and printing were to be delivered to 31, Liberty Hall on Good Friday - not later - because we wanted to distribute them, and get them posted. I was emphatic with Walker about this. He said: "Yes". Good Friday came, and no posters had arrived. The girls came, and still the posters did not come. On Saturday, I went to Walker. I was raging and frothing at the mouth. I said: "What about the posters?" He said: "What posters?" I said: "The posters - you said you would send them yesterday". He said: "What posters?" I said: "The posters that I ordered". He said: "You called that off". I said: "What do you mean - called that off?" He said: "Miss Plunkett came in, and said they were called off". "Surely that is not true", I gasped, "and if you don't want to print them, can't you say so?" He said: "I was told not to print them. Will I go on with them?" I said: "Go on with them". I held it over him. I put him on his metal. He was very indignant at being accused of reluctance to print them and eagerly and gladly resumed the printing of them. He got his son to come in from Dun Laoghaire; and they got on with the job.

I was mystified about all this. I knew Fiona Plunkett was no shirker. What I was indignant about was: if she was calling it off, why did she not come to me? When I questioned her about this, she said: "I was ordered - that

there was no demonstration taking place. The Cumann na mBan were ordered to say there was no demonstration. Flags were not to be flown. It was not the policy of the party". I considered that was I.R.B. work. Cumann na mBan would not order that themselves. That was like the Wolfe Tone Clubs' pilgrimage to Bodenstown on the occasion of King Edward's visit. I concluded then that this was a repetition I knew Fiona Plunkett was the soul of honour and that she would not obey any Tom, Dick or Harry; but it must have been an Army order to the Cumann na mBan. She would not have done that on her own, and she was bitterly ashamed of having to do it. I considered that it was the influence of the I.R.B. element on the Army and Cumann na mBan. The Army were under the I.R.B. influence, because a lot of the Army leaders - the commissioned ranks - were in prison at this time. Griffith was in prison, I think. I don't think anyone of the calibre of Griffith and de Valera were out of prison in May, 1917. They were not all released at Christmas, 1916. None of the sentenced people, including the Countess Markievicz, were let out then. The Army leaders were either dead or in prison. A man named Liam Clarke was the accredited representative here. I know that by deduction. I know he would not act without orders from somebody. He must have been ordered to do it. He was not a man who would do that on his own. Cumann na mBan were told, not only to do it, but to go around and tell the people that the flag was not to be flown. Fiona said: "Those were my orders, and I must obey orders. We might be upsetting something important that was on hands". We were quiet actually for some months afterwards.

The demonstration was quite a success. For the occasion, we put up a scroll at Liberty Hall. We put it across the windows. We got photographs of that taken, and

I have a copy. On the scroll we had: "James Connolly Murdered - May 12th, 1916." We got one scroll made and put up; and it was taken down by the police in fifteen minutes. I was full of indignation at being circumvented in a quarter of an hour, so I got down a roll of calico in the shop, and painted the inscription on it again; and we put that scroll up.

At this time - 1917 - we were defeated; nobody thought we would rise up again. Liberty Hall was mainly a Trade Union Headquarters. They were not all patriotic. Some of the Dublin workers were ex-British soldiers. After the rebellion, the premises was very largely in their hands. Also, there was a section - Larkin versus Connolly. Larkin stood for an international working men's movement. Connolly's followers were mainly nationalists. There was that antagonism. The Union was in the hands of Larkin's section. The Hall was in their hands too. We knew we had unsympathetic members in the back, and enemies in the front.

Jinny Shanahan and myself put up that calico scroll on the occasion of the demonstration. There was a kitchen in Liberty Hall. Next door to the kitchen was a room used as a coal cellar, where there had been got in lately a few tons of coal. We brought the scroll up to this room. We closed the door, and put, between ourselves and the door, all the coal we could shift. There was at least a ton from the floor right up against the door. We knew that, if the Union men became aware of our intention, they would order us out. They did not want the Citizen Army men there at all. They were only tolerated, they were there on sufferance. The Union men would have liked to tell them to go, but, on account of Connolly, they did not have the courage to do it. So, having made ourselves secure, we sat

there. We went up to the roof, and from that position, saw police coming to question those in charge of the Hall, interviewing the committee, which would be hostile to us, and all looking up at the scroll. We discreetly withdrew, and were not seen by the Committee. We heard them trying to force the door, but, on account of the coal, they could not get in.

The authorities - military and police - mobilised, I believe, a huge force, numbering up to two hundred. They got military from Dúnlaoghaire. A cordon was formed in front of Liberty Hall, and no one was allowed to pass. The authorities were a bit uneasy. They did not know what the Citizen Army might be up to.

Liam Clarke was on the steps of Liberty Hall, and he saw Jinny Shanahan. He said: "What are you up to? They are going to open fire". The authorities believed that there was a detachment of Citizen Army men on the roof. He was trying to tell them that there were only four girls. He said: "Will you, for God's sake, come down. They don't believe me that there are only four of you there". We could not get the coal away. We said: "We can't".

The scroll remained on Liberty Hall for several hours. It attracted great attention, and crowds gathered - the same as happened in O'Connell Street when the flag was flown. Really, in the heel of the hunt, it was the four girls inside Liberty Hall, and four girls who were on the wrong side of the door, who were responsible for all this.

It was not until about six or seven o'clock in the evening that they broke down the door of this room in Liberty Hall. The police had to shovel the coal themselves. We sat like perfect ladies, waiting for them. I did not feel

too comfortable at having to face the Union people. The result of that was that the police authorities threatened to suppress a food kitchen, which we were running, in Liberty Hall. It was run by a public spirited woman, Margaret Cunningham of Trinity Hall. There were five or six of these food kitchens in the city being run for the relief of starvation, as there was great poverty in the city that time. I thought there was a danger of the food kitchen in Liberty Hall being suppressed; however, it was not, largely through the efforts of Miss Cunningham and other ladies on the Committee. I wrote frantic letters to Miss Cunningham, saying there was no one responsible for that incident except myself and two others, and would she keep the kitchen open - saying I was sorry that it had that effect, not that I was sorry for what I did. That celebration in 1917 established the 1916 Commemoration.

The most outstanding things I remember in 1917 were meetings in the Mansion House - a sort of rallying of the forces. Their idea was to have Ireland's case brought before the Peace Conference. That would be April, 1917. There was a kind of tug-o'-war as to who would control the new nationalist movement. We were all for Count Plunkett, because he represented Joe Plunkett and the extremist wing. The others were for Arthur Griffith. Those were the two opposing parties. Arthur Griffith was Sinn Féin, and leader of the avowed passive resistance movement, as an alternative to physical force. Very definitely Griffith believed that. Griffith thought that the best thing would be for him to get control and try out this passive resistance movement. We thought that was wrong. Therefore, he was anathema to us, who were the extremists.

Later in the year, before the Sinn Féin Convention of

October 25th, I remember de Valera came to Dr. Lynn's house one night, to talk to Dr. Lynn and myself, as certain representatives of Liberty Hall. Dr. Lynn was more Citizen Army. He said that a plan was proposed that he himself would be a kind of compromise between Count Plunkett, Griffith and MacNeill. He said that he himself was not anxious for it - he was very modest and retiring - but that that was the decision of the boys - that he would be the compromise. That was put forward as a solution. He asked would he be acceptable to our lot. We said he would be, so long as he shared our opinions. It was agreed that our lot would support his candidature at the meeting. While Count Plunkett was Joe's father, and very good, de Valera was the better leader.

Anti-Government activities during 1917, '18 and '19 and Black and Tan Period

Nothing much of note happened in 1917, 1918 and 1919, apart from the resistance to the Government that was constantly kept up. There were raids and so on. That room of mine in Westmoreland Street, and Grace Plunkett's were raided and raided. Grace had a studio there, and when a room beside it became vacant I got it at 5/- a week. At the time I was staying with Dr. Lynn in Rathmines. I thought it would be great to have a room there in town. At another period, I exchanged that room with Cumann na mBan, who had a room on Bachelor's Walk. They worked their activities then from my room in Westmoreland Street. It was where Men's Wear is now. It was owned by Hynes' of Dame Street. I was associated with all the movements, but I did not do any active work, such as going around to families and that.

In the Black and Tan period, I was working with the

theatre. Some weeks I would be on, and some weeks I would not be on. However, as I had a contract with the Abbey, I was paid all the time. That occupied my nights. When St. John Irvine came as manager to the Abbey, I was playing in one of Boyle's plays, where I appeared in the first act, and not again until the last act. In the interval, one night, I went and spoke at an open-air anti-recruiting meeting at Beresford Place - a stone's throw away. When Irvine heard of it, he flew into a violent rage. He was a real Britisher. He ordered Kathleen Drago to dress up in my attire. She was very reluctant to do it. When I came back half an hour before I was due to appear on the stage, he said to me: "Kathleen Drago will take your part". I said: "What about it? I am here half an hour before the time". He said: "You have no right to address a meeting. This is not a tea party, or a Sunday School party". I said: "I have no experience of Sunday Schools. I have experience of the stage". He was very cross. He was not in a position to dismiss me, as I was Yeats' protegée and had a contract. I got an endless ragging about that. The fact that I was addressing an anti-recruiting meeting amused the Company.

All I did in those years from 1918 on was work in connection with the Government of the Republic, for instance, the Ministry of Labour. Madame Markievicz was the first Minister of Labour - before Joe McGrath. I never worked for the Republic or the national cause in my life for a salary. I remember there were many Arbitration Courts under the Ministry of Labour, settling disputes, wages and that.

I acted as a District Justice in the Rathmines area. Lily Brennan got me into that. I was on the Courts, which I think were held at intervals. I do not think they were held weekly at the Town Hall. I think once a month was as much as I went. The cases I dealt with were mostly trivial

crime and small debts, ordinary police court cases. The interesting thing about it was that the people did come to the Courts, and acknowledged their jurisdiction, and mostly obeyed their judgments.

I also was addressing public meetings. There were public meetings held on behalf of the prisoners. Women, in that case, played a good part. Maud Gonne started the Prisoners' Defence League very early on. I really forget the year when it was started. Between one thing and another we were busy mostly organising the Prisoners' Defence League. Then there were a lot of spasmodic meetings held all along, just to keep the flag flying. On any pretence, we would hold a meeting - probably because it was forbidden. We would draw attention to the perfidy of the British. I was usually asked to participate in the meetings, because I happened to have the misfortune to be able to speak. The meetings were held in the open.

I was raided constantly. It would be easier to record the time I was not raided. The people I knew, and wherever I was staying, were raided too. Dr. Lynn was raided day after day. I was staying with her a good deal.

I was not in Cumann na mBan myself, except when Lily Brennan made me an Honorary Member of the Cumann na mBan one time. It was because of something she wanted me to do, for which I had to be a member of Cumann na mBan. They had a rule that you would have to attend your Branch meetings, and appear in uniform. I said to Lily: "I can't do it". What she wanted me to do had something to do with the Belfast Boycott. She said: "I will make you an Honorary Member of the Ranelagh Branch". I was attached to the Citizen Army, and Fox got a lot of his information from me, when he wrote his book, "The Irish Citizen Army".

Madame Markievicz and Fianna Eireann.

Madame Markievicz is in great danger of being misunderstood. The only account written of her is by Seán Ó Faoláin - a very bad, inaccurate, misleading and unsympathetic account of her. It completely misrepresents her character. He came to me, amongst other people, for various sidelines on her character. I am sorry to say that, in some parts of it, he attributes to me - "her friend, H.M." many of these inaccuracies. He wanted to make it a popular book, and wrote cattily of her life. I wrote to him in August, 1934. I have a copy of my letter (Appendix A). He promised to send me the notes and proofs, which he never did. I heard it was about to be published. As I did not trust his ideas of Madame Markievicz, I wrote that letter in August. I also have a copy of a further letter (Appendix B) which I wrote to him when I had read the press-cuttings. I sent it to Seán Ó Faoláin. I did not send it to the papers. I did not know at the time that the book was actually published, and that it was actually in the shops. When Ó Faoláin came to me, he said: "Well, you know, I gathered that impression from what you said". I said: "How could I tell such lies about the woman, because I was very fond of her".

In his book, Seán Ó Faoláin attributed vanity to Madame Markievicz as the motive of her nationalist and military activities, and stressed her fondness for showy uniforms. The truth was, she had never bought a uniform - like many other members of the Citizen Army - except a Boy Scout's shirt, which then cost 3/6d., and a Boy Scout's hat. Her Citizen Army dress up to the week before the Rising consisted of a plain tweed costume with a Sam Brown belt and black turned up hat, similar to the men's, with a small bunch of

cock's feathers. She went out to the rebellion in the uniform coat of Michael Mallin, who had got a new uniform. As he was so slim his coat fitted her perfectly. She bought a pair of breeches and a skirt to wear over them for the Rising. From Ó Faoláin's account, you would think that she had gone to endless trouble and expense with her appearance. She always liked militarism. "I don't like girls", she said, "I am afraid of them". But she had the personality of a boy - indulged in schoolboy jokes and that sort of thing. Perhaps I myself will be dead soon; and I do not want Ó Faoláin's account to pass, without contradiction. He also stated that she would not do any work unless it brought her into the limelight. As a matter of fact, she was ready to do any sort of work that came her way, no matter how uninteresting, or how menial or obscure. I need only mention her work in connection with the soup kitchens in 1913, and later amongst the poor in the slums.

Lots of people will tell you conflicting things about the foundation of the Fianna Éireann. I was associated with the Countess Markievicz in the founding of the Fianna; and I would like it to be understood that she was eighty per cent. responsible for it. I am not saying that she did not get valuable help. In fact, she could not have succeeded if she had not got help; but the driving work of carrying it on was hers. I heard it stated, at a concert in 1918, that Roger Casement was responsible for the starting of the Fianna. That was completely inaccurate, nor would Roger Casement have wished such a statement to be made. The person speaking wanted to boost Roger Casement. Everyone had great admiration for him, but the man was away. He gave subscriptions all right. When a statement like that is made by a responsible person, it is likely to be believed unless contradicted.

Madame Markievicz came into national things through our paper, "Bean na hÉireann", and was very enthusiastic. She had a very enthusiastic nature - bubbling over with high spirits. The Inghínídhe had children's classes. We had abandoned the boys' classes. We found them hard to manage. We were hard pressed to cope with everything, and we let the boys' classes go. That was the reason that Madame formed a special movement for young boys. She modelled the Fianna on Baden Powell's Scouts. She said that the thing to do was to start boy scouts. As far as the Inghínídhe were concerned, they were delighted; but their job was teaching classes. She was full of the idea that we should have a counter-blast to the Scouts. She talked to Seán McGarry, Bulmer Hobson, MacCartan, and to other groups, including Inghínídhe and the Inghínighe's followers.

Madame Markievicz was the driving force. She said: "Let us begin". She began by calling on a sympathetic schoolmaster - I think a man in Pearse Street School. I forget his name. He was sympathetic to us. We got his name as being all right. He talked about the subject in some of his boys' classes, and made it sound attractive. Thus was started the national boy scouts. I think, out of that school, we got six or eight boys, as a very small beginning. Into that came the sons of Republicans. Pádraig Ó Riain, son of the caretaker of 25 Parnell Square at that time, came. He was a young lad aged fourteen that time. The others were aged from eight to twelve years. These six or eight boys were called the Red Branch Knights for the first couple of weeks. There would be a couple of paragraphs in the paper about them. Hobson said that he had had groups of boys in Belfast, some seven or eight years before, who were called "Red Branch Knights". Then afterwards, we thought of the name, "Fianna na hÉireann". Finally, it was

called "Fianna Éireann". It took a couple of months to get that much done. It was out of that small group of boys, who were invited out on scout marches, that the Fianna were formed.

We made use of Baden Powell's scout book for training them. We had no old soldiers to give instructions. At that time, no one in the movement would speak to an ex-soldier; it would be regarded as treason. It was not the same as afterwards, when ex-soldiers came into the movement. We could not afford to pay an instructor. Therefore, it had to be begun at scratch. The boys loved playing at soldiers. After a time, sluaghs were formed.

I was more or less political mentor to the Countess at that time. She was groping at first. She read, and read, and read. Her sister, Eva Gore-Booth, had that sentimental, dreamy love for Ireland. They were in George Russell's and Yeats' set, and formed a sort of Culture club. The Countess Markievicz attended a big meeting in the Rotunda, for the establishment of Sinn Féin; and then Griffith told her to join the Gaelic League. She asked him: "How could I work for Ireland?" He said: "Join the Gaelic League". She joined the Cúig Cúigi, but it was not enough. So she found what she wanted in the Inghínídhe. Then it seemed the right thing, to her direct mind, to begin founding an army of boys, who would grow up to know what they were fighting for, The Inghínídhe always taught history. They always had that idea of physical force. Maud Gonne founded the Inghínídhe because the I.R.B. or other nationalist societies would not admit women. Neither could women join the Celtic Literary Society. Of course, she was always friends with them all. She felt no resentment. It was a lucky thing that we had our own organisation, because we were independent, and not a branch of anything. We were able to do what we liked, with the

result that we did things in advance of other movements.

For the Fianna, we took a hall at 38 Camden Street. The first talks took place in my brother's house - Frank Molony's. Every Sunday evening, we had a few friends in. A good deal of things were hatched there - not official at all. Then Madame Markievicz hired the hall in Camden Street. She paid the rent - ten shillings a week. She kept that on. The boys all met there. There were different sluaghs from different parts of the city. Each sluagh had its special night. As it grew, it was big enough for that. The boys had their Saturday and Sunday route marches, and week-end camps. They were all young children. It meant getting their parents' consent and confidence about letting them out for the week-end. Madame Markievicz did it. No one else could. No mother would let her ten-year old child out like that, unless she was sure that good care would be taken of him. Madame always went with the boys herself, and always instructed them herself.

Madame Markievicz had a cottage which she rented out in Sandyford at 2/- per week. The country was really wild around there. She had that cottage herself for years. It was a very convenient thing, because it was a double cottage. Mary Mulligan and her mother lived next door, and "did" for Madame. It was a one-roomed cottage. I went out and stayed there often. The boys had their tents outside. It is still there. It is a pity there is no roof on it. I wrote to An Óige to do something about it; but I think it all collapsed. She took it in the first instance for painting, and she painted quite a lot of pictures up there. She was a good painter, but, unfortunately, her skill as an artist has been put in the shade by her fame as a politician and soldier.

The cottage grounds were used for drilling the Fianna boys, who went there every week-end and slept in tents. She had a marvellous influence with the boys; she was like a boy among them. Anything she owned, they owned.

At one stage she gave up her house, 59 Frankfort Avenue, and moved her furniture out to Belcamp Park in Raheny. As my family shortly after went to America, I moved out there too. Our idea was to provide a camp for the Fianna and to try an experiment on the same lines as the Ralahine experiment in Tipperary, in the early 19th century. We both thought we could make the place self-supporting by market-gardening. Some of our young men friends, such as Bulmer Hobson, encouraged us in the project. Others, especially Seán McGarry, were very much against it and branded us as "idiots". Financially it was not a success, but the Fianna enjoyed it thoroughly and put a lot of work into developing the grounds. When we decided to wind up the experiment we succeeded in getting a buyer, and the losses which we shared were not very great.

We then took a flat in 15 Lower Mount Street. This was in 1911.

My memory is too hazy to give the numbers of the Fianna Boy Scouts. Bulmer Hobson would know that. I do not know whether Pádraig Ó Riain would know. Percy Reynolds was a most prominent Scout, and a great favourite of Madame Markievicz. We thought he was too pretty, and that he was a "mammy's pet"; but he was very good afterwards - himself and his brother; I think it was Joe, who became a monk; perhaps there was a third brother.

Madame Markievicz did not start anything for girls. She did not like girls, and there were, of course, those

classes in the Inghinidhe for them. You would see a group of boys and girls, who were living in the same laneway; the girls would come out and pull the boys' hair, and that sort of thing; the boys would get sort of shy. Madame used to say: "They always confuse me - those dreadful girls". She never liked them.

There is a certain section who want to prove that Madame Markievicz was only a tool, and that Bulmer Hobson and those started the Fianna. I would not be surprised to hear that the I.R.B. say they decided to start the Fianna. Seán McGarry gave a good deal of help, particularly. He used to turn out on Sundays, and play the man for these young lads. I helped to the extent of making jam sandwiches, and helped to feed the youngsters who forgot their lunch. Madame was really wonderful, the way she devoted herself to the boys. She understood them. They felt they were nearer to her than to their officers. They were not afraid of her.

I was in the political prisoners' wing in Aylesbury Jail after the Rising. With me there were Winnie Carney and Nell Ryan. The Countess Markievicz was in the convicts' wing in Aylesbury Jail the same time as we were there. We caught a glimpse of her now and again at Mass. There was a very nice priest there - a Scot. He would bring us verbal messages from her, and we would send messages to her. He was very good.

I happen to have a scrap of notepaper, on which the Countess, as Minister of Labour, wrote notes regarding a wages adjustment for Mitchell's, the bead workers' rates of pay, piece rates, etc. It is in her handwriting, and it is not signed; but I presume that, as her friend, my authentication of it would be accepted. It is a precious bit of paper to anyone who knew her. I do not know whether I should hand it

in to the Bureau, or to Mr. Mitchell. I would not like to think it would be just left lying about, as happened with some things that were handed in to the Museum in connection with the 1916 Exhibition.

Madame Markievicz was not separated from her husband. The reason they were not living together was because he was in Poland. Whenever he was back in Ireland, he came to her house, "Surrey House". She was always delighted to see him coming. I should say that their love affair had gone off the boil; but she was really rather proud of him. She loved acting, but she could not act. She would often take a part in a play; and he would say she could not act. There was not any disagreement. She would be delighted when he would be coming home, and would say: "I'll be having him on my hands"; but she would really be rather pleased. He would spend about half the year here in Ireland. He was a very colourful character. He would paint the town red. He would have, as "John Brennan" said, his flying column with him - young men about town, writing plays, painting pictures; of course, they were nearly all going to write plays and paint pictures. Madame first met the Count in the Art School in Paris. Sometimes she would get bored with him. "You are so tiresome", she would say. Neither of them would, at any time, have had the remotest intention of separating. She was quite content to have him in Poland, and was quite content to have him here. In a way, he could enjoy being the husband of a famous woman, about whom he could also sneer. He lapped it up.

SIGNED Helena Molony

DATE 19/5/50

WITNESS S. Mac Aodha

51 Larkfield Grove
Kimmage, Dublin. Aug. 31st '34.

Achara,

I think you will remember that it was agreed that you would send me the proofs of my contribution to your life of Countess Markievicz, for my approval before it was printed. As she was , and is still the object of many attacks by anti-Irish writers, it is natural that her friends should be anxious about statements which might be attributed to them

Hoping to hear from you as soon as possible,

Yours sincerely

Helena McCann

51 Larkfirld Grove
Kimmage, Dublin. 6/9/34

Achara,

I return your proof copy, and hope I have not kept it too long. On page III, the line "but it had to be work of a certain type." should be changed to "she enjoyed such publicity as it entailed, where another woman might have shrunk from it," or alternatively, leave out the sentence altogether. That line following the preceding matter- belies her real character. It had not to be "work of a certain kind." She was always ready to do the most obscure and boring work, which others less thorough or sincere would shirk. You would make it appear that love of publicity was the keynote of her character. That is the last thing that would be true of her. For this reason I think the last line in the Ist par. on page II4-- "The limelight was not strong enough in either case".- might be cut out also. This last line appears to be a reflection on your own judgment, for anyone who has studied the events of these years must be aware that a woman who wished for limelight, would have made a bee-line for the Suffrage Movement. Any phase of the Suffragettes' activity was front page news, whereas the "extreme" Nationalist movement was not news at all. It was sneered equally by all papers, the "Independent" in particular, which when it noticed us at all referred to us as "Maud Gonne's unwashed."

The fact is that in I907, through Inghinidhe na hEireann, Madame came into contact with Republicans who believed in physical force to achieve their ends. It may appear comical to you that a proportion of these were women, and for three years (-from I907-I6, when Irish Freedom" was launched) the only paper expressing these views was the "Bean na hEireann" to which she was a constant and valued contributor. So little did she seek publicity that many of her best articles were unsigned. As Editor Manager and Messenger of that paper I had an opportunity of forming an opinion of her character. My opinion has not changed, and it is that simplicity and sincerity was the keynote of her character. That line reads to me just "catty". I suggest that you cut it out.

It is a curious thing that many men seem to be unable to believe that any woman can embrace an ideal-- accept it intellectually, feel it as a profound emotion, and then calmly decide to make a vocation of working for its realisation. they give themselves endless pains to prove that every serious thing a woman does (outside nursing babies or washing pots)is the result of being in love with some man,or disappointed in love of some man, or looking for excitement, or limelight, or indulging their vanity. You do not seem to have escaped from the limitations of your sex. therefore you describe Madame as being "caught up" by, or rallying to the side of Connolly, Larkin, or some man or other,

whereas the simple fact is that she was working, as a man might have worked, for the freedom of Ireland. She allied herself with these later movements because they were advancing the ideals which she had accepted years before. We were writing about Labour conditions womens' labour in particular- years before Larkin came to Ireland. and she never "abandoned" or "drew away from" that cause.

She supported the Womens' Movement, but did not join their organisation in Ireland, because she was a member of Inghinidhe na hEireann, and adopted their attitude on this very vital point. We held that an agitation for votes for women in Ireland, inferred claiming British citizenship, and consequently was inconsistent with Irish Republicanism and Separatism. I remember having some difficulty in bringing her to this point of view. Of course on the principle of Equal Rights we were all united, and we worked in the most friendly way with the Irish "Suffragettes".

Please do not think I am finding fault with your analysis or deductions. I have no right to. That is your own affair. But I naturally do not wish deductions, which I consider to be utterly false, to be attributed to me. In my opinion Madame never sought limelight or publicity. When it came, she enjoyed it and laughed at it, where another woman might be embarassed by it. That is all that could be said with truth.

I hope you will be able to make those slight changes and that you will make the same improvement in the spelling of my name as you do in poor Pat Hoey's, and get it correctly--MOLONY.

Yours very sincerely.

Helena Molony