

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913 21

No. W.S. 546

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 546

**Witness**

Miss Rose Hackett,  
115 Brian Road,  
Fairview,  
Dublin.

**Identity.**

Member of Women's Section of  
Irish Citizen Army 1913 - .

**Subject.**

- (a) Raid by Police on Irish Transport and  
G.W.U. shop, ~~24/3/1916~~,
- (b) Stephen's Green and the College of Surgeons,  
Easter Week 1916.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No S.190

Form B S M 2

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STATEMENT BY MISS ROSE HACKETT,

115, Brian Road, Marino,

DUBLIN.

It was as a result of the big strike in 1913 that I first became attached to Liberty Hall. A workroom was opened to assist girls who had lost their employment as a result of the strike. Miss Delia Larkin had charge of the girls that were working there.

When Miss Larkin left Liberty Hall, Miss Helena Molony came to take charge, and that is when the work of the women's section of the Irish Citizen Army started in earnest.

As well as a workroom, which was very small, we had a shop at Liberty Hall. In the workroom, we made most of the articles that were for sale in the shop. Jinny Shanahan, who is dead, was there then. We carried on between the workrooms and shop, making whatever stuff was given to us. Miss Molony was in charge of the workroom and shop. As a matter of fact, to keep us going - I don't know whether Mr. Connolly or Miss Molony was responsible - we made those grey-backed shirts, and a lot of them went to the Post Office garrison. Coming near that time, we were holding them back, in case they would be required.

I was alone in the shop on the day it was raided. I had heard that from very early that morning, raids were being carried out on printing places and that they were being continued on shops. Premises in Capel Street, where the Gaelic Press was printed, had been raided. In the shop, we sold "Spark", "Nation", and all those advanced

papers that other shops would not sell. That morning, I had sold a copy of one of these papers to a man, who told me that shops were being raided. I said; "They won't get anything here". He was only gone, when the police came in.

When the police entered the shop, they asked for the papers. I said; "Wait till I get the head". I told the men in the printing office that the police were in the shop on a raid, and that Connolly was to be got. Connolly was in, and they had him down in a jiffy. The policeman was behind the counter. Connolly rushed down as quickly as he could. He just saw them with the papers and said: "Drop them, or I will drop you". Helena must have come in, as she was standing at the fireplace with her weapon ready, in case Connolly was attacked. She always had a gun, and was always prepared. When Connolly said: "Drop them, or I will drop you", he had them covered from that on. The police went off, and came back later with a warrant. They searched around, but they got nothing. I had hidden the stuff.

As a result of that raid, there was a general mobilisation of the Citizen Army. It was believed that there would be an attack on the place, on account of Connolly being armed during the raid. As there was a lot of ammunition and stuff being made at Liberty Hall, it would have been serious, at that stage, if it were to be seized. For the rest of that evening, I could see Citizen Army men, in their working clothes, coming from all directions of the city to the hall. From that date until the Rising, there was a continuous guard kept on the premises. I would calculate that the raid took place about three weeks before the Rising, as the police were looking for the St. Patrick's Day number of the paper, entitled "The Gael".

We spent all our time practically at Liberty Hall from that time on, because we had to double-up on the work.

A week before Easter, I took part in the ceremony of hoisting the challenge flag over the Hall.

From time to time, prominent men in the Volunteer movement, including Pearse, visited Liberty Hall. When Connolly would be expecting any of them, he would tell me that there would be a caller, and would direct me which entrance to use and which room to bring them to.

The girls took part in night route marches with the men of the Citizen Army. We would be mobilised at midnight. I took part in the one to Dublin Castle. I think I only missed one route march, which went to the north side.

For about six months before the Rising, Dr. Lynn was giving us classes in first-aid. That was part of the real preparations.

Some time before the Rising, Connolly told us we would have to buck up and get ready, that the day was coming. We used be joking. He would come to the workroom and would be talking to us.

At least a week before the Rising, we were terribly busy making up knapsacks for the men and also first-aid kits, as we had to have so many ready.

From Holy Thursday, we were preparing the food. The scout boys went around collecting bread. Other people got hams, cooked them, and brought them to Liberty Hall, where the sandwiches were made for all the Citizen Army men.

On Sunday, we went for a route march, and I know that was the day the bugler sounded his bugle at each of the places that were taken in the Rising. James Connolly was on that route march. We crossed Butt Bridge, went past Trinity College, up Grafton Street, across York Street and down by Jacob's. As we came to each of these places that were taken afterwards, the bugle sounded. We did not know that at the time but, as each place was taken afterwards, we thoroughly understood what that route march was for. George Oman was the bugler. He was a scout man. We went up James Street and, returning along the Quays, we arrived back at Beresford Place. We did not stand directly outside Liberty Hall. Further up, facing the Labour Exchange, we formed a circle, and Connolly spoke to us. He was very serious in that speech. I cannot remember all he said. I do remember him saying that every man and woman, and every boy and girl, that had marched this day were now soldiers of Ireland and would be confined to barracks - pointing to Liberty Hall. No one was to leave the Hall without permission.

We were all fairly tired after the route march. Usually, on a Sunday night, we had a concert in the back hall. Seán Grogan had charge of the dramatic group. On this particular Sunday night, we did not know whether there would be any concert or not. We were preparing tea for three or four hundred, when Connolly sent word that things were to go on as usual. I used have a stand in the hall, selling minerals, chocolates, etc., and the other girls used to help me. That night, I was sent in a lot of times with messages, to where Connolly was. I delivered some messages for him. He would beckon, and I would go in. It must have been in connection with the Proclamation, because the type was being fitted at the time. It was right at the back of the hall, and when I went in,

one of the men was astounded that I should be allowed in. I just went in with messages to the men. I cannot say for whom exactly the messages were, but I was kept busy that night going back and forth with messages. William Partridge was on guard. I very often forgot to say the password. When he would say; "Who goes there?", I would just say: "It's me!" After the concert, permission was given us to go home. We were instructed to be at Liberty Hall on Monday morning at eight o'clock.

Next morning - Easter Monday - at eight o'clock, Connolly was at the top of the stairs. I was helping to prepare breakfast for all, when Dr. Lynn sent for me. She had a surgery at Liberty Hall for seeing her patients, and we used to help at minor cases. As a matter of fact, that is how she trained us in first-aid. Brigid Davis, who is now Mrs. Paddy Duffy, must have gone there first, as she was given a long white coat, with a red armband. She was in the City Hall later. When I arrived, Dr. Lynn informed me that I would be with Miss French Mullen. Wherever Miss French Mullen would go, I was to be next to her. The white coat, which I got, was down to my heels, and I had to shorten it. I remember Plunkett and some other men were laughing at the coat touching the ground. That is the only instruction I got from Dr. Lynn, who was in charge of us all. She said to me that morning that I would be with Miss French Mullen. We had thought that Brigid and I would be together, but Brigid was with the doctor and I was with Miss French Mullen. She laughed and said: "This reminds me of the time that Queen Elizabeth was getting crowned."

It must have been ten minutes to twelve when we left Liberty Hall. We were moving off in groups. As we passed up along Tara Street, Joe Connolly was in the window of the fire station and said he would be with us.

He was with us later. I know we passed Clarendon Street chapel when the Angelus bell rang, and we were ordered to go on the double. When we got to the top of Grafton Street, I remember Peter Jackson had a big key and he opened the big gates of the park at Stephen's Green. The smaller gates were open. We went into the Park, and the people who were there had to be cleared out. All the gates were closed then.

We did not move into the College of Surgeons until Tuesday morning. We were in the Green for the whole of Monday, until we could not stop there any longer. We were driven out by the fire from the Shelbourne Hotel. The heavy firing started shortly after we arrived at the Green. Milk carts, etc., were held up for food. A young lad, named Fox, who, I think, was with us, was killed at the Grafton Street gate, either coming in or going out. His father was in the Army.

I was stationed at the first-aid post in the park. It was very exciting there. We were under very heavy fire from late on Monday evening. Even when we marked out the first-aid post with a red sign, they did not recognise it and kept firing on us. It was there Madame brought Mr. Kettle when he was taken prisoner. Of course, we had taken other prisoners besides Kettle. There were a few Generals. One low-sized man gave us great praise, I remember. Mallon was fired on, and the bullet went through his hat; and Madame was fired on, and it took a piece out of the heel of her boot.

We got instructions to evacuate to the red building. Miss French Mullen gave me the instruction. The people in that locality were very hostile, and we had a very tough time from them. We did not all get out together. We had to run to the little lodge and, as we did so, we

were fired on. The pellets were hitting us. The lodge-keeper delayed a bit when letting us in. When we were getting out, he showed us the wall where we had been standing. It was all tattooed around.

I remember it was Chris Caffrey, who is now a dresser in the Theatre Royal, had to bring the four of us around. She went out, and returned to us to know was it definitely the College. We had to leave all our stuff behind. When we got out, the crowd was making attempts to attack us, but Chris held them up. When anyone showed a gun, that was enough for the crowd. She got us to a point opposite the College, where there was a man on duty, and he told us when to run across. We had only got to the door of the College when there was a man wounded, and the ambulance came for him.

We were no length in the College when Dorrity was wounded. He had thirteen bullet wounds. He was the only one who was sent out. The men were on duty at each point. A section of the men, led by an officer, went out, from time to time, to make attacks and find out information. Margaret Skinnider was in charge of a section, and led an attack. She was wounded, and a boy named Ryan, was killed at the same time, outside Kapp and Peterson's, between Cuffe Street and York Street. Ryan was not brought back to the College, because he was killed outright, but Margaret was brought back wounded. Some of the men, who were on duty at the various points, were hit, and we had to attend to them also.

Stretcher beds, mattresses and various other things were brought in to us from the Turkish Baths, and we were getting nicely settled down. On one occasion, I was lying down on one of the beds, resting myself. The men were trying out some rifles they had found in the College. The people upstairs sent for me to go for



a cup of tea, and Miss O'Daly insisted on my going, as I needed it. I had only left the bed, when a man, named Murray, casually threw himself down on it and, whatever way it happened, this bullet hit him in the face. We attended him there for the whole week. He was then brought to Vincent's Hospital where he died after a week. They remarked that had I not got up when told to go for the tea, I would have got it through the brain, judging by the way the bullet hit this man.

There was a good lot of Volunteers with us. I think they were from Jacobs. They were able to get backwards and forwards. I was not allowed out. I was small, and I would get to places, unnoticed; and I was always successful; but Madame would not let me be sent out. She said "no", I would have to remain there. What went on otherwise, I would not know. Miss French Mullen went in and out a lot. Chris Caffrey did despatches every day, and was chased a few times. She took them to different places and was trying to get to Connolly, because he had evidently got a message that we were all killed, and he was very worried on account of the two places. Chris wanted to tell him that it was not true. When she did get to Connolly, she told him who were there of us. Connolly said: "Thank God, for that".

Regarding the surrender, we did know that there was something happening. I found Madame one time, sitting on the stairs, with her head in her hands. She was very worried, but did not say anything. I just passed on as usual, and she only looked at me, but I knew there was something wrong. Mr. Mallon went round, shaking hands with all of us. I was coming down the stairs when I met him. He took my hand, and did not speak. He was terribly pale. I thought his face was drawn and haggard. The worry was there. Of course, I realised these things

afterwards. They were actually after getting the news, but they did not give it to us at the time. Our men did not want to surrender. We had a good lot there, and they wanted to make a fight. Mr. Mallon (麥) had to insist, and explained that they were orders which had to be obeyed.

A few escaped before the actual surrender took place. I did not feel like going out, and I was arrested with the crowd. Mr. Partridge was very good to us. He felt for us very much, because the crowd outside were terribly hostile. You could not imagine how they could be so terrible. He kept telling us: "Now girls, heads erect!" We were marched off then to the Castle, men and women, under a heavy escort. When we arrived at the Castle, the prisoners we had taken previously, including Mr. Kettle, were released. I can always remember Mr. Kettle, standing, with his hat in his hands. I did feel sorry for him. We were brought up a side passage at the Castle, the gateway being left open. We formed up again and were brought over to the other side. Then we were marched out of the Castle, not, as we thought to Kilmainham, but to Richmond Barracks. Later that evening, we were brought to Kilmainham.

We were only ten days at Kilmainham, when there was a general release. Madame and others were kept, however. They were brought to Mountjoy. I was released after the ten days. I think there were seventy-five of us released, including members of the Cumann na mBan.

After the Rising, Liberty Hall was closed for some time. After our release, we did our best to try and carry on. We started the Fianna Saoirse and other little organisations to try and keep things going. Mrs. Pearse, Tom McDonagh's wife, Madam O'Rahilly and Miss O'Rahilly, and others, used come.

When Miss Molony succeeded in getting the soup kitchen going again, it was a great cover-up, and we were able to carry on our activities, where a lot of other places were not. I remember, when Breen and those people were on the run, they would come to the place, even then, looking for them. They were able to sit in this place and meet people they wanted to see - very important men - and it was not found out.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of Connolly's death, the Transport people decided that he would be honoured. A big poster was put up on the Hall, with the words: "James Connolly Murdered, May 12th, 1916". It was no length of time up on the Hall, when it was taken down by the police, including Johnny Barton and Dunne. We were very vexed over it, as we thought it should have been defended. It was barely an hour or so up, and we wanted everybody to know that it was Connolly's anniversary. Miss Molony called us together - Jinny Shanahan, Brigid Davis and myself. Miss Molony printed another script. Getting up on the roof, she put it high up, across the top parapet. We were on top of the roof for the rest of the time it was there. We barricaded the windows. I remember there was a ton of coal in one place, and it was shoved up against the door (~~entrance~~),<sup>K</sup> in case they would get in. Nails were put in. Police were mobilised from everywhere, and more than four hundred of them marched across from Store Street direction and made a square outside Liberty Hall. Thousands of people were watching from the Quay on the far side of the river. It took the police a good hour or more before they got in, and the script was there until six in the evening, before they got it down. I always felt that it was worth it, to see all the trouble the police had, in getting it down. No one was arrested. Of course, if it took four hundred policemen to take four

women, what would the newspapers say? We enjoyed it at the time - all the trouble they were put to. They just took the script away and we never heard any more. It was Miss Molony's doings.

Historically, Liberty Hall is the most important building that we have in the city. Yet, it is not thought of at all by most people. More things happened there, in connection with the Rising, than in any other place. It really started from there.

Signed:

*Blackett*

Date:

*26/8/51*

Witness:

*J. Keane*

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