

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 1207

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,207

Witness

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Ballsbridge,
Dublin.

Identity.

Q.M.G. Na Fianna Eireann

Subject.

- (a) Biographical note on Liam Mellows;
- (b) Na Fianna Eireann.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.118

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY MR. ALFRED WHITE

15 Serpentine Avenue, Ballsbridge,
DUBLIN.

Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution - Early Days.

Liam was born on 25th May 1889, in Ashton-under-Lyne, Manchester, where his father, a Kilkenny man, Staff Sergeant William Joseph Mellows of the Army Pay Corps, was then stationed. In many traits Liam resembled his father; both of them had a rock-like uprightness, a serious minded, unflinching adherence to fundamental loyalties.

When his family was ^{very} young, Staff Sergeant Mellows was offered the post of Provost Marshal of the Curragh, a post that carried a commission, but on condition that he compromised his Catholic faith by what was represented to be a token attendance at the Protestant garrison church. He refused. His colonel then suggested that before coming to a final decision he should consult Mrs. Mellows, as a commission would mean a pension to her after his death. Mrs. Mellows saw the colonel herself and, on her own and her family's behalf, refused the offer just as firmly.

From his mother, born Sarah Jordan, of Castletown, Co. Wexford, Liam inherited his tradition of the struggle for freedom on the battlegrounds of 1798 with which the name of her native Wexford is forever linked. The five years of his childhood which he spent there made him a son by adoption of that county; his last desire was to rest in the quiet graveyard in which the grandfather and grandmother who had cared for him were buried.

In the first years of the century the family had moved to Dublin, to 21 Mountshannon Road, Rialto, which was to be home for Liam till his death. They were a talented, united, cheerful group. Two of them died at an early age; his sister Jenny, who was studying for the teaching profession, and his brother Fred. His brother Barney, volatile, nimble-minded,

was in sharp contrast to Liam, on whom the responsibilities of life as the elder brother were thrust at an early age. All of them were musical, and Liam's talent for the violin and music generally prompted his father to suggest to him the career of an army band-master. But Liam had other plans, and when he became a book-keeper in Goodbody's tobacco factory about 1908 - (also Junior Army and Navy Stores, D'Olier St.) - his father accepted his decision and did not attempt to influence him.

The New Fenians.

It was about the time when Liam took this step that a significant change took place in the underground Irish revolutionary organisation. Tom Clarke had returned from America in 1907, and, under his influence, a new group formed in the I.R.B. P.S. O'Hegarty thus describes it: "There was on the one hand the older generation ... which had no policy for the movement save the policy of keeping the spirit alive ... and believed that nothing in the way of action was possible...." On the other hand there was "the younger generation which believed in a forward movement, wanted a forward movement and believed in its own capacity to run such a movement".

The inactive, who were not all of the older generation, were at length induced to resign and, in the ranks, reduced to some hundreds, were "plenty of young men, men with vision and purpose, men who wanted to do something". Among the young men there were three - Bulmer Hobson, Padraic O'Riain and Con Colbert, who had an idea for a youth movement from whom were to be drawn the future activist personnel of the revolutionary movement. The organisation was to be an open voluntary one; self-governing, with no oaths, only a simple promise to work for the independence of Ireland. It preserved

that character up to the dark days of the Civil War and beyond; when, after the boys then enrolled took over the fight from the imprisoned I.R.A.; they suffered death by murder and the firing-squad with only the compulsion of this simple promise.

The method of organisation of the Scout movement, just then founded by Baden-Powell in England, was adopted; but with an Irish and military basis. Its coming was heralded in the July 1909, number of An Claidreamh Soluis by a note, written by P.H. Pearse, recommending attendance at a meeting to be held in 34 Lr. Camden St. to found Fianna Eireann. In August 1909, Pearse announced that at the meeting Constance de Markievicz had been elected Chief Scout, and Padraic ÓRiain, General Secretary.

The officers took it in turn to stand outside the Camden St. Hall with a large flag to attract recruits during drill nights. (It was this hall also which had seen the first productions of the Fay Brothers, which were to lead to the foundation of the Abbey Theatre). The recruiting officers attracted much derision, but recruits - newsboys, schoolboys, sons of old Fenians - came in slowly. Con Colbert went further afield: he visited the schools and, in a few, obtained permission to talk to the boys about the Fianna. He came to Synge St. and Brother Carey allowed him to explain that it was the first open organisation to work for the independence of Ireland. The Brother took aside those who joined as a result of this talk and asked them to promise never to be entangled in secret societies. The majority of the Fianna officers were already in or subsequently enlisted in the I.R.B. but the influence of Madame Markievicz was sufficient to offset the obvious wire-pulling of caucus groups, sincerely motivated though the latter were, and to her it owes, perhaps, the voluntary, independent character which it kept to the end.

A feeling of brotherhood united all in the Fianna, no matter what political way they followed, if it was a sincere way of working for independence.

Liam Mellows came to the Fianna of his own volition; he only joined the I.R.B. later on, under the influence of Tom Clarke. To the last days of his life he had an affection for the Fianna, as will be clear from the following quotation from a letter of the 29th August 1922:

"(5) FIANNA: We must concentrate on youth - salvation of country lies in this - both boys and girls. Fianna never got proper help or encouragement. Fianna ideal can save future. The reason for so many young soldiers going wrong is that they never had a proper grasp of the fundamentals. They were absorbed into movement and fight - not educated into it. Hence no real convictions".

He had a wonderful faculty for attracting the young, and a gift for imparting what he himself felt. In his later work of education in New York he took the history class at a Carmelite Evening School, this gift again found successful expression; but, as Madame expressed it: "To his comrades of the Fianna belong Liam's boyish years of quiet work and training, and the unfolding of the great character and brain that made him the man he was". In the Fianna he had found his first vocation.

In Dublin we soon adopted a military organisation, calling our sluaighte or troops, companies, and our districts, battalions. Liam became captain of the Dolphins Barn-Inchicore district, and also served as adjutant of the Dublin Brigade, and on the headquarters staff. (I was his lieutenant in Inchicore, and also assistant general secretary, and had thus an opportunity of observing his work at close quarters.) With energy and quiet persistence he sought introductions to old Fenians in order to enlist their sons; he sought boys everywhere. His influence over them was profound. I asked one of them what they liked about him: he said they liked

the way he said the name "Ireland". Their instinct for sincerity was unerring.

Perhaps it was because we were young, but the world to us then was picturesque and exciting. Kathleen Ni Houlihan had "the walk of a queen" in those days. The pipers, drills, the marches and manoeuvres (twelve miles out and twelve miles back, with the barefooted newsboys and their bleeding feet marching with the best of them); Madame's attempts at imposing culture (she hung paintings on the walls, and started a library of first editions begged from her vast acquaintance among authors); the visits to Scoil Eanna in Rathfarnham and the talks with Pearse, when he showed us the death mask of Emmet and the sword cane used by Lord Edward Fitzgerald in his last fatal grapple; the talks with Bulmer Hobson in his book-lined cottage room when he tried to teach us political economy; the annual Patrick's Day processions aglow with trade and confraternity banners, and alive with the music of Dublin bands, with the parade of Irish industries on drays, drawn by ribbon-bedecked horses; our own drays with their allegorical tableaux (selected for special attention by the Trinity College students who pelted us with the symbolical oranges as we passed.

But processions and picturesqueness and all, our numbers were pitiful - less than three hundred. But Liam had been watching and thinking, and as to what then happened, I quote from an article written by Madame in 1926:-

"One little scene between Liam and myself always rises before my vision when his name is mentioned ... It was during the very early days of the Fianna, and we of the Executive Council were very depressed. There were hardly any branches of the Fianna outside Dublin, few workers and little money. Liam came to me one day and said to me, very quietly and humbly, but with a twinkle in his eye: "I'm thinking of giving up my job, and I'm wondering if you'll approve." He went on to tell me that his job was a poor one and that he proposed chucking it for something that he would like better, and that though it would not be worth much at the beginning, he believed that he would be able to work it up all right.

"He then made the amazing statement that he contemplated going on the road to organise the Fianna. He went on to tell me that he had a bicycle and a good, new coat, and that once he got clear of Dublin it would be very cheap work, for he need never take a train, and he was sure that in most places he would be able to find sympathisers and friends who would give him a bed and save hotel expenses. He asked us to raise 30/- for him to give him a start and, if possible, 10/- a week. With this, he cheerfully declared, he would be all right; indeed money was hardly necessary, for he was sure that the movement would always find friends who would put him up. But he would just like to know that the 10/- was there all right in case of emergencies. Very soon, he explained, he would cease to be a burden on us, for he believed that soon he would be able to provide the money for his own expenses, with something over for the Executive "from the affiliation fees of the branches he would establish". Of course, it was all nonsense about his job, but it was Liam's way of putting it to always belittle the sacrifices he was prepared to make.

"H.Q. thought it over and hesitated. Some thought it too great a sacrifice, as, if he gave up his job he would probably not be able to get another, and the risk of failure was great. A boy going out alone into the unknown to try and induce boys to take on their young shoulders that which the men had shirked for more than a generation sounded like some story out of the far-off days of Gaelic greatness; it didn't sound like a business proposition for an organisation in the twentieth century. And yet, it was our Liam, the wisest of us all, who, when expounding the scheme, a merry twinkle in his blue eyes when he saw some of the boyish faces of amazement listening to him.

"Most of the H.Q. Staff shared with me the belief that it is wrong to prevent or dissuade anyone sacrificing themselves for Ireland, if that is their wish, and so it came about that Liam got his way, gave up his job, and took up his Cross for Ireland".

Concerning this passage, there is in Seán Ó'Faolain's Life of Madame one of those notes of derision which spoils his work for me. He states that Liam's real job was that of I.R.B. organiser, and implies the consultation with her was a pretence. Madame was sufficiently intelligent to realise the presence of the I.R.B., but she also knew enough of Liam to know that his decision was entirely his own, and that his first and his only task was to set the Fianna going. The interview meant exactly what it said, and there was no want of candour on either side.

Liam started off in May 1913. In the August and September 1913, numbers of "Irish Freedom" Padraig ÓRiain printed some passages from Liam's diary-report which give some idea of his intensive labour. He covered on an average 60 to 70 miles a day on his bicycle, starting in Wexford and then working towards the west. The money which financed him came from Roger Casement through Bulmer Hobson, and this did not end Casement's interest in the Fianna. To the Fianna Handbook he contributed an article on chivalry and, aware as we were of the published and unpublished details of his own chivalrous defence of oppressed coloured races, his words were an inspiration and an example.

Here are two paragraphs from Liam's report:-

"Sat. 17th. Rode to Gowran-Kilkenny (10 miles) thence to Dungarvan. Rode to Borris, Co. Carlow, arriving at 6.30. Saw..... He thought a branch could be started in Borris and promised to help. I promised to return there on Tuesday. Left Borris at 8.30 to ride to Wexford (38 miles) across the Blackstairs Mountains via Sculloge Gap. Shades of Father Murphy and Myles Byrne! It was "black" and no mistake. Rode through the night, arriving in Wexford at 12.10. Mileage covered during the day, 62 miles.

Sun. 18th. Marched with sluagh Fr. John Murphy to Goresbridge. All local people away at hurling match. Gathered together all the boys of the village we could find. Delivered an oration. Wexford Sluagh gave a display of skirmishing, etc. in village street. Returned home a sadder and wiser, etc. At 8 o'clock had another little history chat with Wexford Sluagh. There was great enthusiasm and proceedings terminated at 11 o'clock with singing the National Anthem".

We saw him briefly at the 1913 Ard-Fheis in July. He was deeply bronzed, strong and hearty looking. He was to require all his reserves of strength. Roger Casement (to whose substantial financial support we owed the funds which had started Liam) had written, anonymously, a pamphlet "Ireland, Germany and the Next War" which predicted the early coming of the conflict. The Fianna had helped to distribute it, and in separatist circles, there was an awareness of the English difficulty which was to provide Ireland's opportunity. Liam's work was thus pressed forward with a sense of urgency.

The Irish Volunteers.

After the inauguration of the Irish Volunteers on November 25th 1913, the work of the Fianna showed its importance. Their drill halls were taken over; their officers became also Volunteer officers and instructors and, in December, Liam Mellows took over a good deal of the staff work. The labour was enormous, but after four or five months of back-breaking toil, the nucleus of a headquarters staff was established, and Liam was able to go on the road again, this time as a Volunteer organiser. The Volunteer split in 1914 had caused a diminution in the numbers adhering to the original organisation - from about 200,000 to about 15,000 - and organisation thus became more important than headquarters work; so Liam went off, this time mainly to the west. I quote from the account of a western comrade his impression of Liam at that time:

"My first acquaintance with Liam was in the winter of 1914, when he was sent down from H.Q. to organise and train the Volunteers in Galway. I thought when I first met him that he was only a delicate little chap who was very enthusiastic about the movement, and who might be able to give a very fine lecture on patriotism, or even how to fight - but no more. I very soon found out my mistake.

"He addressed our company the first night he came down, and told us he was sent down for a week and that we were to prepare for a very hard week's work; we felt half-inclined to smile at the little chap from Dublin talking to us about hard work, but that was the only occasion we felt that way inclined. Next night we were brought out with some more companies for a route march. I will never forget it. We were out about an hour when it started to pour rain; of course, we thought we would be allowed to seek shelter somewhere - no such thing: we were given to understand that we were not "sunshine soldiers", so we got the order to "double". Our commandant and Liam and myself were at the head; our commandant was rather stout and we thought that about 300 yards would be a good long double; I thought I was fairly long-winded. I don't know how long we were doubling, but we were nearly doubled up by the time we got an order for "quick march". I pitied the poor commandant; he was blowing like a steam engine. I was nearly as bad, but there was Liam as cool as a cucumber trotting along and the rain coming down in bucketsful. After what we thought an eternity, Liam told the commandant to give the order "quick march". If it was to save Ireland, he couldn't do it. The

order was conveyed to me; I managed to blurt it out somehow and when we looked back we had about half our company. We had to wait for them on the road and some of them didn't turn up at all. It was only then we had an idea of what Liam meant by a hard week's work. Next day, I was lying up for repairs, but by the time that week was up we all had an idea that soldiering was not all sunshine, and I do believe that if it was any other one who brought us through it but Liam that half of the boys would get fed up.

"Liam then applied for another week with us, and we were all delighted because by the time he had spent a week with us even the children on the streets loved him. When the second week was up he told them at H.Q. that he was going to stay with us altogether, and I feel safe in saying that, but for Liam, the name of Galway would never be mentioned in connection with the Rising in 1916.

"Then the work started in real earnest. A branch of Cumann na mBan was started and he taught them first aid; he taught the boy scouts and the 'Volunteers signalling, scouting and everything in connection with soldiering; he was away almost every day on his bike organising some corps of Volunteers".

Sean McDermott, so far as his frail health allowed, was also organising in the west, and was arrested in Tuam late in 1914. Liam claimed an interview with him in the barracks and, by means of some sleight of hand, and a pipe which obstinately refused to get lit, got possession of or destroyed all his papers. Sean was sentenced to six months, and shortly afterwards, Liam himself was arrested and sentenced to three months, which he served in Arbour Hill. At the same time he was served with notice of deportation, but, on coming out of jail, he ignored the order, was again arrested, and finally deported to England in March 1916. He was given the option of residing in a non-military area with relatives, and chose Leek in Staffordshire.

In March 1916 also, Nora Connolly and Barney Mellows, acting under orders, went by a circuitous route via Glasgow and Edinburgh to Liam and conveyed to him his orders for the Easter Rising. In her company, disguised as a priest, he made his way back to Dublin and thence to Galway. From the same friend's account, I quote again:-

"He made Killemeen his H.Q. He sent one of his men in a motor car with a dispatch to Kinvara; the man was captured by two armed police who were watching the house to which he was going, but the driver got away with the car. When Liam got word that the dispatch carrier was arrested, he started out immediately with what men there were to intercept those who arrested their comrade; he thought they were bringing him to Galway, but he was brought to Limerick. He attacked Clarenbridge and Arranmore, captured about six peelers and returned towards Athenry. An incident in Oranmore is worth mentioning; they tried to blow up a bridge at Oranmore when word was received that the military were coming from Galway, a garrison town. Liam ordered his men to retreat outside the village. All his men with horses and carts retreated and Liam remained in the village till all were safely outside; he was walking up the village when what should he see but about two dozen peelers marching down the street. He coolly got behind a tree and opened fire on them with his automatic pistol; the confusion he created among them enabled him to get out of the village before they even thought of firing in his direction, but when they started they kept firing until the whole contingent was gone about three miles, but did not attempt to follow them.

"About two miles outside Athenry they were met by another contingent from Athenry where they took over a model farm. Next day the whole body, about 500 strong, badly armed and not much better trained, retreated to a place called Moyode Castle, owned by a famous Galway family called Persse; this place is situated two and a half miles east of Athenry. We were only two nights there when word came that the military were marching on us"

After hearing several similar rumours, the party retreated towards Clare and reached a place called Limepark. There, while Liam snatched some sleep - he had been awake three days and nights - it was decided to disband.

"When they were all gone, he came to me to bid me goodbye, and when I told him I was going to stay with him - Ah! can I ever forget it? - he took my hand in both of his, looked me in the eyes and said from his heart out: "God bless you".... (I forgot to mention that another organiser who was working with Liam, stayed with us)..... When we got on the high road we started on our own ... We came to the house of a friend whom we knew; this was in a place called Ballycahalan, about 3 miles outside Gort; there was no one in the house except two brothers who occupied the only bed the house could boast of. They got up, had the greatest welcome for us and asked us questions, but insisted on us going to bed. We went to bed and slept till half past ten that night; we then changed to another house and stayed there till Monday night. The three of us slept in one bed in a small room and, on Monday, a girl came to the house to cut potatoes for setting. Of course

we had to be locked in the room for the most part of the day, but it was very amusing listening to that young lady's account of the rising and especially about Liam's part in it; she was actually bursting with news. I never knew anyone who wanted to say so much in a given time. She started off something like this: "Oh, mam, did ye hear about the risin'. O they started lutin' and' robbin' and murtherin' all, thin they all scattered and they all had German gold in their pockets. They ran away from the peelers and Liam Mellows escaped dressed up like a woman - Oh he was a very good lookin' fella ye know but if they ketch him they'll riddle him with bullets". And another caller thus delivered himself: "Now, what do you think of the Volunteers? This is what they brought us to ... Now where is Mellows with his drillin' and his brassy buttons and grand uniform; sure there isn't a tinker comes along but is made much of here ..."

"That night we retreated further up the mountain to a kind of hut or cattle shelter. It was roofed with scraws of sods which only kept out the sunshine; it certainly didn't keep out the rain. We remained there, I think, about a week ... During all the time we were in this hut, an incident happened which made a great impression on all three of us. One morning I awoke and it was just daylight - I could tell by the cracks in the wall and the slits in the shutter of an old window or what was intended for such. I looked around and saw my two comrades asleep, but I said to myself: "Where is the other man?" I supposed he'd gone outside (outside meant the stable where the cattle were - where we were sleeping was divided from the stable by a low partition). I waited for a while to hear him coming in; when I woke up properly, I knew there were only three of us... Liam told me the same thing troubled him ... the same feeling remained with us that there was a fourth man somewhere, and in the latter end any trouble or difficulty we were in, we would finish up by saying: "We will leave it to the fourth man; he will make it all right"... We said we would make for Scariff, a place in Co. Clare.... They wandered hungry and lost "trusting to the fourth man to guide us aright and, as events turned out, our trust was not in vain - taking shelter under a rock in a thick mist, and in the heather, on a subsequent day - I don't know how long we slept - I got on my knees to say some prayers (I might mention that no matter where we were or how situated, we never lay down to rest without saying the Rosary in Irish - Poor Liam had a wonderful faith in prayer). I had my prayers nearly finished when I saw what I thought was a man on top of one of the hills. I prayed on till I was finished. I then noticed that it was a man and that he was making towards us ... At last he came to within 20 yards and sat on a rock and said: Ye are strangers here ... I think ye're Sinn Feiners"... it turned out he was the leader of the Volunteers in the district and had spent some years in Dublin as a shop assistant; knew all the boys in Dublin that Liam knew and, of course, was twice as anxious to do what he could do for us on that account. He told us to remain where we were; that if we went a mile in any direction we would be arrested. "I'll be back shortly"

he said... That evening when it got dark, our kind friend came along and brought us to a stable which was built almost in a hill ...We thought that if we remained two weeks in the stable it would be a long time; little we thought that we would be there for six months word came from H.Q. ordering him to go to America as there was a lot of work to be done there for the cause. Along with this came a letter from his mother (whom he loved very much) advising him to go for Ireland's sake; also a card from his father with the words in his own handwriting: 'In memory of 1916'. He thought more about this card than if it were £100. "

Exile.

In September 1916, arrangements were made by Fr. Burke of Killaloe with Captain Collins of Cork to bring Liam on a freighter to Liverpool. About August, Liam made his way to Killaloe Convent where he was lent a novice's clothing, and in Fr. Burke's company (having had to be told off once or twice for his department), he reached Rochestown Capuchin College where he was taken in hands by Brother and Father Bonaventure who finally got him on board the freighter.

For such a man as Liam, there was no safe underground route. He stayed in Liverpool in a seamen's lodging house (where once or twice he narrowly escaped capture in a raid). Liam, in everything thorough, frequented the publichouses for weeks to acquire seamen's talk; he was roughened already by months of exposure. He had brought his fiddle, and it was an invaluable introduction.

One September evening some friends saw him off, from a suitable distance. Lurching in assumed drunkenness, the baize bag with his fiddle under his arm, he took the boat train for Devonport. He told me afterwards that he joined a crew on the train and managed to obtain unobserved the bundle of the crews' certificates, which he threw out of the window. He lined up with the rest of the crew at the docks and declared himself a stoker.

He went down to the stokehold, and very soon someone appeared and yelled: "Coal the bars". Liam waited till another

stoker staggered down and yelled at him: "Coal the bars". He watched the expert throw his coal twenty feet to the back of the furnace, and soon found out that his fire was piling up at the mouth. Dodging up the ladder again, he hid, and a row downstairs an hour afterwards told him that his surmise was correct; his fire had gone out.

His light-hearted way of telling of his trip hid the considerable ordeal he had undergone. Even on his tough frame the fiery heat and long hours of back-breaking toil took effect. In addition, the vessel went off its course owing to submarine threats and storms, and once during a heavy gale, Liam, as the only sober man, had to take charge of the navigation. After touching at Bermuda, they finally reached New York, after a voyage of sixty-two days.

Clan na Gael and the Irish Republic.

Extract from letter of 29th Aug. 1922, from Liam Mellows, addressed from Mountjoy Prison:

"(d) Dev's work in America. The time has now come for informing the Irish people what miracles de Valera accomplished there. The attempt to belittle his work for Eire both here and abroad must be defeated. Dealing with America is a stupendous work, and tons of data is needed, but it will be labour well worth performing. Show how it was the Republic (and the Republic only) that gained such sympathy for us there; that no other cause would have got the slightest hearing - that De V. changed an ignorant and either apathetic or hostile people into genuine sympathisers in two years. He made the name of Ireland respected where it was despised, and the Irish Cause an ideal where it had been regarded as political humbug. Fr. Magennis could do a very fine opening chapter describing the state of the Irish movement in America and the attitude generally of America and Americans towards Ireland at the time of Dev's coming".

Before attempting to relate the involved story of Liam's work in America, it is necessary to define the relations which existed between the separatist movement at home and the individuals who controlled the 'Clan na Gael', the American I.R.A. The Fianna, and the Volunteers after them (until late in 1914), and probably the I.R.B. received no funds worth

mentioning from America. Roger Casement's money had started Liam off, and similarly Roger Casement, {Mrs. Green (the wife of the historian, J.R. Green) and Erskine Childers had contributed the few thousand pounds necessary to purchase the rifles landed at Howth and Kilcool. I believe the spectacular Howth landing was staged to persuade the Clan na Gael to increase their contributions from the Irish-American funds (ostensibly collected for the Irish Republic).

As Desmond Ryan points out in his book on John Devoy ("The Phoenix Flame") the old Fenian had in the course of his long years of American residence acquired an American outlook on things. He had become very deaf and depended for all his information on his American-born colleague, Judge Cohalan - American-Irish rather than Irish-American - who thus dominated the Clan na Gael and its organ "The Gaelic American".

The Judge's general attitude was given in his own words at the trial of Jeremiah O'Leary in July 1918: "When Germany and Great Britain went to war, I hoped that Germany would beat Great Britain because she is the ancient enemy of my race and my people. But I am for America first, last and all the time. When the United States entered the war I turned against Germany. If the devil were an ally of the United States I would be with the devil."

John Mitchel, years before, had denounced the attempt to use the protection of American citizenship in the interests of any other nation as a fraud on the American people. To this commonsense principle, Irish American citizens had, in practice, adhered, but some of them also assumed the right to control Irish Nationals in American interests. For instance, at a meeting held in 1917 under Clan na Gael auspices, attended largely by Irish Nationals - some refugees after 1916, and none of them American citizens, -

the Judge ordered all the young men present to join the American army. The 'plug ugly' stewards attempted to tear off the Irish tricolours which these refugees were wearing. On another occasion (according to 'John Brennan' in "Kerryman" Christmas 1938 number) John Devoy (acting probably on Cohalan's insinuations) denounced Roger Casement to several 1916 refugees as a British agent, and said that the forged Casement Diary was a genuine document. I am unable to verify what Liam told me: that the diary story was first publicly alluded to in the "Gaelic American". The same paper later added Liam to the list of those it slandered unforgivably. This, Liam added, was the "Gaelic American" way.

In a letter dated September 1919, to Mrs. Nora Connolly O'Brien, Liam thus describes what took place:-

"I broke completely with the Gang. Lots of things happened -- more than I can write about and more than was known even among friends. Threatened with expulsion from everything. Told them to do it. They backed down. Resigned from the office (Gaelic American) at the same time. Was begged to remain by Uncle (John Devoy). Did so. Campaign of the most vile and vicious slander started which has lasted till the present time"

When Liam reached America, the viewpoint of American politics, which had previously been anti-British, due to the English navy's interference with American shipping, had become Anglophile as America moved towards war. Judge Cohalan's attitude had changed accordingly, but Liam voiced the views of Irish nationals in America in resisting the Judge's attempt to swing them into line. At his first public meeting in America, he refused to use the 'safe' speech written for him and spoke as he thought. He also began to address street corner meetings in the same strain.

Dr. McCartan states that the 'Clan' had decided, before his (Dr. McCartan's) arrival in July 1917, to send

Liam to Germany to bring arms to Ireland by submarine, and that after Dr. McCartan's arrival as Envoy of the Irish Republic, it was decided to send him, also, as a political agent. They probably had. It was an easy way of getting rid of both of them in the awkward situation brought about by the war.

Arrested in America.

No move having been made by the Clan to help them on their voyage, Liam and Dr. McCartan used the good offices of 'John Brennan' to get in touch with a German girl who might be able to help them embark on the ship which was evacuating the German consular officials after the declaration of war. Unfortunately, 'John Brennan' relates, Dr. McCartan thought it his duty to convey the arrangements to John Devoy and, whether as a result of this or good espionage, Liam was arrested at the German girl's house. He had disguised himself as a seaman - 'Patrick Donnelly'. Dr. McCartan had been arrested a week previously when his ship had reached Halifax.

Liam was conveyed to the 'Tombs' Prison. He related that when he was brought in, the warden looked at him with disgust and said: "You're not Irish; you're a bloomin' Swede". However, he relented afterwards and presented him with a cigar. Liam's story was that one comic opera detective to whom they were confided also ran a film company, and it was his pleasant and money saving custom to use the prisoners in his charge as unpaid 'supers'. When he got the two Irish prisoners he concocted an entirely new melodrama about Irish American plotting and heroic detectives, and was considerably hurt when they refused to play.

Week after week, 'John Brennan' continues, Mellows and McCartan remained in custody, while the American press jeered at the Clan na Gael for being afraid to come to the rescue

of their 'friends'. Eventually, Mrs. Murphy - a friend of Dr. McCartan's - was asked to give bail and, to the intense surprise of Cohalan and his associates, both were released. They were held under bond not to return to Ireland until after the war, but neither of them could be intimidated into dropping their activities for Ireland. The Clan hounded Liam systematically, procuring his dismissal from one job after another, even from labourer's work on the docks which a good friend, Joseph McGarrity, had procured for him.

In his difficulty, another good friend came to his assistance, the Most Rev. Dr. Peter Magennis, Superior General of the Calced Carmelites. Liam had previously, when in the "Gaelic American" taken a great interest in the young American Irish, and with Fr. Magennis's encouragement, he taught history to the children who came to the evening school in the Carmelite parish. The Carmelite relates he was a most successful teacher and caught the attention of the children from the first moment they came under his tuition. Fr. Magennis, as will be seen from the following extracts from Liam's diary, also helped him financially in his difficult position:

"Jan. 24th 1919 - Go to Carmelite Hall in evening in response to invitation - Ceilidh in progress - All the Carmelite Fathers present, also Dr. Pat McC(artain) and many others. Astonished at being presented with cheque for \$500 testimonial - couldn't utter a word."

Dr. Magennis writes as follows of Liam's work:

"It was at this time that he and I began our tours as travelling 'showmen' - as we humorously termed it. Amongst the children of the Parish School we found enthusiastic dancers of the old Gaelic dances and not a few who could do justice to the old Gaelic airs. Liam supplied the music and I did the talking. In the latter office, occasionally, Liam took a part, and his sympathetic utterances and his historic narratives were a treat to the people who had forgotten that there was an Ireland to love and a country to die for.

"It was only yesterday (he wrote in 1923) that I met a Bishop who had heard us on one of these occasions and the tears filled his eyes when he spoke of Liam.

"All our performances were given gratis, and even the ordinary social entertainment that is offered on such occasions we generally managed to decline. It was the Priory of the Convent in 29th Street who paid the fares of the children. When, in the days that followed, poor Liam fell ill, and the doctor, who learned to love him and who now grieves sincerely at his untimely taking off, declared that the true cause of the illness was "slow starvation", it was only then that I adverted to the fact that he had paid his own fare on these occasions from his scanty store".

The illness referred to was a serious one, which struck him down in March. This entry in his diary refers to it.

"March 4th 1919. Went to school. Feel ill all day; wretched in the extreme; violent pains in the back, chest and head and unable to eat ... Meet Fr. Augustine just arrived from Ireland at 12 o'clock. ... After school go to lodgings and prepare lecture on Emmet I promised to deliver at night before the citizens of the I.R. Feeling much worse; pains more violent accompanied with growing weakness; can hardly see .. Get message from J. D(eyoy) asking me to see Dr. Maoldhomnaigh for him re Mr. Conboy testifying at J.A.O'L's trial ... Go to the Dr. at 9 p.m., hardly able to walk, can scarcely hear him talking to me but do not mention to him that I am ill .. Go to Citizens at 10 p.m. Unable to give lecture. Head feels on fire... Return homewards with Alf Metcalfe and Molly Murphy ... Latter asks us in to have tea ere we go home ... Get worse and begin to rave but the Murphys and Alf do not suspect as they think I'm only fooling as I often do because all I can talk about is history ... Leave Murphy's at 12 o'clock with Alf and Domhnall MacCartaig ... Get weak twice on way home (ten blocks) and, supported by the two of them, reach 31st Street at last. Get feverish and rave until I lose my senses. 4 a.m. very sick...

March 5th. Come to myself at 1 p.m. Alf and Fr. Flanagan and Dan come at 3 p.m. ... Late at night Dr. McCartan comes and feels alarmed. Forget what happened after but told afterwards I was delirious all night ... Alf watches me and sits up all night as I learn he did the night before.."

Dr. McCartan in his book thus alludes to Liam's activities and illness:-

"Behind the activities of the Irish Progressive League ... a new organisation, independent of the Clan, started by Joseph McGarrity and helped by Peter Golden, Padraic Colum and others ... stood the Carmelite Fathers. Their ramshackle Priory at the foot of East Twenty-ninth Street was a home for every Irish exile. Mellows and I, and later, Boland and de Valera all shared the hospitality of these good Carmelites. Father Denis O'Connor, Father Slattery, Father O'Flanagan and Father O'Farrell were true representatives of the Church Militant for the Faith and for the Irish Republic. But the virtual leader in New York in these stormy days was their Assistant General, Father Peter E. Magennis ... When we were homeless,

he housed us; sick, he cared for us; in all our trials he was our inspiration and help.

"The Irish were the only element in the United States that persisted throughout the war in holding meetings not in furtherance of it. Police officers and secret service agents often menaced but rarely attempted to break up an Irish meeting; they respected the anger of an Irish crowd. Mellows, addressing one of the Irish Progressive League meetings, was confronted by rows of Government agents. So Mellows, instead of delivering his set speech, addressed himself to the task of soothing them: "What will you say" he demanded, when your grandchildren ask you what you did in this great war to free small peoples. Will you tell them you were engaged in New York city in hounding down the unarmed Irish, and with revolvers trying to silence their claims to be free?"

In his diary, Liam frequently alludes to the constant shadowing to which he was subjected by these agents. Father Magennis relates that the latter were causing a disturbance at one of his meetings, when Liam immediately accosted them and politely asked them to display more courtesy. One of them pulled out a revolver and presented it at Liam. "Sonny", said Liam, "Put up your play-toy; we have been looking down the barrels of too many of those in Ireland to be afraid of them here". And in tones that meant work: "Do what I tell you or get out". They got out.

Dr. McCartan's narrative continues:-

"There was a bad epidemic of influenza in New York at this time, and Mellows, his constitution weakened, got double pneumonia. In his delirium he was back in Galway leading his troops in the Rising of 1916 ... Shouting orders, he would try to rise, only to fall helplessly back, gasping for breath, and then in a minute or two he would be trying to rise to fight again. Doctor Maloney - author of the book on the Casement Diary - treated him and he lived till the black day of Ireland's shame, the day the Irish Free State shot him in Mountjoy Jail, 8th December 1922".

The Friends of Irish Freedom.

Following Easter 1916, the Clan na Gael decided to form an open organisation which they called "The Friends of Irish Freedom". Like the Clan, the governing body of this organisation was exclusively in the hands of Judge Cohalan and his associates, and its activities were rather in the

domain of American rather than Irish politics. An Irish Race Convention held on February 22-23rd, 1919, in Philadelphia had, in a resolution sponsored by Joseph McGarrity (to whom the idea of the Convention was due) pledged the raising of a fund of a million dollars to aid Ireland. The administration of the fund having been assumed by the F.O.I.F., they used large sums in extensive newspaper advertisement in support of a campaign against President Wilson and the League of Nations. Judge Cohalan was also interested in the campaign of Senator Johnson for nomination at the Republican Party Convention to be held in Chicago. In his letter of Sept. 1919 to Mrs. Connolly O'Brien, Liam thus alludes to it:

"Philadelphia Convention came off. Went in and sat in the background. Had row with Brehon (Judge Cohalan) when he tried to put me up for puppet on the first day. Refused to speak except on second day (principal day) ... result, war between Brehon and myself ... Gang not pulling with de Valera. Want to run him. He won't be run. He has seen through them. Never saw a sicker man. Disillusionment isn't the word. Gang cold on Bond proposition (the Dail Loan of six million dollars afterwards raised by de Valera). Afraid of failure to raise full amount. They're always afraid of failure anyway".

The whole background of the struggle had been altered by the first meeting of the Dáil on 21st Jan. 1919, when the establishment of the Irish Republic had been ratified. On Feb. 3rd, President de Valera had escaped from prison, and on April 4th, the Dáil had decreed the raising of a loan. The "Gaelic American", organ of the Clan, refused to recognise the situation thus created, and in an effort to remove their hostility, Harry Boland was sent to America, but reported failure. It was then decided to send President de Valera himself, and after travelling as a stowaway, he arrived in New York. Liam's diary thus alludes to his arrival:

" June 12, 1919. Visit Priory in evening for supper and thence go to Murphy's, 21st St. ... Hear there from a messenger of arrival of An Ceann ... John Hearn turns up unexpectedly; tells me he called to my room in afternoon and to his great surprise found Joe McG., Dr. McC., Boland and An Ceann there...

"This explains the state I found the room in. Find old clothes belonging to someone. Visit room at 2.30. It looks as if a crowd had been there.

Still in a precarious state of health, Liam was now plunged into feverish activity. As President de Valera's advance agent, he toured America with him. Fr. Magennis thus describes the tour:

"This mode of action pleased Liam, and he counted his friends from the east to the west and from the north to the south until the name of Liam Mellows became a household word in the home of every lover of Ireland. The remarkable success of the great Chief was as much due to the wise management of Liam as it was to the wonderful personality of de Valera himself ... The dictum of Liam was that the Chief should go where his chances of a reception were poor, for there most certainly he could do the greatest good. His method of procedure was radically different from the recognised political tactics of the political Irishmen of America. Meetings where all believed in Ireland and where all were willing to help Ireland had no fascination for Liam. He was an apostle born to the work, and caring not for opposition, nay, rather welcoming it".

Cohalan and the Cuban Analogy.

An interview which President de Valera gave on Feb. 6th, 1920, was seized on by Judge Cohalan as a weapon in the controversy. In an effort to quieten English fears of the possible consequences to them of a Republic, President de Valera suggested that the Treaty between the United States and Cuba might be adopted as a precedent. This provided that the government of Cuba should not enter into any treaty or alliance with any other Power or Powers which would impair the independence of Cuba, nor would the government of Cuba allow lodgment in or control of the island for military or naval purposes.

The "Gaelic American" declared this interview to contain a denial of the full freedom of the Irish Republic (which, however, the "Gaelic American" had never recognised). When called on for an explanation by the President, Cohalan defined himself to be an American first of all, and added: "If Ireland

were to change her position and seek a measure of self-government that would align her in the future with England as an ally, in what I regard as the inevitable struggle for the freedom of the seas that must shortly come between America and England, every loyal American will without hesitation take a position unreservedly on the side of America".

The history of the support accorded by the two American parties to the Irish Republic may be briefly summarised. Congressman Mason had asked for an appropriation for diplomatic representation to Ireland. His resolution was finally torpedoed. The House of Representatives and the Senate had requested President Wilson and the Versailles Peace Conference to favourably consider the claims of Ireland to "self determination". These two resolutions were ignored by President Wilson. In view of the probable victory of the Republican Party at the 1920 American elections, it was decided by President de Valera to attempt by a personal campaign to secure the insertion of a 'plank' favourable to Ireland in the Republican party programme to be adopted in 1920. As de Valera now firmly held the stage as a spokesman for Irishmen in America, this proposal to rob Judge Cohalan of his political prestige as the disposer of the Irish Vote in America brought the fierce opposition of the "Gaelic American". Liam described to me this opposition to his efforts to enable de Valera to speak at the Chicago Convention. The opposition secured that no hall should be available for the purpose, and Liam was forced to buy out an opera company to enable the meeting to be held. Needless to add, no support was given to the Irish cause at the convention.

The Irish delegation then determined to prevent support for Ireland from ever again being a card in the hand of self interested American politicians. A new organisation, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic

was formed and finally launched in Washington in November, 1920. To this the sincere members of the F.O.I.F. came over in a body, and great numbers of other Irish Americans who had refrained hitherto from taking part in organisations with American political affiliations, and who had the single unselfish desire of helping the country of their origin thronged into the new organisation, and helped to make the Bond Drive a real success. This achievement of President de Valera's, with which the name of Liam Mellows will also be linked, brought Liam's work in America to a successful end.

In Ireland.

Early in 1920, Liam had received word that his father was seriously ill, and had repeatedly expressed the desire to see him once again. His application for leave could not be granted, and his father died in July 1920. It was a great blow, as there was a deep affection between them.

On his arrival home in October 1920, he was made "Director of Purchases" for the I.R.A. and given a seat on the Army Council. He threw himself into the new work with all his usual zeal. He had purchased in America some thousands of newly invented "Thompson" sub-machine guns, but unfortunately, after some had been sent to Ireland successfully, and after Liam's departure for Ireland, the ship was held up, the consignment seized by the American police eventually finding its way into the hands of gangsters. *As* "Mr. Nolan", the commercial traveller with the straw-coloured moustache ^{HE} became a familiar figure in Dublin, and his lodgings ^{WERE} raided several times by the "Tans", but his mild, inoffensive manner was sufficient warranty of harmlessness. It took Liam some time to get used to the extraordinary conditions of the Anglo-Irish war. He told me one evening in my flat in 9, Peter's Place, which he had taken over as an office: "I asked them (Collins and Mulcahy) how I would get down to Cork, expecting

to be told of some marvellous underground route. They looked at me in a very surprised kind of way and told me to take the train". Here also, he made appointments with "Patsy Patrick" (Sean Etchingham), his greatest friend, and the two of them yarned in their own humorous, unforgettable way (Sean telling of the time he created the Enniscorthy 'ghost' - duping even O'Donnell, the chronicler of Irish ghost stories; Liam telling the story of his work in America in vivid detail ... it is a poignant regret to me that it was never written down). He made many new friends and kept his old ones; the late Maurice Fenlon of Mary's Lane, for instance, who threw aside his marine store business to act as buyer for Liam in England of all kinds of things - pig iron for bombs, potassium chlorate for explosive and so on. Liam was plunged into a whirlwind of activity ranging not alone over Ireland and England, but to Germany, where Robert Briscoe was buying automatics, Mauser rifles and ammunition, and when the truce came (he expected it to be short-lived) he intensified his work.

The I.R.B. and the Treaty.

Cathal Brugha, President de Valera and others never rejoined the I.R.B. after 1916, taking the view that the secret 'government' was unnecessary and might be harmful. Liam's view of the I.R.B. had undergone a change. In his letter of 29th August 1922, from Mountjoy, he thus referred to it "... The underlying idea (of a life of Cathal Brugha) should be that of "Principle" ... a word that at one time meant everything to (and conveyed everything of) the I.R.B."

Under the dominant leadership of Michael Collins, the majority of the Headquarters Staff, who were also on the Supreme I.R.B. Council, had begun to use the 'stepping stone' argument, which is best set out in their own words in the following circular sent to members (including Liam, although as he had, I believe, ceased attending meetings, his membership

was nominal):

"(That in transmitting this document the Divisional Board wishes to make it clear that each individual member of the organisation is perfectly entitled to hold and express his own opinion as to whether the acceptance of the Treaty was right or wrong, but that since the present situation has arisen the Divisional Board urges most strongly on all the members to do their utmost to preserve the organisation intact to meet future eventualities. It will be observed that the document from the S.C. states that the maintenance of unity will be the SOLE policy of the organisation pending a decision on its attitude by a conference of all Co. Centres as soon as the draft Irish Constitution is available.)

The Organisation and the New Political Situation in Ireland

It has always been the policy of the Organisation to make use of all instruments, political and otherwise, which are likely to aid in the attainment of his final end, i.e.,

"A Free and Independent Republican Government in Ireland

The Supreme Council decided that no action for or against the present peace treaty be taken by the Organisation as such, it issued the following statement to members of Dáil Éireann who were also members of the Organisation.

The Statement

The Peace Treaty

"The Supreme Council, having due regard to the Constitution of the Organisation, has decided that the present peace Treaty between Ireland and Great Britain should be RATIFIED.

Members of the Organisation however who have to take public action as representatives are given freedom of action in the matter".

By Order - S.C. 12.12.1921.

"In order to avoid mis-interpretation of this statement it may be necessary to draw particular attention to the fact that this instruction was issued only for the information of T.Ds. who are members of the Organisation and it left those free to act as they wished in the matter of voting for or against the Treaty.

"It also is pointed out that some such situation as that presented on the agreement to the Treaty was obvious from the date of the termination of hostilities, and the agreement to the Truce, and that it would not be expedient for the organisation to interfere in a situation that may have the result of bringing Ireland nearer to that final end above mentioned. Until the present issues are clearly defined, which cannot be until the draft Irish Constitution can be considered by the Supreme Council, and when the Council may be in a position to judge what use can be made of the new position in the matter of gaining our ultimate aim the sole policy of the organisation shall be, to

maintain in the Organisation itself, in the Army, and in the nation as a whole, that unity which is so essential to ultimate success, so that these forces may be available to support the Republic when the proper opportunity arises.

"Pending the situation that will be created when the Irish Constitution has been drafted

1. The Dáil shall continue to be recognised as the Government of the Irish Republic.
2. Members of the Organisation in the I.R.A. shall continue to receive routine military orders through their authorised military officers.
3. When the proposed Irish Constitution is published the policy to be adopted by this Organisation will be discussed in accordance with Article 35 of the I.R.B. Constitution.

By Order
SUPREME COUNCIL
January 12th, 1922"

The opponents of the I.R.B. held the view that for the old Irish Party to accept 'Home Rule' might have been right, but a Republican State could not abdicate, even to 'save the revolution (or, as Abbe Sieyes remarked of a similar situation, to save the revolutionists.) = In his speech against acceptance, Liam said:

"An effort has been made here from time to time by speakers who are in favour of this Treaty, to show that everybody here in this Dáil was prepared mentally or otherwise to compromise on this point during the last few months. I wish, anyway, as one person, to state that this is not so. I am speaking for myself now on this, and I state certainly that, consciously or unconsciously, I did not agree on any form of compromise.... They (the plenipotentiaries) were sent there to make, if they could, a treaty of settlement - personally I doubt if it could be done - but they were not sent to bring about what I can only call a surrender If the English Government wanted to make concessions to Ireland it had the power to do so even though it had not the right, and we could take whatever it was willing to give without giving away our case But this Treaty gives away our case because it abrogates the Republic The Parliamentary Party after years of efforts, when they in their turn had done their best, they went the way that all compromising parties go As it was with the Irish Parliamentary Party, so it will be with the Irish Free State parties and I say that with all respect If peace was the only object, why, I say, was this fight ever started? Why did we ever negotiate for what we are now told is impossible.... Under this Treaty the Irish people are going to be committed within the British Empire The British Empire stands to me in the same relationship as the devil stands to religion You may talk

about your constitution in Canada, your United South Africa or Commonwealth of Australia, but the British Empire to me does not mean that. It means to me that terrible thing that has spread its tentacles all over the earth, that has crushed the lives out of people and exploited its own when it could not exploit anybody else ... Aye, if Ireland was fighting for nothing only to become as most of the rich countries of the world have become, this fight should never have been entered upon We would rather have this country poor and indigent, we would rather have the people of Ireland eking out a poor existence on the soil, as long as they possessed their souls, their minds and their honour ... Is this Treaty going to give you peace? No. Under Clause 7 you are going to be made a cockpit of the next naval war in which England is engaged, because your docks and coastline are given up, unfortunately, to the British Government to use as it sees fit".

At a subsequent session, after the decisive vote had been taken, Liam protested against using the machinery of the Republican Dáil to set up the 'Free State'; he stated it was a crowning act of iniquity against the Irish people. This policy was carried a stage further when the new State sought to establish authority over the I.R.A. Liam and other members of the H.Q. Staff, having received a refusal from the new Minister for Defence to summon a Volunteer Convention, constituted themselves into a Military Council and ordered a Volunteer Convention within two months. As a counter measure, the opposing members of the H.Q. Staff began to remove hostile officers from their positions and to regroup and arm their own supporters, who were subsequently put into uniform and paid. The German arms landed in Waterford were intercepted by the Republican H.Q. and diverted to Dublin Republicans. The Convention was held, and a new Executive appointed, among whom was Liam, as Quartermaster General. Headquarters were first established at 44 Parnell Square, and on April 13th, the Four Courts was occupied as military headquarters.

The clash which followed is part of general history, and need not be detailed. On the night of the 28th-29th June,

the Four Courts were surrounded and, having refused to surrender, were attacked with rifle and artillery fire. On 30th June the building took fire, and mines in the basement exploded. The garrison received an order from Oscar Traynor to surrender and did so. Liam Mellows was among the prisoners.

Thoughts in Prison.

It was some time before the prisoners realised that their former comrades now differed from them not only in methods, but in aims. To the members of the Provisional Government, loyalty to the London agreement was of more importance than their pledge-bound loyalty to Republican aims. The death of Michael Collins in an unnecessary exchange of fire at very long range between his armoured car and a Republican patrol accentuated the differences. In a letter of 26th August 1922 (captured and published by the enemy in October) Liam Mellows thus defined the position:

"Naturally we are thinking hard here, though the place and atmosphere is not conducive to thought. However the net results of my negotiations are:

"(1) A Provisional Government should be set up at once even if it is unable to function, or to function only in a limited way. This to be done apart from the question of the Dail If at meeting of Dail this is not cleared up, and if it is accepted that it is a "Provisional Parliament" and not the government of the Republic --- then the necessity of a Pro(visional) Repub. Govt. is most urgent Even though the decision of the Election of 1918 stands: even though the Election of June 1922, was an "agreed" election at which no issue was put or decided; yet, because of the interpretation put upon it by the Treatyites (and used broadcast by the British) it is essential that the Republic be once again reaffirmed by the people by vote as soon as possible. When that may be no one can tell, but we cannot look too far ahead. In the meantime, the Provisional Republican Government should endeavour to carry on".

On 29th August 1922, he wrote again:

"..... Therefore an object - a target - must be presented for the enemy (F.S. or British) to hit at -- otherwise it becomes a fight (apparently)

between individuals. Hence the necessity of getting the Provisional Republican Government established at once in the most limited way. This to be done apart from the question of the Dail. The advt. in today's paper re postponement of Dail is inserted by Republican Government. The impression the Press and the Provisional Government want to create is that the next Dail is the "Provisional Parliament called for by the terms of the Treaty. If at meeting of Dail this is not cleared up, and it is accepted that it is a "Provisional Parliament" and not the Government of the Republic -- then the necessity of a Pro. Repub. Govt. is most urgent

The conception of a government within a government should not have been new to the majority of the members of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. who formed the new Provisional Free State Government. They had worked such a policy themselves in the I.R.A. and in the First Dail, and a Republican Provisional Government functioning in the open would have avoided the serious objections to secret, oath-bound organisations, and would have provided the necessary means of bringing unorganised military forces under discipline. But the megalomania of these I.R.B. officers brought them to consider the action of their comrades in preferring principle and sacrifice of worldly interest to the monetary rewards of surrender, as an offence against the 'discipline' of the I.R.B. an offence which they later resolved to punish with death. The unfortunate death of Michael Collins from a stray bullet removed the one man who would have had the strength to control them, and sharpened their desire for vengeance. Their first victims were two unarmed Fianna boys - Sean Cole and Alf Colley - whom they captured at Newcomen Bridge (the military uniforms were clearly seen by witnesses under the disguise of trench coats), brought away in a car and murdered. The legislation hurriedly passed establishing courtmartial and new offences which gave them power to shoot any prisoner they took did not satisfy them, and they continued to murder in or out of uniform without regard to legality.

The imprisoned Four Courts leaders were looking at the matter from this angle, an acknowledgment that the Republic still existed. Colour is lent to the assumption that this was the Four Courts view by an incident shortly after the Four Courts surrender. Some of the prisoners, after conversation with friendly sentries, brought word to the leaders that an escape could be managed. Strict orders were issued prohibiting escape, but in the meantime, some had easily got away and reached the Gresham Hotel, H.Q. of the still resisting Dublin Republicans.

Looking back at the situation from today, it is arguable that no government could tolerate a shadow Republican government controlling their own armed force. It is, however, also arguable that responsible Republican leaders (including Liam Mellows) now visualised such a shadow government taking firmer control of the I.R.A. with a view to ending the Civil War, and continuing in existence as a rallying point against a future crisis such as a European War (that this was in Liam's mind can be seen from his anti-treaty speech already quoted, and from his notes on a copy of the I.R.B. circular advocating acceptance of the treaty - he has written "Next War" and underlined it). Liam visualised that the shadow government would be made a target for propaganda and persecution, but that this would keep the issue alive. The situation would not have been novel to the Provisional Government; as I.R.B. men they had maintained secret control over the army and Dáil when such dual authority was much more objectionable.

But, as in all wars, when nothing happens according to plan, control over the I.R.A. became more disconnected as an unrelenting war added to the bitterness, the Free State military became still more undisciplined, and a grim succession of tragedies, too painful to recapitulate, made the gulf wide and deep.

The next quotation from the captured letter of 26th August will have to be dealt with in detail, and the context illustrated by selections from the Declaration of 1919 to which Liam alludes, because in our time a quite unwarranted use has been made of his hurried suggestions for an elaboration of Republican policy. It is first necessary to define his attitude to Russia. He had witnessed the attempt made by Dr. McCartan to secure recognition by Russia of the Irish Republic (used by the Russians as a threat to secure a trading agreement with Britain, and discarded when the agreement was secured). Norman Thomas, perennial Socialist (not Communist) candidate for the American Presidency, had given valuable help in speaking at meetings of the Irish Progressive League, and other 'left' speakers had also helped. The following excerpt from his diary of 2nd May 1919, will illustrate his attitude towards Russia:

"Memorial meeting to commemorate the Third Anniv. of the execution of Padraig Pearse... Addresses on "Pearse and the Republic by Rev. Wm. G. O'Farrell, O.C.C., Myself, Miss Lola Ridge and Martin Conboy Miss Ridge referring to the United States, spoke of "the coming revolution" and Russia ... Mr. Conboy in his address disparaged such talk and spoke somewhat unfavourably of Russia ... In the course of my remarks I said that Russia had given more encouragement to the Irish Republic than America had ... Supper afterwards with Conboy and walked as far as his house with him ... He's a fine type of American and a thorough gentleman".

It will be noted that Liam merely quotes from the "Workers Republic" of July 22nd, 1922, suggesting that although the Declaration of the Dáil in 1919 still stands, that it be interpreted into "something like" the article in the "Workers Republic". It is therefore unjustifiable to use the article he quotes as if the wording and ideas were his own, and that he considered they should be substituted for the 1919 Declaration:

"(2) The programme of Democratic Control (The Social Programme) adopted by Dáil coincident with Declaration of Independence, January, 1919, should be translated into something definite. This is essential if the great body of workers are to be kept on the side of

Independence. This does not require a change of outlook on the part of Republicans or the adoption of a revolutionary programme as such. The head-line is there in the Declaration of 1919. It is ALREADY part of the Republican policy. It should be made clear what is meant by it. Would, suggest, therefore, that it be interpreted something like the following, which appeared in the "Workers Republic" of July 22nd last:

(Quotation from "Workers Republic" : Under the Republic all industry will be controlled by the State for the workers' and farmers' benefit. All transport, railways, canals, etc. will be operated by the State --- the Republican State --- for the benefit of the workers and farmers. All banks will be operated by the State for the benefit of Industry and Agriculture, not for the purpose of profit making by loans, mortgages, etc. That the lands of the aristocracy (who support the Free State and the British connection) will be seized and divided amongst those who can and will operate it for the Nation's benefit", etc.)

He continues: "In our efforts now to win back public support to the Republic we are forced to recognise -- whether we like it or not -- that the commercial interests so-called -- money and the gombeenman -- are on the side of the Treaty, because the Treaty means Imperialism and England The 'stake in the country' people were never with the Republic. They are not with it now -- and they will always be against it until it wins. We should recognise that definitely now and base our appeals upon the understanding and needs of those who have always borne Ireland's fight".

The relevant passages from the Declaration are:

"..... we declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the nation, but to all its material possessions; the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the nation; and with him (Padraic Pearse) we re-affirm that all rights to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.

"We declare that we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality and Justice for all, which alone can secure permanence of government in the willing adhesion of the people In return for willing service, we, in the name of the Republic, declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the nation's labour".

Other clauses dealt with the care of children; the abolition of the foreign poor-law system; the exploitation of the nation's resources in the interest and for the benefit of the people; the development of industry on progressive and co-operative industrial lines; the prevention of the shipment of food and other necessaries from Ireland until the wants of the Irish people are fully satisfied and the future provided for; and the establishment, in co-operation with other countries of social and industrial legislation.

In his final words, Liam asked that the position be defined with the following headlines:

FREE STATE - Capitalism and Industrialism - Empire.

v.

REPUBLIC - Workers - Labour.

Last Hours.

On December 7th, 1922, shots were fired in Dublin at an army officer and member of the Dail, who was killed, and another Dail member accompanying him was wounded. The Free State Cabinet thereupon ordered the execution on December 8th 1922, as a reprisal, of Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor, Joseph McKelvey and Dick Barrett. At 3.30 a.m. they were brought from their cells and the sentence read to them. At 5 a.m. Liam wrote this letter to his mother:

"My Dearest Mother,

The time is short, and much that I would like to say must go unsaid. But you will understand; in such moments heart speaks to heart. At 3.30 this morning, we (Dick Barrett, Rory O'Connor, Joe McKelvey and I) were informed that we were to be executed as a "reprisal". Welcome be the will of God, for Ireland is in his keeping, despite foreign monarchs and Treaties. Though unworthy of the greatest human honour that can be paid an Irishman or woman, I go to join Tone and Emmett, the Fenians, Tom Clarke, Connolly, Pearse, Kevin Barry and Childers. My last thoughts will be on God and Ireland and you.

You must not grieve, Mother darling. Once before, you thought you had given me to Ireland. The reality has now come. You will bear this as you have borne all the afflictions the cause of Ireland has brought you -- nobly and bravely. It is a sore trial for you, but that great courageous soul of yours will rejoice, for I die for the truth. Life is only for a little while and we shall be reunited hereafter

Through you I also send another message. It is this: let no thought of revenge or reprisals animate Republicans because of our deaths. We die for the truth. Vindication will come, the mists will be cleared away, and brothers in blood will before long be brothers once more in arms against the oppressor of our country -- Imperialist England. In this belief I die happy, forgiving all, as I hope myself to be forgiven.

The path the people of Ireland must tread is straight and broad and true, though narrow. Only by following it can they be men. It is a hard road, but it is the road Our Saviour followed - the road of Sacrifice. The Republic lives: our deaths make that a certainty.

"I had hoped that some day I might rest in some quiet place - beside grandfather and grandmother in Castletown, not amidst the worldly pomp of Glasnevin; but if it is to be prison clay, it is all the sweeter, for many of our best lie here

"I have had the Chaplain to see me. It is sad, but I cannot agree to accept the Bishop's Pastoral. My conscience is quite clear, thank God. With the old Gaodhals, I believe that those who die for Ireland have no need of prayer.

"God bless, protect and comfort you.

Your loving son,

WILLIE".

When going to execution, he asked the chaplain if he was denied the sacraments because he was a Republican. The chaplain denied this and after an interval, Liam went to Confession and received Communion.

This delayed his execution until 9 a.m. The soldiers were nervous, and the first volley only wounded him severely. The chaplain rushed over and attended to him, after which Liam, raising himself with some difficulty on one knee, called out: "You'll have to shoot straight, boys". The second volley was sufficient.

His mother received the first news of his death from a newspaper. She had spent the previous night on a fruitless journey to the Governor General, Timothy Healy, and others asking them to intervene. Two years afterwards, Liam's body was surrendered to her and buried at Castletown, Co. Wexford, as he wished.

Pious, a true Christian, a soldier, with all a soldier's direct approach to things. A soldier's death was his at the end, as he would have wished.

Go ndeanfaidh Dia trocaire air.

" Dear Alfie,

How can I ever thank you - sad but lovely and in every particular correct - with the exception of the last paragraph - which I would like you to correct.

On the night of 7th Decr. I was raided by Free Staters.

On the early morning of the 8th I was given word of Barney's arrest - in Wellington Barracks - and looking for cigs ectra. Later on that morning I was apprised through stop press of the deaths of the four - saw B. in B'well, Wellington Bks. - went on to M'joy Bks. with Mr. and Mrs. Woods, Donnybrook - drove out to Glenaulin to demand the body from Tim Healy - after a prolonged silence the answer given was - His Grace Mr. Healy knows nothing of the matter - he's but a figurehead."

(The above is a copy of a letter which I received from Mrs. Mellows regarding this account).

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Ailfrid de Faoite)

12 Jul 1955.

Witness: _____

(Sean Brennan), Lt. Col.

