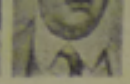
THOMAS MacDONAGH shot — May 3.



JOSEPH PLUNKETT shot — May 4.

EDWARD DALY shot — May 4.

MICHAEL O' HANRAHAN shot — May 4

WILLIAM PEARSE shot — May 4.

JOHN MacBRIDE shot — May 5.

MICHAEL MALLIN shot — May 5.

EAMON KENT shot — May 5.

CON COLBERT shot — May 5.

SEAN HEUSTON shot — May 5.

SEAN MacDERMOTT shot — May 12.

JAMES CONNOLLY shot — May 12.

Order in cypher

WHAT was this startling document?

It was an order in cypher on a secret file in Dublin Castle only to be promulgated and not to be put into force until the issue of a further order from the Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle, signed by the Under Secretary (Sir Matthew Nathan) and the General Officer Commanding the Forces in Ireland (General Friend).

The order directed various classes of persons to be put under arrest, the police to be confined to barracks, pickets and mounted patrols to be put on guard in the city, a list of premises to be occupied and certain houses to be isolated, including the Archbishop's House and the Mansion House.

★ If this particular plan had been put into effect, the Volunteers could never have occupied their strategic positions in the city.

The main body of the document was substantially accurate and correct, coinciding with the recommendations made by Gen. Friend, who was in the Military H.Q., Parkgate Street, and sent to Nathan in Dublin Castle and then forwarded to London.

Into action

THE committee we had formed went into action. We decided that Sheehy-Skeffington and Byrne should send copies to English journalists and distinguished men like George Bernard Shaw, Chesterton, etc. We divided up what we believed to be the influential people in Ireland who would be at least not hostile. We met several times, always in different places. At one of these meetings in Dr. O'Ceallaigh's house, Rory O'Connor produced the first half of the document and, subsequently, we got the whole text.

● Just at that time James Connolly sent word to the effect that, as he relied on my publishing the document, he would not do so in his weekly: "The Worker's Republic."

Document

THE following is the letter which I signed accompanying the document and the document itself:—

"Sir, the gravity of the present situation in Ireland, compels me to invite your serious attention to the enclosed. It is a copy of portion of a document recently addressed to, and on the files, in, Dublin Castle.

"In view of the deliberate intention here revealed on the part of the Government to cause bloodshed in Ireland by an attack on the Irish Volunteers—a body formed openly in pre-war times—in a manner certain to provoke armed resistance, I appeal to you to use your influence, public and private, in whatever manner you may consider would best benefit this country. The cipher from which this document is copied does not indicate punctuation or capitals.

P. J. LITTLE."

The DOCUMENT was as follows:

"The following precautionary measures have been sanctioned by the Irish Office on the recommendation of the General Officer Commanding the Forces in Ireland. All preparations will be made to put these measures in force immediately on receipt of an order issued from the Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle, and signed by the Under Secretary and the General Officer Commanding the Forces in Ireland.

"First, the following persons to be placed under arrest: All members of the Sinn Fein National Council, the Central Executive Irish Sinn Fein Volunteers, General Council Irish Sinn Fein Volunteers, County Board Irish Sinn Fein Volunteers, Executive Committee National Volunteers, Cuide Gnotha Committee Gaelic League.

"See Ref A3 and 4 and supplementary list A2. . . Metropolitan Police and Royal Irish Constabulary forces in Dublin City will be confined to barracks under the direction of the Competent Military Authority. An order will be issued to inhabitants of city to remain in their houses until such time as the Competent Military Authority may otherwise permit or direct. Pickets chosen from units of Territorial Forces will be placed at the points marked on Maps 3 and 4. Accompanying mounted patrols will continuously visit all points and report every hour.

"The following premises will be occupied by adequate forces, and all necessary measures used without need of reference to Headquarters.

"First, premises known as Liberty Hall, Beresford Place; No. 6 Harcourt Street, Sinn Fein Building; No. 2 Dawson Street, Headquarters Volunteers; No. 12 O'Connell Street, "Nationality" Office; No. 25 Rutland Square, Gaelic League Office; No. 41 Rutland Square, Foresters' Hall; Sinn Fein Volunteer premises in city; all National Volunteer premises in the city; Trades Council Premises, Capel Street; Surrey House, Leinster Road, Rathmines.

"The following premises will be isolated, and all communications to or from prevented; Premises known as Archbishop House, Drumcondra; Mansion House, Dawson Street; No. 40 Herbert Park; Larkfield, Kimmage Road; Woodtown Park, Rathfarnham; Saint Enda's College, Hermitage, Rathfarnham, and in addition premises in list 5 D. see Maps 3 and 4."

ROGER CASEMENT hanged—Aug. 3.

THOMAS KENT shot — May 9.

Shocked

WHAT shocked people at the time was the intention expressed in this plan to isolate the Archbishop and the Lord Mayor. But knowing that the Archbishop was such a staunch Nationalist and that the Lord Mayor could be used to paralyse military action, a British military leader might have thought it a wise precaution.

On our list of persons to be given the information, certain bishops were mentioned, and I remember Dr. O Ceallaigh also among others Most Rev. Dr. MacRory, then Bishop of Down and Connor, who commented briefly and sympathetically on the difficult position of Dr. W. Walsh, the Archbishop of Dublin, and added "poor William."

Dr. O Ceallaigh also visited Dr. MacCaffrey, then Vice-President of Maynooth, who befriended me later.

I saw some other responsible persons, including Stephen O'Mara, one of the founders of "New Ireland" and I told his father, Alderman O'Mara (treasurer of the Irish Party funds) who was strongly in favour of publication. I also conveyed the information indirectly to Dr. O'Dwyer, the Bishop of Limerick, and to the Archbishop of Dublin.

★ The general opinion was in favour of publication and none of them raised any objection on the grounds of its being bogus information.

More tense

IN the meantime, the position was growing more tense, the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army had held parades and manoeuvres; the air was full of the threat of coercion and conscription, and the people were disgusted with the holding up since September 17, 1915, of the Home Rule Bill, such as it was.

Pearse was speaking in public of the necessity of a "blood sacrifice" to save the nation. Connolly's attitude was well-known, and his scorn for the "next war patriot."

Looking back on these factors after the event, one can easily realise that a clash was inevitable and the real question was who would strike first. A small group, including Clarke, Connolly, Pearse, MacDermot, MacDonagh, Plunkett, Rory O'Connor and the other well-known leaders, had fixed on Easter of 1916 as the definite date for the Rising.

Eoin MacNeill had been informed of our intention to publish the document and had approved, but on April 18, Tuesday evening of Holy Week, for some reason, he doubted the wisdom of such action.

★ *I felt we ought to be of one mind in the matter, so late that night Rory, Sheffington and myself took a taxi out to Woodtown, Rathfarnham, where he lived. After some discussion he agreed to publication.*

It was one o'clock in the morning when returning we dropped Sheffington at the top of Terenure Road. As we parted I made some remark about hoping our action would prevent the conflict of military occupation and bloodshed and he said: "Please God it will." With these words we parted, and I never saw him again. (Just a week later, he the pacifist Sinn Feiner, after an attempt to stop looting in the city, was taken prisoner and shot in Portobello Barracks).

Man in gap

AT one of the last meeting of our committee we had arranged three lines of action to get publication. First, I was to publish the whole text of the document.

My second line was to have the substance of the document in the "Notes of the Week", and if the printer objected to that, Sheffington was to convey the document and my covering letter to Alderman Tom Kelly to read at a meeting of the Corporation. This meeting (dealing with the Dublin Metropolitan Police vote) was to include a debate on a pronouncement against the Irish Volunteers uttered from the Bench by Judge Kenny a few days previously.

★ As it turned out our last line of action was successful and Alderman Tom Kelly proved to be the man in the gap.

When Rory first gave us the document, I made a remark that things might get pretty hot for me, but Sheffington said a curious thing: "The British will repudiate the document and so they will leave you alone.

"The authority of the document will protect you, but I wouldn't be in the shoes of the man who copied it from the files."

Mistake

AT six o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, I started writing my notes. I was down in the Wood Printing Works about 8 o'clock. My manuscripts and the document I handed to one linotype man, named Tormey, who, I knew, was an Irish Volunteer.

The document had been printed on a handpress (I think) at Kilmainage, by Rory O'Connor, who put in no punctuation and no capitals because, he said, the original in code had no stops or punctuation. There was a mistake as to the name of the Archbishop's palace.

"In the first version it was 'Ara Coeli', the name of Cardinal Logue's house in Armagh—obviously the error of a stranger in the British Service—but, lest anyone might be misled, Rory told me he changed it. (He should, of course, without changing the document, have put a footnote explaining the error).

There were quite a number of errors in the document from a political point of view as to the bodies to be suppressed; errors which could easily have been made by people anxious to include all suspects and only partially informed on Irish affairs such as were some of our rulers in Dublin Castle.

When Mr. David, manager of the Wood Printing Works, had read his copy of the paper as the first few copies came off the press, he was alarmed.

He said very little, shook his head, and went off to his lunch. A Welshman, he was without much imagination about Irish nationality. He went, I learnt afterwards, to the "Irish Times" office to consult the editor of the "Evening Mail" finally decided to do so, and the morning papers followed suit.

The editor of the "Evening Telegraph, had refused Dr. O Ceallaigh's request for publication.

In the morning papers on Monday there appeared a Royal Proclamation prohibiting the publication of speeches, etc., made at a secret session of the British Parliament. At the end of it were some clauses we thought very significant. They were: "It shall not be lawful for any person in any newspaper, circular, etc., to publish the contents of any confidential document belonging to, or any confidential information received from any Government Department or any person in the service of His Majesty."

★ *It looked as if some Government officials believed the document was genuine and were shutting the stable door after the steed was stolen.*

Charged

I WAS arrested after the Rising and released, dropped like a hot coal I thought after certain papers were found in my lodgings, including correspondence about the cypher document.

When, after the Rising, the Hardinge Commission of Inquiry into the cause of it held its sittings, first in London, and then in the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, from May 25, I did not evade it.

● But no move was made to invite or bring me before the Committee.

The following passages from the findings of the Commission dated June 26, 1916, show that there was no serious intention of finding out the truth:

"On the 19th of April a special meeting of the Dublin Corporation was held at the Mansion House to discuss the police rate. Alderman Thomas Kelly, in the course of a speech attacking Mr. Justice Kenny (who had alluded at the opening of his Commission to the state of disorder in Dublin and had urged military action) made a statement to the effect that he had received that morning from the Editor of New Ireland, a circular which he would read. It was from a man named Little, New Ireland Office, 13 Fleet Street, Dublin, 16th April, 1916."

After quoting my letter and the document, the Hardinge Report continues:

"This document was as an entire fabrication. Copies of it found since the outbreak are shown by identification of type to have been printed at Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Citizen Army.

"It is not known who was the author of this invention, or whether Mr. Little was in any way responsible for it. Many copies of this forged document were printed and distributed, and it was widely considered by the people to be genuine and no doubt led to the belief by the members of the Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army that they would shortly be disbanded. This undoubtedly became one of the proximate causes of the outbreak."

Genuine

IT is very important to note that at the same time the Commission indicated through its official evidence that some such machinery as was outlined in the document was actually in preparation and that the military were to arrest the leaders immediately after Easter.

It is also important to note that Sean MacDermott, the night before he was executed, told Rev. Dr. Patrick Browne, who attended him, that the document was genuine.

Further, the following signed statement of the late Mr. Eugene Smyth, telegraphist in the G.P.O., who had the opportunity of obtaining full and direct information of the substance of the plans contained in the document, is clear evidence of a first-hand nature. It should clear the honour of Pearse and his comrades.

"I have read over the document which was sent by Mr. Little to Alderman Tom Kelly and which was read out by the latter at a meeting of the Dublin Corporation on April 19, 1916.

"The document was an outline of the method (suggested by the G.O.C. in Ireland to the British Government) for grappling with the 'dangerous state of affairs in Ireland'.

"I was in a position to know at first hand the entire contents of the suggested plan of operations and I can definitely confirm the truth of the contents of the document. Only the reference to the maps and Nets are unfamiliar to me and I assume these were inserted, possibly in London, but certainly after the matter had passed out of my sphere of duties. I cannot confirm that the plan of operations as suggested by the G.O.C. were ordered to be put into execution."

Signed E. Smyth, the statement is witnessed to by Mathghamhain O Donnaigh (Matthew O'Doherty).

★ Who's News goes South 21
● The woman's angle 22
★ World Affairs 22
● Rule of Law 24
● Hypnosis myth 25
● Fabulous prizes 26
★ The top youth page 27
● Cartoons 28