

DOCUMENT. WS 4

DIARMUID LYNCH

ORIGINAL

NO. OF PAGES	1013-21
LIBRARY STATE RECORDS	1913-21
NO. W.S.	4

THE I.R.B. :

Part 1

Some Recollections

and Comments

=====

Distribution of

the

CASEMENT PAMPHLET

Part 2

=====

Supplementary Statement

on

'Easter Week'

Part 3

=====

ORIGINAL

THE I. R. B.

Some Recollections & Comments

by
DIARMUID LYNCH

1908. I returned to Ireland from the U.S. in 1907. A few years earlier, while State President of the Gaelic League of the State of New York, colleagues asked me to join the Clan-na-Gael. Prior thereto, however, the IRISH WORLD - the chief supporter in America of the Irish Parliamentary Party - protested in its "Gaelic Notes" that the Gaelic League in New York was dominated by the Clan-na-Gael. Such was not the case, though many of our men were members of it. I was not a member and desired to remain in a position to assert that I was not in case the IRISH WORLD should pursue that line of criticism. Accordingly, I declined the invitation to join. In the course of my Gaelic League activities I had had many friendly contacts with Clan men and explained my attitude in this matter to John Devoy who agreed with my decision.

Shortly after I located in Dublin in 1908 Sean T. O'Kelly "approached" me about the I.R.B., and in due course I became a member of the Bartholomew Teeling Circle.

I think it was somewhat earlier that I was requested by P. T. Daly to "meet a few friends" who desired to have a chat about the Irish situation in New York. The latter, to the best of my recollection, comprised John O'Hanlon, Fred Allen and Daly himself. In after years I realised that my inquisitors on that occasion had been prominent members of the then Supreme Council of the I.R.B.

1910. I moved from Dublin to Cork and in due course became attached to the Cork Circle.

1911-12 Towards the end of 1911 I was selected as Divisional Centre for Munster on the Supreme Council. I was so notified by Sean O'Hegarty.

I continued to act in that capacity until Easter Week, 1916. Later, on release from prison in June 1917, I resumed office as D.C. up to the date of my deportation to the United States in April 1918.

The constitutional method of electing a Divisional Centre was that a provincial Convention comprising County and District Centres elected by ballot a special committee of five, and the latter in turn elected by ballot a Centre for the Division. Thus, these five were the only members in the province to whom the Divisional Centre was known as such.

My predecessor as Divisional Centre for Munster was, I believe, Michael Crowe of Dublin.

Before my period of office Cathal Brugha - who as a representative of his firm travelled extensively - had a

sort

of roving commission to do I.R.B. organising. I was informed that he kept in contact with "Centres" in various towns and enrolled men as occasion offered.

It was not a constitutional function of the Divisional Centre to enroll members; his duty was to keep in contact with County Centres and thus keep posted on the state of the Organisation in his Division. Recruiting for the individual Circles was the business of the respective local Centres - who had an intimate knowledge of men in their respective localities and thus were the best judges of suitability for induction into the I.R.B.

Even so, I did on occasion take men into the organisation in places where no Circle existed - those whose names had been suggested to me by Centres elsewhere, or men whom I in the course of my visits had had opportunity to "size up".

In many instances I attended Circle meetings - where a meeting coincided with the date of my business visit to the locality. In such cases I acted in the capacity of an "organiser" and not as Divisional Centre.

Periodically, I got reports from County Centres and District Centres with respect to other Circles and/or groups in various parts of the respective Counties which I had no opportunity to visit in person; also of unattached members here and there. Local Centres and even unattached members were definite focal points from which to do recruiting. But where neither existed the location of a likely prospect was more difficult than the proverbial "looking for a needle in a haystack" - the needle was in the stack but in those days of denationalisation there may not have been in a whole district a single man imbued with republican ideas!

Even in cases where one was assured that a certain man was a likely prospect, the official responsible for his induction had ^{not alone} to be certain that such "prospect" entertained the republican viewpoint but that his probity and tact were beyond question. And, often when after tedious investigation a man was deemed fit in every respect the inquisitor found himself "up against a stone wall" - that of religious scruples in the matter of joining a "secret organisation". This was a stumbling block in the matter of numerical progress.

1912-13 During these years I regularly attended meetings of the Supreme Council in Dublin. I was also a fairly regular attendant at meetings of the Coiste Gnotha of the Gaelic League - whereon I represented the American Gaels since 1907.

Supreme Council meetings at that time were largely devoted to reports on the state of the Organisation in the several Divisions, on finance, on publications; on such events as the Wolfe Tone and Emmet commemorations; on possibilities for the advancement of the Irish Republican doctrine and contrariwise ~~numerical progress~~ to denationalising schemes.

As an outstanding instance of what may now seem to have been excellent material for the I.R.B. - of men in various parts of the country in 1912-3 who had proved themselves ^{available} in very many respects - and yet were not ~~available~~ as members, I may mention Terence MacSwiney. He was then writing excellent articles for IRISH FREEDOM. Even so the consensus of opinion among my fellow members of the Cork Circle was that he was not to be "approached" with a view to membership in the IRB. - not in 1911-2 at any rate. My acquaintance with him at that time was only casual, and I forget the actual reason for non-approach in his case; the religious ban may have been the obstacle.

The latter, to my personal knowledge, prevented many men from joining. Even some enrolled members occasionally developed uneasiness on that point. I believe it was to meet this situation that a visit to Ireland by the Rev. Denis O'Sullivan of Valentia was availed of in getting him to address the men of the Dublin District on the theological aspect. A "general meeting" of those was held in the Clontarf Town Hall for that purpose. This was during my membership of the S.C., but I was unable to be present and forget the exact year.

The only other "general meeting" of which I have any knowledge was that held in the ~~Rxxxx~~ Foresters Hall, Parnell Square, Dublin, early in December 1913. This was addressed by Denis McCullough and myself. To the best of my recollection the purpose on this occasion was to emphasise the duty of I.R.B. men to cooperate to the fullest extent in the formation of Irish Volunteer Companies, and of choosing I.R.B. men as officers where possible. (The Irish Volunteer organisation had been formally established some two weeks earlier). One feature of this meeting which stands out in my memory is that of Padraig Pearse occupying a seat in the rear of ~~back~~ the hall. It was probably his first appearance at any meeting of the I.R.B. (Le Roux relates the circumstances of his admission to the organisation earlier that year).

I have no recollection of a meeting of the Supreme Council held in the early formative period of the Irish Volunteers, - that is prior to its formal establishment - as mentioned by Lé Roux. (Tom Clarke, p.125). I do, however, recollect informal talks with Tom Clarke bearing on that question, and was aware that the "Executive" was quietly suggesting and directing various developments from the I.R.B. standpoint. Then, as prior thereto - 1912-3 - my visits to Dublin were but intermittent.

1914.

In January, 1914, Tomas Aghas and myself went on a mission to the United States to raise money for the Gaelic League. On the outbreak of the War in Europe the Clan-na-Gael decided to raise a Fund for the Irish Volunteers; Tomas and myself necessarily brought our campaign to a close. He returned home in September. I stayed on as I had another and a secret mission, viz., that of IRB envoy to biennial Convention of the Clan.

In the latter capacity I had no contact with the Convention proper, the regular procedure being: first the envoy consulted with the "RD" (Revolutionary Directory) which then comprised John T. Keating of Chicago, John Devoy and Joseph McGarrity; next day to appear before and confer with the "Committee on Foreign Relations". One of my duties was to report on the "Home Organisation". On stating its strength to be approximately 2,000 I recollect an outburst of amazement on the part of an American-born member of the Committee. He, evidently, had been under the impression from previous reports that we had a much larger membership - coupled with the feeling that the heads of the Home Organisation were lax in recruiting. At any rate, my statement was based on returns made by the Divisional Centres at the meeting of the Council held prior to January 1914.

At that time this particular committee-man - a veteran in the Clan - had no conception of the conditions under which we at this side ~~xx~~ laboured. He probably had a recollection of a much earlier period when the Home Organisation included perhaps thousands - the remnant of the very large IRB membership in the days of the (early) Land League. Meantime, of course, death had taken toll of that remnant, and the great majority of the survivors had been diverted from their Republican allegiance by the overpowering growth of the Home Rule movement under Parnell and his successors. A percentage remained nominally IRB over many years but by 1913 only an odd man here and there belonged to an active Circle. Only the latter were included in the 1913 computation.

1914
contd.

On returning from the U.S. in November 1914 (via Liverpool) I brought from the Clan-na-Gael a draft for £2,000 for the Irish Volunteers, carefully secreted. I also brought for my personal use an automatic pistol and ammunition. These ~~items~~ latter items I duly "declared" (on being questioned by the Customs inspector) lest a search of my person and belongings should bring the draft to light. The "firearms" were held by the Customs authorities, - against which I, as an American citizen, protested. Fortunately, I was not known to the officials in Britain as I had been to the police in Ireland; I was informed that if I sent an application - signed by a "J.P." and a clergyman - to the Home Secretary, the articles would doubtless be forwarded to me in Ireland. In due course the pistol and ammunition reached me by post; they remained ~~in my possession for "Easter Week".~~ in my possession for "Easter Week".

Soon after my arrival in Ireland I reported to the two available members of the "Executive" - Denis McCullough and Tom Clarke -, and was informed of developments during my absence: the Split with Redmond, the gun-running at Howth and Kilcool, and on the report furnished by an "Advisory Committee" appointed for the purpose of drafting a plan for a fight in the Dublin area. This plan was deemed to be only provisional; Tom was very critical of certain points. I did not read it, nor do I recollect the personnel of the committee, ^{which} I understood ~~that~~ it included a considerable number of prominent Irish Volunteer officers. To my mind, the drafting of military plans for an insurrection (which purpose was not perhaps stated to the committee) was necessarily of a secret nature and should accordingly be entrusted to a much smaller committee; that the latter should in the course of their deliberations have the closest contact with the I.R.B. Executive. I urged that the "Advisory Committee" should be dissolved; it was allowed to lapse.

1915. Shortly thereafter, Pearse, Plunkett and Ceannt cooperated in drafting plans for an Insurrection. About the end of May, 1915, at a meeting of the I.R.B. Executive (on which I functioned as Acting-Secretary, - MacDiarmada being in prison) Pearse, Plunkett and Ceannt were, on my motion, formally appointed a "Military Committee"

(The cooperation of Clarke and MacDiarmada later in 1915, and the addition of Connolly and MacDonagh in 1916, is referred to elsewhere).

The 1915 Divisional elections (IRB) were due a few months later. In the ordinary course Sean MacDiarmada would have supervised those in Connaught - which he represented on the Supreme Council. Due to his many activities in Dublin over previous years, plus his physical disability, he had been unable to give more than casual attention to the organisation in that province. He was now in prison so it was agreed that I should visit the Division, attend to any necessary preliminaries there and conduct the election. Tom Clarke furnished me with the names of Centres and some prominent men in the province. First I went to Limerick for the Volunteer parade (May); thence partly by train and partly by bicycle, - never entering or leaving any town by train. My first official call was at Athenry where I met Larry Lardner and Liam Mellows, - both of whom undertook to attend to pre-election details in County Galway. Thence I proceeded to Castlebar, Westport, Newport, Ballina, Ballaghaderin, etc. The organisation in Mayo was at a very low ebb, except in Westport. One of the few contacts I had in County Sligo was the name and address of a schoolteacher who was deemed eligible for membership. I "swore him in".

Further electoral preliminaries were conducted by responsible parties whom I interviewed, and a date was set for the Divisional election at Claremorris. I attended the latter. One of the delegates present was elected Divisional Centre to replace MacDiarmada (whom Tom Clarke and myself had agreed to nominate for co-optation to the Supreme Council). Just as our work at Claremorris was in progress, a

telegram (pre-arranged should a certain event arise) reached me at the hotel where we were in session; I took the night-goods train - the only means available; reached Dublin next morning and Cork in the afternoon.

Evidently, the police were ignorant of my whereabouts during those visits to Connaught - to which end I had taken pains. Contrary to the British Government attitude to American citizens generally, I was ordered in June 1915 to register as a "Friendly Alien". This meant that I should report to the police when leaving any "Proclaimed Area" and again when entering another. As I did not so register I was summoned to appear before a magistrate at Inns Quay Court. Tom Clarke was of opinion that I should refuse to register; that deportation to the U.S. was certain to follow, and that this would afford the Clan ~~with~~ material for anti-British propaganda. Under the then circumstances - with a fight in prospect - I preferred to register as ordered and remain in Ireland. I did so just before appearing in court; the charge against me was accordingly dismissed.

Gaelic League Ard Fheis - Dundalk, July 1915

The non-political plank of the Gaelic League (by which it was understood that any person whether a Home Ruler, Orangeman, or Sinn Feiner should not inject his particular political viewpoint into Gaelic ^{League} branches, classes, etc. This was always respected by the I.R.B. and by its members who held seats on the Coiste Gnotha. But, on this governing body of the League an element advocated lines of procedure with respect to the Board of Education and "Dublin Castle" (on matters affecting the language movement, of ~~course~~ course) which to many of us were objectionable. There was a multiplicity of such moves, and thus there was a growing divergence between what may be termed the "Right Wing" and the "Left Wing" over the years prior to 1915. When "Left Wing" opposition to those methods was voiced, the Right deemed it Sinn Feinism and "politics". The initial factor, however, was that Right Wing policy developed very definitely along Redmonaite Party ~~lines~~ lines, which was at variance with that of "Sinn Fein" - the term then generally used for all national opponents of the Parliamentary Party.

Dr. Douglas Hyde, the President, was in fact the leader of the Right Wing. I remember an incident at the Ard Fheis 1913 at Galway: His rulings from the chair were distinctly one-sided throughout the proceedings. Though I was able to follow the discussions my knowledge of Irish was too slight to enable me to participate in the debates, or "appeal from the ruling of the Chair" - a very ordinary feature of American deliberative assemblies). So, I had to content myself with the pertinent query: "An tusa an Ard Fheis"?

During the greater part of 1914 I was absent in the United States. On my return I found that the cleavage between the two "wings" of the Coiste Gnotha had widened. Prior to this the IRB Executive had taken no official steps with regard to the election of the Coiste Gnotha, though our members on the latter body did to very limited extent. This in itself was proof that the IRB had no wish to inject "politics" into the work of the Gaelic League. The "Right Wing" comprised men and women who had given veteran service to the language movement; all we had previously sought was to ~~keep~~ keep them from pursuing tactics which savoured of "parliamentarianism".

By the summer of 1915, however, when the stage was ^{being} secretly set for insurrection against Britain, the time had come in my opinion when the "Left Wing" should control the Coiste Gnotha - not to use it for the propagation of Republicanism but to obviate the possibility of tactics contrary thereto. I discussed this with my I.R.B. colleagues on the Coiste, and probably with Tom Clarke though I have no distinct recollection of ~~the latter's~~ such

discussion

1915 contd. discussion with the latter. Well in advance of the Ard Fheis date I communicated with prominent Gaelic Leaguers throughout the country - who were also I.R.B. men - urging that delegates favourable to our political views should without fail be selected to attend at Dundalk. Colleagues on the Coiste next suggested that we endeavour to elect men then in prison: Sean MacDiarmada, Barnan de Blaghd, and one other I think. It was felt that ~~this~~ their election would convey a salutary lesson to all concerned.

Our delegate friends at Dundalk (not all IRB men) held a caucus meeting; the decision was unanimous with one exception. Nominations were made accordingly.

As the result of the ballot was being announced and Sean MacDiarmada's name appeared high on the list, An Craoibhin's uneasiness became apparent. When the election of the next prisoner was read Dr. Hyde swept his papers from the rostrum and left the Convention Hall. A delegation to him at his hotel brought back word that he had resigned from the presidency. This situation had not been sought or expected by us. But, had he given that as an ultimatum when the list of nominations was read, we would not have swerved from our plan at that juncture in national affairs. The new Coiste was safe from the I.R.B. viewpoint!

O'Donovan Rossa Funeral

Though a member of the Funeral Committee I had hardly any hand in the arrangements. Just then I had been busy with the Ard Fheis at Dundalk; whence we returned to Dublin a day or two prior to Sunday, August 1st.

Meeting for Re-organisation of the Supreme Council

This was held in Dublin either about the middle of July, 1915, (before the G.L.Ard Fheis) or about the middle of August (on my return from the Officers' Training Course, Dublin/Wicklow, under "Ginger" O'Connell).

There was not a full attendance of the elected Divisional Centres. Those present proceeded with the completion of the membership of the Supreme Council: Tom Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada, Padraig Pearse and Dr. MacCartan were co-opted.

Robert Monteith

Towards the end of August Monteith was ready to proceed to Germany - via New York. Tom Clarke and I decided to give him £100 for his expenses; this sum was handed to him in Tom's shop.

First meeting of the new Supreme Council

This, I think, was held in September. Denis McCullough was elected President (which, be it noted, meant President of the Irish Republic virtually established by the I.R.B.). Sean MacDiarmada was re-elected Secretary, and Tom Clarke re-elected Treasurer. These three now comprised the "Executive".

Denis McCullough was the elected representative of Ulster. The other Divisions were represented as follows: Leinster, Sean Tobin; Munster, Diarmuid Lynch; Connaught, Alex. McCabe; South England, Dick Connolly; North England, Joseph Gleeson; Scotland, Padraig Pearse and Dr. MacCartan - co-opted members in addition to Clarke and MacD. - completed the Council. I would say that all eleven were present, but am not certain.

Casement pamphlet distribution - see separate statement.

Ballyfeard, via Cork,
July 22, 1950.

MS. 4

The Bureau of Military History,
Ath Cliath.



A Chairde:

The I.R.B. - Recollections etc

On reading over my copy of the above (original on file with you) I note that the opening words on p.7 - "The following month (October)" - should read

"Later in September".

Will you kindly make this correction.

Mise le meas

Diarmuid Lynch
~~DIARMUÍ LYNCH~~

1915
contd.Landing Place for Cargo of Arms

The following month (October) I had a talk with Pearse. He desired that I secure the views of Tralee men and others in that part of Kerry as to the relative merits of Ventry Harbour and any other advantageous spots in that region for the landing of a cargo of arms and their expeditious distribution therefrom.

I proceeded to Cork, reported there to the police under the "Order", and transacted some business in the ordinary course. "Reported" again that I was leaving for Tralee (my insurance managership took me to all parts of Munster). The telegraph operators at Cork Station were usually IRB men and they were aware that the "G.man" on duty there always wired ahead to the police at my destination (Sean O'Hegarty, Tommy O'Riordan, etc were able to decode his ~~xxx~~ messages). So, on arrival at Tralee I again duly "reported". On presenting my Registration Book the constable on duty remarked: "Aren't you an Irishman?" to which I answered "yes". He continued: "Then what the blazes do you want to register for?" and handed back my book unendorsed. I said "O.K." and left. As matters turned out later, I should have insisted on the usual endorsement to show that I had "reported". After some ~~xxx~~ months I had reason to wonder whether that R.I.C. man was really friendly and was afraid to acknowledge his own remissness when the matter of my non-registration at Tralee arose, or whether he had acted on orders and "put one over on me".

My visit coincided with a meeting of the Tralee Volunteers. There I contacted Austin Stack and a few of his chief lieutenants. All favoured Fenit as the landing place - from which a light railway ran to Tralee. The local "G.men" kept peeping over the wall of the laneway, but that sort of thing was commonplace and no notice was taken of them.

(a few miles
Next afternoon I went on to Dingle ~~1/4/16/1/16/16~~ from Ventry). One of my first calls was to the R.I.C. barrack (not for the purpose of "reporting" which was unnecessary at Dingle) where I canvassed the men for Life Insurance. In the light of my real mission to that town, and especially, light of actual happenings in the Tan war, that solicitation does seem ironical! ~~When I contacted the I.R.B. Centre~~

Then ~~When~~, I contacted the I.R.B. Centre. In the dusk of the evening he, accompanied by two of his men, met me outside the town. Sitting in the middle of a field we had our chat. They also favoured Fenit, - pointing out that Ventry was some twenty miles from Tralee (where the necessarily large body of Volunteers needed for the first stage of transmission was located); that the conveyance of ~~x~~ the cargo from Ventry through the bottle neck of the Dingle peninsula would be extremely hazardous as a small body of police posted there might bring ~~the~~ the whole enterprise to disaster.

The Centre at Listowel was equally convinced that Fenit was preferable to any other point on the Kerry coast.

The result of my visit was promptly reported to Pearse; also to Clarke and MacDiarmada. I have no recollection of the matter being discussed at any meeting of the Supreme Council.

(Here I may remark that it is certain James Connolly had no knowledge whatever of the expected cargo of arms from Germany until January 19th/21st, 1916, - when it was agreed that he become a member of the Military Council).

Pearse's Secret Instructions for I.V. Comdts (IRB men)

1916. These Pearse gave to me early in January, 1916 at St. Enda's; I was to convey them orally to the Cork, Kerry, Limerick and Galway Commandants. He outlined the positions which these Brigades were to occupy on the Volunteer manoeuvres which had been decided on for the Easter week-end, viz.: Cork to hold the County to the south of the Boggeragh mountains - left flank contacting the Kerry Brigade which was to extend eastwards from Tralee; Limerick was to contact the Kerry men on the south and those of Limerick - Clare - Galway to the north. Limerick, Clare and Galway were "to hold the line of the Shannon to Athlone".

There was no immediate hurry for the transmission of these orders so I remained on in Dublin for the scheduled Supreme Council meeting.

Then the ~~service of the~~ "ENEMY Alien" Order was ~~served~~ served on me (based on my non-registration at Tralee!). This confined me to a five mile radius from my residence in Dublin and resulted in the cancellation of my mission.

(Further details respecting those secret orders are given in my article written in 1945 for An Cosantoir) (*not published*)

Supreme Council Meeting, January, 1916

It may be as well to supplement my comments to Le Roux on this (p.84 of folder):

Denis McCullough presided. At least ten and perhaps the entire eleven members of the Council were present.

Clarke and MacDiarmada - accepted as leaders and known to be the two ~~resident~~ resident members of the "Executive" resident in Dublin and in closest contact with events which would govern decisions of the I.R.B. - had the entire confidence of the Council. At that meeting they initiated all the leads to the principal matters discussed; Pearse had little to say on any subject. To me, possessed as I was of knowledge of many of their moves (as already detailed), it was evident that neither of these three desired ~~to~~ to report the full extent of their progress, not, I am satisfied, because of any lack of confidence in their colleagues but for the obvious reason that the secret decisions and plans of the Military Council had better be kept within as narrow a circle as possible. In my opinion, then and now, this attitude was the part of commonsense and wisdom.

MacDiarmada's motion that "we fight at the earliest date possible" was in line with that attitude, and the Council as a whole was fully justified in being satisfied with that decision.

(R. M. Fox's remarks about "nods and winks" - which obviously ~~refer~~ refer to my statements appearing in Le Roux's "Tom Clarke and the Irish Freedom Movement" - exhibit not merely a lack of grasp of the situation but are hypercritical in his ridiculous effort to prove that only for Connolly's insistence there would have been no Insurrection).

Detention of James Connolly

Connolly "disappeared" on January 19, 1916; he was back at Liberty Hall on the 22nd. During his "disappearance" I spoke with Sean MacDiarmada on the matter. Sean's only answer was a smile - which "spoke volumes" to me (perhaps Mr. Fox would now add "smiles" to "nods and winks"!)). I was satisfied that Sean knew of Connolly's whereabouts and did not wish to discuss him. I was equally

satisfied

1916 satisfied that Sean's colleagues on the then Military Council also contd. knew. Having the fullest confidence in the five members thereof I pursued this question no further. And, when early in March I saw Connolly in conference with those whom I knew to be members of the Military Council, and coupled this with his previous impetuous outspokenness and threats regarding lone action by the Citizen Army - which bid fair to bring to disaster all the IRB plans for the Rising - the definite conclusion was not far to seek that his "arrest" in January was the deliberate act of the I.R.B. Military Council.

When discussing Connolly's disappearance with William O'Brien, in Richmond Barracks after the "Easter Week" surrender, he agreed with that conclusion. He told me that when speaking with James Connolly after his return on January 22nd, Connolly refused to say anything about his whereabouts during the previous few days.

Committee on Telegraph-Telephone "Manholes"

First meeting called by Sean MacDiarmada about the 1st of April - Andy Fitzpatrick, Sean Byrne, Dick Mulcahy and myself. Additional members later, - John Twamley and the brothers King. The report was compiled by me and delivered to Sean MacD. on Monday of Holy Week. (other details given in my "Supplementary Statement on Easter Week").

Military Council - Co-option of Tomas MacDonagh

See my "Supplementary Statement on Easter Week."

"EASTER WEEK" - G.P.O. Area

The Report on Operations in this area, compiled by me and ratified at a general meeting of the survivors of the Garrison in 1938, is in the hands of the G.P.O. Garrison Committee. A copy of it was handed to An Taoiseach a few years ago and I believe was deposited by him in the National Library. This copy is, of course, available for the Bureau of Military History.



1917

Post-"Easter Week" Reorganisation of the I. R. B.

When the "Convict" prisoners were released from ^{Pentonville} ~~Lanes~~ in June, 1917, Dr. MacCartan joined us - at Holyhead, I think - and informed me (I was the only member of the pre-Easter Week Supreme Council among them) that a temporary Council had functioned in our absence.

The following Autumn the Supreme Council was regularly re-established - thanks to the preliminary work done by Michael Collins at Frongoch and during 1917 while Secretary of the National Aid Assn. I forget the ~~particulars~~ full personnel of the new S.C. so at the moment I will name only the members of the "Executive: Sean McGarry (President), Michael Collins (Secretary), and Diarmuid Lynch (Treasurer).

The "Easter Week" Proclamation had revealed the continued existence till then of the I.R.B. as a functioning organisation. One of the post-Easter developments was that a few veteran members (Cathal Brugha among them) decided that there was no further need for the

secret organisation. (Commandant de Valera informed me immediately after leaving Pentonville that he would discontinue membership, but gave no reason for his decision). Others who had participated in the Insurrection felt that while remaining in the I.R.B. they should no longer be subject to the old discipline.

Those who desired to relinquish membership were, of course, at liberty to do so. But the new Supreme Council determined that the continuance of the I.R.B. was still essential; that an amended ~~new~~ Constitution was necessary; that discipline would be rigidly enforced; that whole-time organisers would be put in the field.

Draft of revised Constitution was drawn up by Tomas Aghas, Con Collins and myself. This was further revised by Mick Collins ~~and myself~~ and me. In due course it was ratified by the S.C.

(In the matter of this Constitution we find an instance of the oft-alleged knowledge by British officials of secret I.R.B. and other documents as at the time they were issued or were in effect: In "The Secret Societies of Ireland" by H.B.C. Pollard (published 1922) he includes what he cites as the "Constitution of the I.R.B. in 1914" But it so happens that the Constitution reproduced by him (Appendix J) as for 1914 is not the pre-Easter Week Constitution but that revised and adopted at the end of 1917. Copy of the latter probably fell into the hands of the British during the Black and Tan raids. It is not pertinent to this statement to comment on any other feature of Pollock's book).

Comment on the Constitution of 1917

I never saw an official printed copy of this amended Constitution; it had not been printed at the date of my imprisonment in February 1918. Therefore I am not in a position to say if the version given by Pollock is a full reproduction. Under clause 32 as cited by him I note a reference to clauses 33, 35, 36 which clauses do not appear. Otherwise, from my recollection of the changes made the text of I would say, the document is correctly quoted .

Some of the principal changes from the previous Constitution were:
(a) A provision to expel any member who subsequent to initiation into the I.R.B. should join any other oath-bound organisation. There was a particular reason for this in 1917 and the Supreme Council was determined that the IRB should continue to have but one object, and that its members should not be dominated by any other secret organisation. (Clauses 5,6).

(b) The sub-division of each geographical province in Ireland into two I. R. B. Divisions - thus laying the foundation for more intensive recruitment, and incidentally enlarging the membership of the Supreme Council (elected and co-opted) from 11 to 15. (Clause 10).

(c) More specific regulations pertaining to a Declaration of War (clauses 20,21).

(d) the addition of a proviso for the appointment of a "Military Council" and ~~the~~ limitation of its powers. (Clause 23).

Sinn Fein Convention, October, 1917.

The Provisional Executive Committee of Sinn Fein discussed the draft of a constitution to be submitted to the coming Convention. Griffith, Milroy and other old-time Sinn Feiners were in favour of retaining the original Sinn Fein idea of "The King, Lords and Commons of Ireland", - an unbelievably retrograde step a year and a half after "Easter Week"! I.R.B. members of the Provisional Committee led by Mick Collins, supported by non-IRB men who included Joe McGuinness, vigorously protested against this move; the prospect of their success was not encouraging.

Though not a member of that Committee I had an interview with

de Valera

de Valera who was, in which I stressed the definite I.R.B. attitude - that we would fight against any backdown from the "Easter Week" Proclamation. He also wanted to hold to the latter and evidently had a plan to meet the situation. Those other members of the Committee who opposed the retrograde proposal held a private meeting - at which I recollect Count Plunkett, Joe McGuinness, Piaras Beaslai. The result of our talk was that steps would be taken to contact in advance delegates chosen to attend the Convention. The I.R.B. accordingly decided to re-enact the plan followed in the case of the 1915 Gaelic League Ard Fheis - with a view not merely to ensure a "republican" constitution for the re-organised Sinn Fein organisation, but also the election of ~~an~~ a permanent Executive Committee which could be relied on to uphold it.

Immediately prior to the Convention de Valera had suggested a preamble to the Constitution reading:

"Sinn Fein aims at securing the international recognition of Ireland as an independent Irish Republic. Having achieved that status the Irish people may by Referendum freely choose their own form of Government".

Fortunately, Griffith and his supporters on the Provisional Committee accepted that, but the IRB was still doubtful as to what may happen at the Convention. It proceeded with its plan. Our efforts were not confined to I.R.B. men. The delegates communicated with reported at the Foresters Hall and were informed of the circumstances. Also, they were handed a list of those whom we deemed it wise to elect on the permanent governing body. Some of them, or others in whom they confided, reported this move to the Convention - where it was sharply criticised. This did not worry us, - our purpose was not personal but national. The tenseness of the situation was relieved by Griffith's laudable withdrawal of his candidacy for the Presidency in favour of de Valera. De Valera's draft constitution was adopted unanimously; nothing further was heard of "The King, Lords and Commons of Ireland". While the personnel of the Executive elected differed very considerably from that suggested by the I.R.B. it was entirely satisfactory. Sinn Fein had become a definitely Republican organisation.

1918Sinn Fein Food Control

While the seizure of pigs (on their way to the North Wall for export) and their detention in Dublin was effected in my capacity as Sinn Fein Food Director, it may be said to have been a combined Sinn Fein-IRB-Irish Volunteer undertaking.

It was a prelude to my deportation to the U.S. - which terminated my membership of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

Some details of the I.R.B. organisation
in MUNSTER, 1912-1916
are given on pages following:

I. R. B. organisation in Munster, 1912-1916.

After a lapse of over 30 years I find it impossible to recall fully the location and strength of the various Circles and groups in the province. I had all the information then of course - through County and District Centres.

I give such details as I can recall; these apply for the most part to 1912-13. I was absent in the U.S. during 1914. Then, personal business confined me chiefly to Dublin over 1915. When any special I.R.B. matters called me South at the latter period, efforts to transact business were camouflage to a large extent.

Some of the names mentioned hereunder will serve for the securing of further particulars.

As previously stated I reported to the Clan-na-Gael Convention, 1914, that the strength of the "Home Organisation" (i.e. in ~~Great Britain~~ Ireland, ~~and~~ England and Scotland) was approximately 2,000. This figure probably represented the strength in Ireland alone by 1916.

The Irish Volunteers after the Split with Redmond furnished not alone a favourable but a definite recruiting field for the I.R.B. But as active Volunteers were for the most part looked on by the I.R.B. as men who would participate in an Insurrection when the right moment was revealed, there was no longer any necessity for a great increase in I.R.B. membership, especially as the great majority of Commandants and senior officers of the Volunteers were already members of the secret organisation.

KKERRY

I have no recollection of having ever attended a Circle meeting in Kerry. Austin Stack was County Centre and I kept contact through him. I did, however, on my own initiative swear in four men at Valentia Cable Station: Tim Ring, "TOS" O'Sullivan, ~~W.~~ W. Scaife and Alec. Smith. In the matter of selecting a landing place for arms cargo I interviewed men at Dingle and Listowel. Of the prominent Tralee men still living there, Eamonn O'Connor is the only one I can remember - I'm pretty certain he was IRB as well as Volunteer.

CLARE

There was a circle at Ennistymon, and one at Crusheen, - with groups at various places: Carrigaholt, Ennis, Kildysart, etc. I have a very happy recollection of the circumstances under which I swore in a man at Carrigaholt - but that is not for the record.

Whether Michael and Paddy Brennan were then members I cannot say for a certainty. Sean O Muirthille, Gaelic League Organiser, was in touch with the entire County. That he gave me information concerning certain districts I'm certain but cannot recall details.

There was what might be termed an unofficial Circle somewhere in the country beyond Ennistymon (I forget the name of the locality), which occupied a peculiar position. The Centre was Tomas O'Loughlin, an old man of 70 or thereabouts, who held the strange idea of keeping his men apart from any official contacts. Though this ~~was~~ was irregular he was permitted to have his way. He was very ~~usually~~ secretive in all his talk and actions. I recall ~~an~~ with pleasure an incident in which he figured:

At Ennistymon, 1915, I learned from Sean O Muirthille that the
local

local Irish Volunteers were negotiating with the Redmond Volunteers (then defunct as an organisation) for the purchase of twenty Enfield Rifles, but had not the cash to complete the transaction. I went straight to Dublin and The O'Rahilly gave me the requisite £40. Returning, I put up at Sean O'Muirthille's ~~head~~ headquarters - a small hotel where Tomas O'Loughlin was also staying at the time. It was agreed that the local IVs should retain ten rifles. The other ten were to be distributed at my discretion; these were brought to my bedroom and eventually went: 2 to Carrigaholt, 2 to Ennis, and 6 to Crusheen. Next morning, I learned that old Tomas on his own initiative and without saying a word to anybody had remained on guard all night on the stairs outside my room - he having been suspicious of a young R.I.C. man going home on leave who happened to stay at this hotel overnight. In post-Easter days this would have seemed a very trivial but back in 1915 we were enthused and proud of the old man's spirit.

Other collaboration during my visits to County Clare which I recollect with pleasure was that of two clergymen. They were splendid.

This incident of the Ennistymon rifles throws a light on the then dearth of arms among the Volunteers, and how essential the ~~xxxx~~ prospective "Aud" cargo was for the plans of the I.R.B. in 1916.

LIMERICK

I completely forget the strength of the I.R.B. in the County. Under the influence of the old veteran, John Daly, whom I never missed an opportunity to call on (he was incapacitated in my day), and his active lieutenants Jim Leddin, ~~and~~ Colivet, etc., I am satisfied that the organisation was fairly strong in the city. I never attended a meeting of the Limerick Circle; none of my visits coincided with one.

I recollect contacts with individuals and groups at Pallasgreen, Doon, etc.

TIPPERARY

Frank Drohan had a Circle at Clonmel; William Benn one at Tipperary town; P.C.O'Mahony one at Cashel (of which one or more Rockwell students were members). I attended a meeting at Tipperary and one at Cashel, - about 15 members present at each, not the full membership. There were, I believe, one or two groups further north in the County, but I ~~was~~ never in those localities.

WATERFORD

Willie Walsh had a Circle at Waterford City. I believe there were one or two groups elsewhere in the County; the facts have escaped my memory.

CORK

The Circle at Cork City - to which I was transferred about 1910 - was then in its infancy with a small membership which included: Sean O'Hegarty (Centre), Thomas Barry, Tomas MacCurtain, Sean Murphy, Dommall Og O'Callaghan, Diarmaid Fawsitt, Bob Langford, Tadgh Barry, Tommy O'Riordan, Tommy O'Mahony, ~~Billy O'Shea~~ Sean O'Sullivan, Billy O'Shea.

The latter was the only man of the organisation of former years (which had faded out) now attached to the re-organised Circle. Quite a number of ~~xxx~~ city men then living had belonged to the I.R.B. but for one reason or another they were not now deemed up to standard.

The Circle made considerable progress over 1912-16 but my contacts during the later years were few.

Elsewhere in the County the only Circles I recollect were at Cobh and Millstreet. There were groups at Kinsale, Fermoy, Glanworth, Mitchelstown, Skibbereen and Tracton. I swore in men in some of these places.


DIARMUID LYNCH

March, 1947.

Witness

Flavence O'Connell

2 May 1947.

CASEMENT PAMPHLET

The Distribution of, 1915

The story of this item of I.R.B. activity during the First World War is given herewith in detail as requested by the Bureau of Military History.

The difficulty envisaged by the I.R.B. in 1915, in what nowadays seems such a simple matter, throws a light on pre-"Easter Week" conditions. As in other matters, a way was found to circumvent the extreme watchfulness of British Government officials in Ireland.

The pamphlet comprised a series of articles written anonymously by Sir Roger Casement some years earlier. The outbreak of the 1914 war brought Casement's ideas into the realm of "Practical politics". The series was published in the Gaelic American, New York (the official organ of the Clan-na-Gael) in 1914, and then reproduced by it in pamphlet form. Subsequently it ran in "Irish Freedom", Dublin.

The Supreme Council, prior to my return from the U.S. in November 1914, ordered a large edition printed by the Enniscorthy Echo - the editor, sub-editor and most of the staff of which were I.R.B. men. When printed, the pamphlets were placed temporarily in Larry de Lacey's house. Soon afterwards a raid was made thereon by the R.I.C. for the purpose of arresting Sean O'Hegarty (head of the I.R.B. in Cork who had been dismissed from the Post Office there because of his national activities, and who was then staying with de Lacey) in connection with the ~~was~~ posting in the Enniscorthy area of leaflets controverting some British propaganda. Reference to these matters in the Enniscorthy Echo, April 19, 1930, states that the stock of pamphlets escaped the notice of the police. They were promptly transferred to a friendly farmer's place "somewhere in Wexford", and there they remained for many months.

At a meeting of the Supreme Council in the Spring of 1915 the difficulty of advantageous distribution was stressed - circulation by "Sinn Feiners" (which term included I.R.B. men) might defeat its purpose, viz., an impartial study of them. Though important, this matter of distribution was not urgent; the meeting passed on to other items on the agenda. At a later meeting I mentioned a plan for getting them into the hands of each County, Urban, and Rural Councillor and to professional men throughout the country; the job was left in my hands.

Among the leading seed merchants in Dublin, Cork, etc. were staunch "Unionists" whom the British Government officials would never dream of associating with the dissemination of documents savouring of "disloyalty" or contrary to the "Defence of the Realm Regulations". This and the fact that the season was at hand for the issuance of their bulb catalogues (about the size of the Casement pamphlet) suggested the scheme.

"All is fair in love and war", so I decided to have sets of envelopes imprinted with the name and address of one seed firm in each of ~~five~~ centres, - Dublin, Galway, Tralee, Cork and Waterford, and of a concern in Belfast engaged in a different but extensively advertised line. I was, of course, fairly certain that in due course all these firms would be interrogated sharply by Dublin Castle; also that they would receive indignant protests from ~~the~~ the pro-British element among their customers. Even so,

Dundalk,

I was fully satisfied that ~~whenever~~ eventually no injury would result from the ruse - other than the momentarily outraged feelings of those whose names had been thus used. Anyway, the stratagem gave the best assurance of hoodwinking the Post Office in the execution of good national work.

The lists of Councillors were not available, except those in Co. Cork (which were given in Guy's Directory). We therefore had one of our members in the Local Government Board headquarters write the secretary of each Council for the names and addresses. The latter were promptly turned over to me. The next step was to ascertain the total number to be covered from respective centres, added to which was a large number of professional men grouped likewise.

Suitable envelopes having been procured, the imprinting was done by James Connolly at Liberty Hall. The addresses were typed by the staff of one of our men. Next, the requisite bundles were delivered at four addresses to await the pamphlets.

We were now ready to bring the pamphlets from Wexford. I arranged with William Sears, editor of the Enniscorthy Echo, to have an escort of IRB men meet me at Ferns, and then guide us to the cache.

Joe Dunn, a taxi driver and IRB man, arranged for the taxi. We started from Dublin in the early afternoon. Half way to Ferns, with time to spare, we stopped for a roadside snack. Soon a large motorcar hove in sight. As it came abreast of us Joe pretended to be working at his engine. The driver of the car - whose passenger was a British Naval officer - asked if he could be of help - an offer which Joe graciously declined as he had "only a little engine trouble". We were to meet that car again. Further on we stopped at a hotel for tea - the "tourist" being shown to the "coffee room" and Joe to the kitchen. Reaching Ferns at dusk, our escort met us as arranged - Seumas Doyle, P. Keegan and M. Davis - which was fortunate. A heavy fog had set in, and as one of them directed Joe along a bye-route the number of four-cross ~~was~~ roads we came to - with right and left turnings - ~~exceeded~~ anything either Joe or myself had ~~experienced~~ ever experienced. Arriving at the spot, we found that it was "Oulartleigh House" belonging to Thomas Murphy who did an extensive threshing mill business. The number of farmers etc present was embarrassing; this occasioned a long delay before we could load the potato sacks in which the pamphlets had been packed. They filled the back of the taxi.

It was 2 a.m. when we reached Arklow on the return journey - with the fog growing more and more dense. Just past the town we came to a cross road, and neither Joe nor myself knew which we should take for Dublin - and Anthony Mackey was waiting up at his home on the south side of the city to take delivery of our precious load! As we wondered how or where we could get our direction we deemed ourselves fortunate to see a light not far away and to this we drove. Imagine our surprise to find it shone not from a private residence but from that ~~British~~ British Naval officer's car.

The chauffeur informed us that we were on the wrong road; that we should have turned left at the cross. Just then a Coastguard, armed with carbine, hopped over the wall and plied us with questions - we had the front windows open: Where are you going? Where did you come from?, etc, all of which Joe answered quite calmly. Then he placed his hand on the handle of the rear door, but instead of opening it he asked: "Anybody in the rear"? to which Joe replied "No". Fortunately for us, and for all concerned, the fog had made the windows opaque. Had that Coastguard opened the door and seen the rear

piled with burlap bags containing bulky material, certain it is that further investigation would ensue - with the alternative of shooting our way out. Great was our relief when our inquisitor concluded without more ado that we were "law-abiding" travellers; he obligingly told us that the road straight ahead was impassable for a car; that we should ~~fix~~ go back to the cross and turn to the right. We felt doubly grateful then as had shooting started we would unquestionably have driven straight ahead from our waiting position - to almost certain disaster on the rocks. (The presence of that Coastguard convinced us that the building near by was a "Coastguard Station" but "Nada" in the Enniscorthy Echo refers to it as Kynock's Ammunition factory. It is now the Arklow Pottery Works.).

When a few miles along the Dublin road one of our lamps gave out. While Joe was in the act of re-charging with carbide we noticed an approaching bright glow behind us - evidently from a strong electric light which could have been none else than that of the car we parted from at Kynock's. Our "guilty consciences" convinced us that the British officials had on ~~checked~~ second thoughts decided to investigate us further - folks who at that hour of the morning didn't know the ~~main~~ road to Dublin. Our first thought was to pull to the side of the road, get inside the fence and be ready for eventualities. But in the next few seconds Joe got the lamp alight and decided to "give them a run for it". Off we tore through the fog at an uncomfortably high speed; it was impossible to see clearly more than a length or two ahead. When nearing bends it seemed that only a miracle could save us from crashing. Joe was, however, equal to the task. He admitted never having experienced a more difficult one. That powerful naval car could, I'm sure, have caught up with us. Instead, over a stretch of miles he kept about 150 yards to the rear, taking advantage doubtless of getting the lay of the road from us. Our guess was that we would be trailed all the way to Dublin, but, no, - at a certain cross we turned left and he continued straight on towards Wicklow. Another sigh of relief, and yet another twinge of misgiving: "Would that naval man telephone the Bray and Dublin police to be on the lookout for a "suspicious car"?"

It was daylight when we reached Bray, and apart from the last mentioned possibility it would be too risky to be seen unloading such sacks from a new taxi so early in the morning - at the house of a "Sinn Feiner". So, at my suggestion, Joe made a detour and headed through the Dublin mountains for Rathfarnham and St. Enda's college. In the avenue there we secreted the sacks among the shrubbery. Joe cleaned out his taxi the best he could and set out for Dublin. I went up to the college to talk with Pdraig Pearse. I found him already dressed; he came with me to see the sacks. He thought they could be hidden to better advantage so we dragged them to a thicker patch. I told him I would have a grocer's van call for them as early as possible, and he remarked that he would inform his lodge keeper, Miceál Mac Ruaidhrí (?). Though I knew the old man to be one of the best, I demurred, whereon Pearse remarked: "Oh, I must tell Miceál; if he should come across them during the day and realised that I had not trusted him with my knowledge of their whereabouts he'd never forgive me".

The sacks reached the houses where the envelopes were in readiness. There the members of each household and other helpers got the material ready for mailing (letter post).

An All-Ireland Final at Croke Park was imminent. I advised IRB men in the Provinces to meet me after the match, at a central location, where suitcases containing ~~the respective~~ bundles were ready for them. These were to be handed in at the

the respective Post Offices exactly at 6 p.m. the following Thursday - not earlier and not later. Thus, should the contents by some mischance be discovered at any one Post Office, the probability was that those posted elsewhere would be delivered to the addressees before the authorities could issue a warning.

The area covered from Dublin was the largest, and this delivery almost came to grief at the post office. The young lad, entrusted with the posting reached the front office of the G.P.O. promptly at 6 o'clock, only to find that bulk post should be handed in at the rear platform. To get to the back was but a matter of a minute or two but when he got there it was, of course, after six, and six was the closing time for such deliveries; the postman on duty refused to accept them. The boy, however, had "an old head on young shoulders"; he pleaded the excuse that a pal met him on the way to the G.P.O. and insisted on his having a drink; that if the postman did not take his letters from him he would lose his job. The plea succeeded.

Early that Thursday I left for Cork. Next day I visited Kinsale on business and called on an Urban Councillor who was well disposed to "Sinn Fein". He expressed his astonishment that he should have received by the morning post from a "Unionist" firm in Cork city a very ably written pamphlet entitled "Ireland, Germany and the Freedom of the Seas", and that colleagues of his also received copies. He was much impressed by the contents but simply could not understand how or why it should have come from such a firm. The news was most welcome to me, - it was proof that the ruse worked satisfactorily at Cork. I offered a possible "explanation" of the envelope and quickly went on to discuss my personal business.

Later it became evident that Cork was not the only efficient centre; deliveries were duly made from all the others. Then the fun began.

Special orders were issued immediately by postal headquarters that thereafter items of bulk postage should be opened and examined on receipt at any post office. This information was conveyed to us by I.R.B. men in the Dublin G.P.O. White, Tomkins and Courage of Belfast offered a Reward of £100 for information giving the name of the party who had thus used its name. Sir John W. Mackey offered £100 likewise. But though at least ~~200~~ 40 individuals knew the man who had directed the job at various stages, their loyalty to the cause of ~~Irish~~ Irish Independence was proof against any "reward".

Nicholas Hardy & Co, Dundalk

Diarmuid Lynch
DIARMUID LYNCH

March 25, 1947.

Witness
Florence O'Donoghue
2 May 1947.

COPY

Supplementary Statement

by
DIARMUID LYNCH
on
"EASTER WEEK", 1916

This record, covering certain petty details in addition to important ones, is made at the special request of my nephew and nieces of Ratharum, Co. Wicklow.

The record of operations in the GPO area during Easter Week, 1916, now on file in Dublin, was compiled in 1937 from some 165 individual reports submitted to me by surviving members of the Garrison, - supplemented by my personal recollections. It was specially condensed for an allotted space in a book then under consideration. The first draft was read and commented on at a special meeting of the Garrison members; the revised statement was read at a later meeting and (with a few slight corrections) was adopted as correct.

These day-by-day reports comprise an interesting and valuable collection, even though - as might be expected after a lapse of more than a score of years - many are inaccurate in certain details. I have edited these to some extent (in red ink) on the individual reports.

Having had inside knowledge of many pre-Easter Week developments and of incidents which had a bearing on the ~~Irish~~ Insurrection, I have in a preface to the Record sketched the historical background. Other recollections of mine over that period were published in the Gaelic American (New York) of April 9, 1921. I may also remark that comments on various other aspects and incidents are among my personal papers.

The Declaration of Independence issued on Easter Monday, 1916, had appended to it the names of the seven men who, on its proclamation, became the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic. I venture to say that few, if any other than myself, had definitely known prior to that Easter Monday that these particular seven men comprised the "Military Committee" (or "Military Council"), - the body ~~that~~ most intimately responsible for the Rising. In fact, very few knew that this body existed.

The "Military Committee" originally comprised Padraic Pearse, Joseph Plunkett and Samonn Ceannt. They were so appointed in the Summer of 1915 on my motion at a meeting of the I.R.B. Executive (Denis McCullough, Tom Clarke and myself). I was then acting-Secretary of the "Executive", - as substitute for Sean MacDermott who was then in prison. The three appointees (or perhaps only two of them) were present on that occasion, though neither of them was a member of the Supreme Council IRB.

Shortly after MacDermott's release I was informed that he and Tom Clarke were co-operating as ex-officio members of that "Committee" - which from that time forward may be termed "The Military Council" (the title applied ~~hitherto~~ in the post-Easter period.)

those of
In the Autumn of 1915, /the Provincial representatives, I.R.B., elected (or re-elected) during the months preceding, who were available, met in Dublin to complete the personnel of the Supreme Council in accordance with the Constitution, i.e. to co-opt four members. On this occasion it was my privilege to move

that

the co-option of a man not hitherto a member of the "S. C." - Padraic Pearse. He was so chosen. (The other three were: Tom Clarke, Sean MacDermott and Dr. MacCartan).

The last meeting of this Supreme Council was held in January, 1916. In LeRoux's Life of Tom Clarke (p.180 - 1) * there appears a statement of mine respecting two decisions arrived thereat: (a) that we "fight at the earliest date possible" and that the S.C.'s "next meeting be held on Easter Sunday" ^(which are correctly given).

It was after this January meeting of the S.C. that James Connolly was co-opted a member of the Military Council. Thomas MacDonagh was co-opted the seventh member of this Council in mid-April 1916.

Quite a few individuals have, I understand, conveyed the impression that they knew prior to Holy Week 1916 that an Insurrection was being planned and that the date was fixed for Easter Sunday. I feel compelled to comment on such claims - in justice to the memory of the men who comprised the Military Council:

From early in March, 1916, other and more pressing engagements kept Sean MacDermott from attending to his routine duties as Business Manager of Nationality. At his request I substituted for him in that position. When absenting himself from the office (12 D'Olier Street) he invariably told me where I could find him during the day in case I should wish to consult him. On one occasion I went to Mrs. Houlihan's, 77 Amiens St., to confer with him. This lady knew me well as a close friend of Clarke and MacDermott; she had no hesitation in directing me to the room in which Sean was. I had no doubt whatever as to the nature of the business he was engaged in. I knocked at the door and entered the room forthright. I expected to find him in conference with the original members of the Military Committee (Pearse, Plunkett and M. Ceann) and Tom Clarke - all of whom were aware that I had been party to the appointment of ~~the~~ said Committee. It had not occurred to me that Connolly might have been in session with them, but, on seeing him there recent incidents flashed to my mind and I immediately accepted his presence as a matter of course. Connolly, on the other hand, did not then know that I was a member of the Supreme Council nor of my connection with the appointment of the Military Committee. His look of astonishment on my entry convinced me that he had had no notion that any person other than his then colleagues of the Military Council knew of the existence of such a group, or that anyone other than their hostess knew of that particular meeting. MacDermott was already on his way to the door in answer to my knock; he and I retired to the landing for our talk.

The next date on which I contacted MacDermott during the day was, I believe, Monday of Holy Week, - in Mrs. Wyse Power's rooms over her restaurant, Henry Street. When lunching with him on the following Wednesday, he said: "Diarmuid, I want to tell you something which you should have been informed of earlier: the Rising is fixed for next Sunday". I replied: "I knew that". I should have said that I surmised so much; my actual reply startled him. Excitedly, he asked: "How? Who told you?". The manner of his question ~~confirmed~~ confirmed my previous conviction that the members of the Military Council had determined to keep strictly to themselves, up to the latest moment possible, the fact that Easter Sunday was the appointed day for the start of the Insurrection. I answered to this effect: "Well, Sean, nobody actually told me, but ever since the January meeting of the Supreme Council I was satisfied in my own mind on that point" I added that this conviction was strengthened by his constant

* Having mentioned Le Roux I have to remark that he made misstatements about the IRB in this work; certain citations of me in his Life of Pearse are also incorrect.

attendance during the previous month at meetings of the Military Committee; furthermore, that I recognised the import of his recent instructions to secure and report to him as soon as possible the exact location of each telegraph and telephone manhole in the city. His worried look disappeared, and when I related to him how when I made that motion at the January meeting of the S.C. naming Easter Sunday as the date of the next session I felt that that particular Council would never again meet, he smiled that smile so characteristic of the Sean whom his friends loved. (The "manhole" report, accompanied by sketches, had been handed to him by me two days earlier, i.e. on Monday of Holy Week).

I also remarked that while I felt I had the right to question himself or Tom Clarke on the progress of their plans, I deemed it fitting not to do so; that he on his part was entirely right in not having given me the definite information earlier; that the closer the secret was kept the better the prospect for a successful launching. He then told me that Tom MacDonagh had been co-opted a member of the Military Committee the previous week.

Here is another matter of which I have happy recollections: As stated, I had previously been satisfied in my own mind that the Rising would start on Easter Sunday, and that as a result the publication of "Nationality" would cease with the issue of April 22nd. As acting business manager I drafted and had "set up" an appeal to occupy the last page - headed "SPREAD THE LIGHT" - urging readers to secure new subscribers. My idea was that if during the course of Holy Week the British authorities should happen to note any suspicious activities, the APPEAL for new subscribers may act as a counter-balance to allay such suspicions. It could do no harm anyway. Just as Sean was about to leave the office on Monday morning, April 17, I showed the press proof to him without comment. His only comment was a smile. I now assured him (on Wednesday) that at the time I understood and appreciated his reticence, and he laughed heartily on being reminded of the incident.

➤ *Insert paragraphs (see attached).*

I venture to assert that the other members of the Military Council had been equally secretive up to the middle of Holy Week; to think otherwise would be a reflection on the probity and commonsense. Prior to that many men had, of course, been assigned duties which the leaders deemed essential preliminaries to the success of their plan. But, any guess on the part of such assignees as to the main purpose underlying such work or the date on which it was to become effective, should not now be construed as equivalent to definite official information in those respects. This comment also applies to the decision of the Supreme Council IRB.: that we should defend ourselves to the utmost against any attempt by the British authorities to deprive us of our arms.

While drafting these personal memos, I decided to check up on my conviction regarding the manner in which the Military Council guarded its secrets: I wrote on May 11, 1938, to Commandant Eamon de Valera ~~then~~ (An Taoiseach) requesting him to let me know the date on which he was officially informed that the Rising was fixed for Easter Sunday. He replied through his Personal Secretary to the effect that he as Commandant of the 3rd Battalion, Irish Volunteers, received his first information that an Insurrection was scheduled for Easter Sunday through a message in code (which code was arranged some months earlier) delivered to him on Spy Wednesday by Joseph Sweeney (then a student at St. Enda's).

With reference to the conclusion reached by me regarding Easter Sunday I had in mind one other important matter; I forget whether or not I mentioned it to Sean MacD. It was This:

Early in January, 1916, Padraig Pearse had entrusted to me secret instructions for oral delivery to the Commandants, I.V., in the South, setting forth the areas ~~in~~ which their Battalions should occupy at Easter. These instructions were open to but one construction.

Eventually, circumstances over which we had no control necessitated the cancellation of my mission; the instructions were, however, delivered later by some other messenger.

Details of the foregoing matters have been set forth elsewhere by me. (Article "set up" by An Cosanfoir but not published).

The first meeting of what I may term the "Committee on Manholes", summoned by Sean MacDermott, was held in the office of the Gaelic League, 25 Parnell Square, early in April. He desired me to elicit, ^{deliberate} from the other men present - Andy Fitzpatrick and Sean Byrne (outdoor service men of the Post Office Engineering Staff) and Dick Mulcahy (a clerk in the GPO annex). Considerable information was available impromptu; during the next two weeks these men and others (including John Twamley and ---- King) whose names had been given to me, surveyed the entire field and reported definitely the exact position of each manhole. My report was handed to Sean MacD. on Monday of Holy Week (to the best of my recollection) - a separate sheet for each Battalion area, accompanied by sketches showing the exact locations. We also had a supply of duplicate "keys" made with which the ~~man~~ manhole covers could be lifted, and provided for each battalion a set of demolition tools. This equipment was stored temporarily in the rooms of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League; it was distributed on Good Friday to addresses selected by the respective Commandants.

On Good Friday while MacDermott and myself lunched at the Red Bank Restaurant (as we frequently did) Sean handed back to me the sketches for the Four Courts, Jacobs, South Dublin Union, and Bolands areas for delivery to the respective Commandants. That afternoon I handed them in person to Ned Daly at the Red Bank (where he and Piaras Beaslaoi) also had lunch; to Tomas MacDonagh at the Princess Restaurant, Grafton Street; to Commandant Eamonn Ceannt at his office, Lord Edward Street; and to Eamon de Valera at his home. Sean informed me that Connelly retained those for the north section of the city, Stephen's Green, and the Castle environment; that he would distribute these. *(Mac Donagh got those for the Telephone Hdgrs.)*

My last contacts with this job were: (a) when Captain Jim O'Neill and myself made up a "necklace" of galignite in Liberty Hall Easter Monday morning - for use in the manhole in front of the Dame Street entrance to the Castle, (b) when Andy Fitzpatrick told me just before the Headquarters Battalion left Liberty Hall for the G.P.O. that he was off to demolish the wires at a certain point on the north side, and (c) when John Twamley reported to me in the GPO that he had severed the wires between Dublin and Dun Laoghaire.

On the investment of the Post Office the first job in which I participated (with Tom Clarke and others) was the smashing of the door and glass partition which separated the Public Office from the Primary Sorting Office, (the latter extended to Henry Street). Next came the manning and barricading of the front and side windows of this room, - of which I was O/C during the week.

Tuesday
About 12.45 p.m. ~~Monday~~ a bodyguard for Padraic Pearse was ordered out. This comprised a squad under Capt. George Plunkett and about an equal number under me. We accompanied Pearse to the centre of O'Connell Street opposite the main entrance to the GPO, where, standing on an improvised elevation, he read the *Manifesto to the Citizens of Dublin* to the assembled citizens. *About 1.15 p.m.*

Top 5
~~Shortly thereafter~~, the Lancers arrived, - as described in the official statement of operations in the GPO area.

When quiet again reigned inside the building I suggested to Tom Clarke that we take a look through the letters which had been "sorted" into pigeon-hole marked "R.I.C. Headquarters". Tom smilingly agreed. They afforded interesting reading, - for the most part communications ~~transmitted from~~ ~~from~~ from D.I.s transmitting detailed reports of R.I.C. sergeants on the strength armament, activities over the previous week, etc of the Irish Volunteers

Volunteers in their respective districts. We chuckled at the fact that all their spying was now in vain, and that neither they nor their superiors realised the imminence of the climax. The entire content of the sorting tables and the pigeon-holes was then dumped into waste paper baskets and stored away (a needless operation, as events turned out). On the latter detail I remember Liam Pedlar participating.

On Tuesday afternoon, Lawrence's shop diagonally across from the GPO (~~at the corner of Cathedral Street~~) was set ablaze by looters; a large crowd of onlookers had assembled in O'Connell Street. I called General Connolly's attention to the danger that threatened ~~xxx~~ our position at the corner of Earl Street. He again ordered George Plunkett and myself each to take a squad of men and endeavour to stop the fire from spreading and compel the looters to cease. Just as we got across, the Fire Brigade arrived. To enable the fire engines to get close to the burning building our men raised the wires which had been strung across O'Connell Street that morning. A man and woman perched on the top of the building seemed intent on jumping to the street to avoid the flames; we had to resort to pistol fire over the heads of the crowd to force them back and enable the firemen get to work.

Wednesday morning: General Connolly ordered me to take men and bore through the south wall of the GPO at the Henry Street end and then continue ~~xx~~ through the adjacent buildings until contact was effected with Frank Henderson's men who were operating from the Coliseum towards us. The desired contact was soon made. Returning to General Connolly I reported formally. Though my contacts with him had not been on the same ^{informal} plane as with the other members of the Military Council (now the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic) I was aware that he had learned of my status in the IRB, so I now (though only one of his Captains in the GPO) ventured a pleasantry: "We captured three English Generals" said I, and after a moment's pause I added: "We got them in the Waxworks". A flicker of a smile lit those keen eyes of his as I quickly turned and moved off to my post.

Twenty-one years later I was interested to learn the sequel to the foregoing: When sifting data for the record of the GPO area I had a talk with Captain Jim O'Neill who had been one of Connolly's right-hand-men in the Citizen Army. Relating his personal recollections of Connolly he touched on Connolly's sense of humour (a quality he was not generally credited with), and I in turn told him of the Waxwork's story. This brought to O'Neill's recollection how Connolly had come to him and his assistants in the "armoury" (located in the General Sorting Office) that Wednesday and said: "Well, boys, 'tis all over; we just bagged three of their Generals". Pausing for effect, he added: "We captured them in the Waxworks".

Of the men in my section at the outset only a few were previously known to me; I soon came to know all of them. Several of the contingents that reached the GPO after its occupation (including the Maynooth men) were assigned to my post (the right hand ground floor abutting O'Connell and Henry Streets), only to be withdrawn - wholly or partially - soon afterwards. It became difficult to keep track of the personnel or to know exactly who was stationed at each particular point at any given time. Accordingly, on Wednesday I had the names not alone in my section but throughout the building listed; each was given a particular number which he was to retain during the fight. What became of that list I know not, - probably it was burned with the GPO itself. Perhaps 'tis as well. It would have been an awkward document to fall into the hands of the British at the surrender. Yet, if available in after years it would have been both interesting and useful; it would have simplified the work of the "Garrison Committee" in authenticating the names that went on the "Roll of Honour".

As the week progressed I availed of opportunities to visit the roof and examine every part of the building - including the basement. On Wednesday night I was sent to inspect the position held by men under Liam Cullen on the second floor overlooking Henry Street. The latter were quietly alert at their posts and especially watchful lest some of the enemy might have come over the roofs from Parnell Street to the opposite side of Henry Street from which they could have enfiladed our positions. To insure better observation our men shot out the glaring electric lamps that ~~that~~ still overhung Henry Street.

About 1 a.m. Friday Sean MacDermott directed me to get a few men and transfer to a place of safety any surplus bombs from the upper portion of the building and such as the men on the roof had no immediate ~~use for~~ need of; also the explosive materials from the main armoury. These we deposited in one of the basement rooms which extended under the Henry street sidewalk. Of those whom I had on this job I only recollect J.J. Walsh.

About daybreak I again encountered Sean MacD. who was "looking for a good man" to carry word immediately to the outposts in O'Neill's (corner of Liffey and Henry Streets), Lucas's shop and the old Independent House on Middle Abbey Street, ordering retirement to the GPO. Having been absent some hours from my regular post, as a number of men had meanwhile been ordered rest, I knew not where to locate any particular one of them. Sean was fearful that with daylight strengthening, the danger of enemy fire would increase for those men on their way back to GHQ; I volunteered to carry the order at once. Proceeding through Williams Lane and Abbey Street I knocked at Independent House but the men not knowing who was there did not answer. Those in Lucas's, directly opposite, saw me; I crossed and gave ~~him~~ the order. Recrossing to Independent House I was admitted. Next, to avoid a similar delay at O'Neill's, I advanced on the south side of Liffey Street; on arrival at the corner I was seen by the garrison. Having given the order, I immediately started on my return. (In later years I learned that ^{the} Liffey street had also been occupied by our ~~own~~ forces. Sean, evidently, was not aware of this. Though I passed ^{it} twice, the men there under Tom Byrne received no order to retire. They remained there until Sunday, and some or all of them escaped arrest).

When I again reached Abbey Street the men from the first named two posts were already rushing in extended formation towards Williams Lane. All the recalled men were lined up in the GPO yard; roll call showed only one missing, - Sean Milroy. But as Sean was said to have known every nook and cranny in the neighbourhood it was felt he would return in due course; he did. One of my happiest recollections of ^{the} Easter Week is that of Sean MacDermott and Tom Clarke sitting on the edge of the mails platform, - beaming satisfaction and expressing their congratulations.

For the next three hours I enjoyed my first sleep of the Week, - on a mattress in the hospital section. During what was perhaps the last hour of it I was conscious of cannons booming, and experienced something akin to the fatalistic sensation which I presume soldiers in the World War must have felt daily: if a shell were to explode in our midst it would certainly bring death and destruction, but if in the providence of God some of us should escape, - that would be that! So I "slept" on. The booming increased but no shell struck that rear portion of the GPO.

Before resuming duty at my regular post in the Primary Sorting Office I permitted myself the luxury of a shave. The enemy gunners soon had our range; later the roof caught fire. It occurred to me that the enemy might attempt a frontal attack
at this stage

at this stage and endeavour to drive our men from the barricaded windows. To meet such an emergency I ordered my men to fill sacks with coal (the only material available) and build an L-shaped barricade midway on the floor - from behind which we could continue the defence at the front and side. Soon afterwards the flames eat their way through the glass roof of the cupola. What ensued is described in the general statement of operations. (Years later at a dance under the auspices of the F.O.I.F. in New York a man in evening dress accosted me and laughingly expressed a "grievance"; - reciting how I ~~was~~ had ordered him bring in from the GPO yard sacks of coal for that barricade).

While the garrison was assembled in the General Sorting Room pending final arrangements prior to evacuation, the fires spread along the Henry ~~xxxx~~ Street side of the roof. It was announced that a volume of sparks was coming down the open air-shaft to the basement, - just near the storeroom in which the explosives had been deposited the night before, which room had no door. It was almost directly under the doorway leading from the ~~garage~~ ~~xxxx~~ G.S. room to Henry Street, - through which exit the garrison was to retreat. Sean MacDermott despatched men to fetch a fire hose. When this arrived The O'Rahilly took hold at once and played a stream against the sparks - a temporary safeguard. I ordered some twenty men to stack their arms and advance to the basement for the transfer of the munitions to the Princes Street side where a possible explosion could result in least harm while the evacuation was under way. ~~xxx~~ Momentarily these men evidenced reluctance to ~~part~~ with their rifles even temporarily. To ensure ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ their return I ordered them to give the arms to comrades standing near by. This done, they proceeded to the basement.

Earlier in the week I had explored the underground passage or corridor that led from Henry St. side to the Princes Street side and then inclined to the GPO yard. Midway a large iron tube crossed that dark passage about 3 or 4 feet from the floor. Those unaware of this obstruction were likely to bump into it - with the chance of dropping the bombs they carried. Accordingly, men were posted at the tube and at points near the centre of the corridor holding stumps of lighted candles. This does not seem now to be an incident worth recalling, but the tenseness of that moment was such that the men who participated in it are not likely to forget it.

Just as the transfer had commenced, The O'Rahilly called my attention to the fact that our prisoners (a British officer, some privates, and some D.M.P. men) were in a room at the other side of the underground corridor, - a storeroom which extended under the interior of the building, - to which they had been transferred for safety when the top of the building where they had been located during the week was endangered by the fire. The danger which our own men were subject threatened the prisoners also. My ~~first~~ impulse was to remove them instantly, but decided to first report the situation to General Connelly (a matter of a minute or two) and leave him say where they should now be placed. His order was to shift them to the safest point then available; I had ~~some~~ ~~xxxx~~ escorted to the rear of the General Sorting Room and left them under guard.

The sequel to this was that at the subsequent courtmartial the British Officer testified that he and his fellow prisoners had been placed in that room in the basement and "left to die like rats in a trap". I heard of this statement before my own courtmartial. The fact, of course, was that their detention in the basement was but temporary pending our evacuation of the GPO, and that just as soon as the danger to the explosives was noted they were promptly transferred therefrom. I took occasion to contradict the officer's ~~xxxxxxxx~~ wrongful assertion and to state the facts during the course of my courtmartial, - my only statement thereat.

Meanwhile,

Meanwhile, the bombs, gelignite, etc., were being placed in a storeroom off the yard abutting Princess Street; each man on depositing his quota (which in the instance of bombs consisted of only two - one in each hand), crossed the Sorting room to the basement for another lot. Then, to make assurance doubly sure, I had other men soak mail bags in water and these I spread over the explosive materials. (There was no telling what may start off one of these "home-made" bombs, and if one went off ----!). While so engaged, Harry Boland arrived on the scene and lent me a hand. Just as the covering was almost finished Harry, remarking that they were "now safe enough", rushed ~~from~~ towards the Sorting Room. In a few moments I followed. To my astonishment there was not a man left in that room in which the garrison had been assembled, - the evacuation had been completed while I was engaged in the task of averting the danger of a premature explosion. (This is a fact worth remembering in view of the controversy as to who was "the last man to leave the GPO", - which was a matter of no consequence as I view it).

On reaching Henry Street through the ~~only~~ ^{nearest O'Connell Street} exit, on that side of the GPO, and having crossed into Henry Place I saw some of our forces bunched at the angle of the latter where it turns at right angles towards Moore Street. As I came up with them I passed by a dead Volunteer in front of the double doorway of O'Brien's store. (Later I learned that he had been shot by the discharge of a comrade's gun during an attempt to break the door with its butt). A few paces further on I met Padraic Pearse who ordered me to take half a dozen men, break into O'Brien's, ~~or~~ cross the roofs to Moore Street (to avoid running the gauntlet of enemy machine-gun fire down Moore Lane - which was the cause of the hold-up at the angle of Henry Place), and occupy the houses on Moore Street between Henry Place and Henry Street. From O'Brien's roof we managed to step across an open air shaft and into the next building. Here our advance was checked by an intervening laneway which we could see from a second storey window, but into which we could not get as we had no implements with which to bore the wall. Thus we were compelled to make our exit through a window on the groundfloor into Henry Place, and then proceed along the latter to Moore Street where we entered the corner building on our left. (The rest of the garrison occupied the Moore St. houses to the right, which became the new G.H.Q.)

Boring with pieces of iron which were entirely unsuitable for the purpose, but the best we could find, our progress through the walls towards Henry Street was slow. The men were also exhausted from want of ~~any~~ sleep. Even so, they worked like Trojans, - taking turns at wall-boring and window-barricading. (The only one of them I recall is Joe Derham). Eventually, we contacted another squad who had entered about midway in our block and had bored towards us. Later, the flames from the GPO spread across Henry Street and were pushing towards us. Fear of them (coupled perhaps with the noise of the wall boring) had evidently driven the occupants of ~~the~~ portions of these houses to seek shelter in the yards and sheds to the rear. I well remember one cosy apartment in which the fire was still alight; on the mantelpiece was a framed photograph of Commandant Ramonn O'Connell, and on the table some cold chicken. I felt sorry for the late tenants but did enjoy that piece of chicken.

As the night wore on the fires became more menacing. We deemed it wise to retreat somewhat from them. In one small room (basement) I came across two of our men lying fast asleep, their heads near the fender (a good fire was in the grate) and feet almost touching the wall opposite. They were so exhausted that they had to be lifted bodily through the bored walls.

At daybreak I reported to G.H.Q. the general situation in my post, and got orders to join the main body. The prospect

there - in the new position, Moore Street, - was anything but encouraging. General Connolly, badly wounded, lay in a front room near the centre of the block. ~~xxxxx~~ I learned that the men had been ordered not to draw enemy fire. But on entering one of the rear rooms I found ~~xxxxx~~ one on the point of shooting at a man whose head appeared at intervals above a roof in the direction of Nelson Pillar. I stopped him just in time, - partly because of the general order, and partly because of the likelihood that the man target (who was probably an enemy sniper or lookout) might live to tell the tale, to our immediate disadvantage. The only enemy force against whom we could possibly open fire (and that under practically impossible conditions because of our respective positions) were those who manned the barricade at the junction of Parnell and Moore Streets. On the other hand we could have been subjected to rifle fire from the roofs of buildings on O'Connell Street. And, were the enemy to bring a field gun into action ~~in~~ from behind the barricade just mentioned an oblique fire could quickly demolish our entire Moore Street position.

To erect/

When retreating to GHQ that Saturday morning I noticed ~~the~~ the semblance of a barricade which evidently our men had endeavoured, across Moore Street from Henry Place. I learned that the attempt had failed due to enemy fire from Parnell Street. Later, it seemed to me that there was but one desperate chance left by which to extricate ourselves from this Moore Street position - where we were pinned in and ineffective - viz. a bayonet charge from the yard abutting Sackville Lane (to which our position had extended in the direction of Parnell Street) against the enemy sand bag barricade located 50 yards away. Anticipating the possibility that our leaders may decide on this means of endeavouring to move forward to Williams & Woods as originally intended on the evacuation of the GPO, I felt that the preparation for such a charge should be started immediately. Accordingly I passed word to a few officers to line up in that yard 50 men who were equipped with rifles and bayonets. The alacrity of both officers and men for this anticipated charge was splendid; the spirit of exhilaration which they evinced recalled the picture of the Irish Brigade at Fontenoy. The party being in readiness I left to report the fact to Pearse or Connolly. In the first house off the yard I encountered Padraic Pearse (and his brother Willie). I reported, but his decision was in the negative. To the best of my recollection he said that negotiations had ^{already} been opened with the British Command. The anticipated bayonet charge would not (and did not) materialize!

Insert 3 pars (see attached).

I had no opportunity to return to the men in the yard. I first went to have a talk with Sean MacDermott. He informed me that Connolly was being taken immediately (on a stretcher, of course) to meet the British O/C; he asked me to discard my Sam Brown and pistol and accompany the party. I predated the stretcher bearers down the narrow staircase leading to Moore Street. Satisfied, from the few remarks MacDermott made, that the British expected Gen. Connolly and his party to emerge, I unhesitatingly stepped out to the sidewalk. (In his report (1937) Seumas Devoy states that he had previously been despatched under a white flag to the enemy barricade to inform the officer in charge there that Connolly was to be brought out immediately).

As I stepped into view two British officers standing in Riddall's Row (diagonally across) beckoned to me to advance. On their instructions the stretcher bearers (Micheal Staines, Liam Tannam, Michael Nugent, Seumas Devoy, James Byrne and Joseph Tallon) proceeded along the north side of Moore Street to Parnell Street. There we were searched, - a proceeding against which I protested on the ground that we accompanied our Commanding Officer under a flag of truce and that the search was a reflection on our honour as Irish soldiers. It occurred to me afterwards that perhaps they had followed the usual procedure under such circumstances. Anyway, the search went on and in the pocket of my tunic they found some loose pistol ammunition which I had overlooked when discarding my equipment.

Then

Insert
p. 9

Miss Elizabeth O'Farrell states (Catholic Bulletin) that she left Moore Street Hdqrs. with Commandant Pearse's original message pertaining to surrender at 12.15 p.m. and returned thereto at 2.30 p.m.; that she took Comdt. Pearse's second message to Gen. Lowe at 3 p.m.; that the latter insisted that Pearse should surrender unconditionally and that Connolly should follow on a stretcher; that it was about 3.30 p.m. when Gen. Lowe received Comdt. Pearse at the top of Moore Street.

Thus I figure that my interview with Pearse was between 3 p.m. and 3.15, and that his departure from Hdqrs. took place shortly thereafter. The surrender was signed by him at 3.45 p.m. - presumably at Dublin Castle.

Comdt. Connolly was not taken from Hdqrs. with Pearse (as one writer seems to imply). I did not see Pearse leave but certainly some time elapsed between his departure and the time at which Connolly was taken thence on a stretcher.

Then, surrounded by a heavy armed guard our party advanced to the vicinity of the Parnell Monument. There the stretcher bearers were ordered to lay it down; the officer in charge went to confer with his superior officer. On his return the convoy retraced its steps along Parnell Street to Capel Street, thence to Dublin Castle. At the request of the British Major in command of the escort I walked in front with him. He was much interested in the stubborn resistance made by the GPO garrison, and was curious about events therein during the week. My replies gave him very little information, - not that it mattered much at that moment.

In the Upper Castle Yard our men were ordered to lay the stretcher on the ground. I then advanced to Connolly, went down on one knee by his side and asked if he had any message to send, - entertaining at the time a vague notion that we would be taken back to Moore Street. His answer was in the negative; I bid him goodbye. Immediately, the seven of us were marched off, not to Moore Street but through the Lower Castle Yard and around to Ship Street Barracks. None of his men saw Connolly again.

On finding ourselves being placed in the Guard Room (Ship Street) I protested against our detention there as prisoners, - though not certain that we had any belligerent rights in this respect, and much more certain that even if we had they would not be respected. We were kept there overnight. Next morning I again demanded that we be returned to our GHQ. The officer to whom I spoke informed me that he had the previous evening (Saturday) transmitted my demand and it was denied. He added that even if it were otherwise decided it would now amount to this: that we would be taken back to Moore Street under guard and brought back from there as prisoners, as the leaders and men left there had surrendered the evening before. There was nothing more to be said.

That Sunday afternoon the 25 or 30 of us in the Guard Room were marched off to Kilmainham. On being escorted into the old-wing cells a warder unceremoniously cuffed and pushed a couple ~~xxx~~ of our men through the doorway. My protest against such treatment of "prisoners of War" was answered by a baton on the jaw. This was just an indication of what in a few months we had reason to believe that prisoners (non-combatants at that) incarcerated there while the insurrection was in progress had experienced. The white-washed cell walls were much smeared with blood, - evidence of brutal treatment!

Our stay in these cells was brief. We were ushered into the main hall of the prison and lined up with about an equal number of others. Three corporals - "Dressed in a little brief authority" - were our immediate masters. Champions of "small nations" as units of Britain's army - and Irishmen at that - they vented their spleen against us who fought for the national independence of Ireland. They indulged in sneers, threats and provocation. One of them took a fancy to my pig-skin gaiters and commandeered them. We soon learned that an inquisition was afoot in an adjoining room. British officers demanded the name of each prisoner called before them, his rank, position occupied during the fight, the name of his commanding officer, etc. Immediately I passed along word that none of their questions should be answered. The inquisition soon ~~ceased~~ ceased; we were all marched off to the disused rooms of the old prison infirmary.

Early on Wednesday morning some of us were awakened by peculiar noises. We wondered if they were the sound of volleys. Later, our fears were confirmed by the brief answer of the sergeant on guard over us: three of our leaders had been executed.

Similar sounds came Thursday morning. I felt certain that Joe Plunkett had been added to the list of martyrs; on Wednesday

afternoon

afternoon I had opportunity of a few brief words with him - he having joined us during our short period of exercise in the yard. He had been courtmartialled earlier in the day, but had not yet been advised of the verdict. What it would be was not far to seek.

That Thursday all prisoners in the hospital were transferred to Richmond Barracks. ~~Later~~ Later, that same day I think, several hundred prisoners (including many from the country districts who had not had a chance to participate in the Rising) were lined up in the barrack square, - for deportation to England the rumour ran. Two "G" men scanned our faces as we stood in column of four; I was ordered to fall out. (Just then I espied Samonn Ceannt with a few others standing at the side of the square to our right; we could only wave to one another.) Back in one of the barrack rooms I found myself in goodly company: Commandant Samon de Valera, Count Plunkett, John O'Mahony, Lord Mayor Laurence O'Neill, and more than a score of others.

As the days passed the panicky and embittered ~~frank~~ attitude of our jailers became less tense; the exceptions being some R.I.C. men who were on duty in the prison yard. The latter showed themselves to be much more antagonistic than even the military had been at the surrender. Through the tact and good offices of the late John O'Mahony one of our military guard brought in "refreshments", and delivered notes to our friends who sought information about us at the outer gates. De Valera was taken from our midst and did not return. By our guard I sent a request to my sister-in-law to bring along a suit of ordinary clothes next day. This he delivered to me and the following day took out a parcel which contained my uniform coat, breeches, shirt and tie. These mementoes of Easter Week I still possess.

In like manner I despatched a note to the American Consul requesting that he be present at my courtmartial to hear a statement which I intended to make respecting the assertion of our officer prisoner in the GPO, viz, that he and his fellow prisoners "were left to die like rats in a trap". The Consul (Mr. Adams) was not present, but while Billy Partridge and myself were awaiting transfer to Kilmainham (after our courtmartial) I saw him drive from the Barrack precincts in company with the members of the Court. (Efforts made by friends in the U.S. to save me from execution is another story). That evening, Thursday May 18th, ~~the~~ the decision of the Court was announced to me at Kilmainham: sentenced to be shot, - and then the further information that this was commuted to 10 years penal servitude.

As I write it occurs to me to give the name of the "rat in a trap" officer - Second Lieut. A. D. Chalmers - which I recall from reading a statement made by him as published in the "Irish Times" Handbook. Due to the fact that I was in charge of the squad that shifted the prisoners from the GPO basement on Friday of Easter Week, he was called on to testify to my presence in the GPO as a participant in the Rising, - an unnecessary formality on the part of the Court. Prior to the date of my appearance before the latter he came into our room in Richmond Barracks accompanied by Detective Inspector Love. We were all ordered to stand up for inspection. That he came to identify some one was evident, but he did not get his man. He was looking for me as we soon learned. Himself and Love retired from the room and returned in a few minutes. We stood again and at a jocose remark by one of our number we all laughed. Then Chalmers pointed to me, saying: You're Lynch. I recognise you by your gold tooth". My belief is that Love described to him the clothes I then wore (by this time I was no longer in uniform - the saving of which I was now extremely glad), as well as calling attention to my gold-filled tooth. On the only occasion Chalmers

saw me (to his recollection anyway) during Easter Week, I was in no laughing humour and he was too scared to take any notice of me. Anyway, neither his recognition of me nor the manner of it mattered a hoot. Here I was, one who participated in the Rising, and so proud of the fact - as well as of the pre-Easter "Character" which Love's subordinates gave me in the pre-Court-martial "hearing" that any man who should endeavour to prove the contrary I would deem my worst enemy. Naturally, I bear Chalmers not the slightest illwill for testifying against me, but for his malicious lies in the "Times" Handbook - which in view of the facts are ridiculous - he deserved no better treatment than that usually accorded to a "rat in a trap". Thank God he and his ilk have passed into the limbo of forgotten things.

Richard Lynch

(1938)

20/1/47

Witness

Reverend Donohue

2 May 1947.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
 BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
 NO. W.S. 4

Tracton, April 25, 1947.

Major F. O'Donoghue,
Bureau of Military History,
26 Westland Row,
Baile Atha Cliath.

Dear Florrie:

Further to mine of February 17th: The following are now ready for transmission -

- (1) The I.R.B. - Some Recollections and Comments.

This document includes, as requested, some points not covered in our chat on the subject.

- (2) Distribution of the Casement Pamphlet.

I had completely forgotten having used the name of Hardy & Co., Dundalk, until you located their advertisement. Otherwise, the story is, I believe, complete.

- (3) Supplementary Statement on "Easter Week".

This, as you will note from memo. at top, was not written "for the record". I include it in the brochure as statements therein pertaining to "Easter Week" are of more than passing interest.

A number of personal allusions on minor details in the foregoing are subject to the criticism that they are not worth recording and smack of egotism. My purpose, of course, is to illustrate conditions under which we of the I.R.B. operated in pre-1916 days. Were I to retype all the matter - which is beyond me at the moment - I would be inclined to omit them.

- (4) Comments on Le Roux's MS on Tom Clarke. (In Folder)

The value of these was that they prevented the appearance in print of numerous misstatements of historical fact - though my efforts in that respect were not entirely successful.

Later, I hope to treat of the other subjects mentioned in my letter of February 17th last.

Mise, le meas,

Diarmuid Lynch
DIARMUID LYNCH

P.S. As you intend to come out this way I'll hold the above till then.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1110-24
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-24
W.S. 4