

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 27



ÉIRE

Telefón 61018.

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

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Document W.S.27.

Replies to eight ^{questions} ~~items~~ on

EASTER WEEK

by

P.S. O'HEGARTY

3rd October 1947.

Together with copy of the Questionnaire.

File S.49.

ORIGINAL Abridged Questionnaire.

1. What authority decided on the Rising?
Where, when, and who were present, and in what capacity?
2. If it was not the Volunteer Executive, what relation, if any, did it bear to -
 - (a) The central council of the Volunteers,
 - (b) The Executive of the Volunteers,
 - (c) H.Q. Staff of the Volunteers,
 - (d) The Supreme Council of the I.R.B.
 - (e) The Military Committee of the I.R.B.
3. Was the Military Committee of the I.R.B. subordinate to the Supreme Council, or had its decisions to be reported to and ratified by that body?
4. How did the body which decided on the Rising secure obedience to that decision by the five independent bodies which took part in the Rising? :-
 1. The Irish Volunteers.
 2. The Citizen Army.
 3. The Hibernian Rifles.
 4. Na Fianna Éireann.
 5. Cumann na mBan.
5. If separate decisions were made by these five bodies, how were they co-ordinated?
6. Were Clan na Gael consulted as to the decision or as to the date? Was any assistance sought from or given by that body, whether in the form of money or otherwise?
7. Did the I.R.B. send any envoys to the U.S.A. or elsewhere in connection with the projected Rising?
Who were sent and to whom?
Did they carry credentials or written messages?
What messages were they expected to bring back and what did they bring back?
Were any of these envoys intercepted or arrested? If so, was there any leakage of information, and if so, what was the result?
8. What was Cassment's position?
Was he asked to go to Germany? If so, by whom?
Who arranged finances, transport and contacts?
What was it hoped to achieve by his mission?
Was it any or all of the following? :-
 - (a) Arms.
 - (b) A naval and/or military expedition to Ireland.
 - (c) Personnel to train and/or direct the Volunteers either before or during the Rising.
 - (d) Military and/or naval action elsewhere to relieve pressure on Ireland.
 - (e) Post war diplomatic or other advantages.

ORIGINAL Questionnaire

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① The Supreme Council of the I.R.B. when I joined
through Dublin on the first Sunday in August, immediately after
Germany moved and before Pyle's declaration war, Tom Clarke
held me there and he a Council meeting or two or even
they could manage it, to consider the situation. The
said MacDonnell in May 1915 in Ladbroke, he told
me that the Council at that meeting had decided to
launch a Rising before the war ended, and had established
a Military Committee to plan and organize it. He told
me who they were, told me the plan, with the various
buildings to be held, and said that the plan was
absolutely, that when they put him in the Military Committee
they found that he had had such a plan prepared for
some time, and it was adopted without alteration.
He said that he had been working at such a plan "for years"
as a hobby. It was to be a Dublin Rising only,
a blood sacrifice. In his own words "he'll hold
Dublin for a week but will save Ireland". They
did not expect to win, of course, nor did they expect
any early resolution of feeling in their favour. At
the best, they expected that it would be years and
years. The thing fell that the national morale
of Ireland was so low that there was no other
way to arrest it than by the shock of a Rising.
That nothing would have been more surprising than that if
they could have foreseen the early and complete
swing-over. Something else was "in" in the
period before MacDonnell was executed, and when

there was vague hope of his escaping with a long term of imprisonment told me that he said one day "Even if I sit twenty years I could have another crack at the when I come out"

(2) No official relation, save to the Supreme Council, which was nominally the coordinating and directing head and supplied the finances. My trip saw all the other organizations, and committed them to the Rising through individuals in key posts in them.

(3) It was, as its decisions were subject to ratification by that body, but how far they were reported I cannot say. I have come to the conclusion, from everything I heard, that the Rising was never and launched by MacDonnell and Plunkett, that they had the same just as much as they felt like, that the Military Committee left all the detail and coordinating work to them, and that they kept the vital ship to themselves as much as possible, and in the end acted, I presume with the concurrence of the Military Committee, but at any rate on their initiative. I heard - I have been told so by Owen Connolly, Denis McCullough, and Pat McCurtain - that at the last meeting of the Supreme Council, held at the end of Dec. 1915 or beginning of Jan 1916, it was decided that there was to be no Rising unless and until a further meeting of the Council was held and approved. But the actual date was fixed

Some time in January, intimations reaching the
Clan na Gael early in February (see Devoy's
recollections). Except Macdermott and probably Tom
Clarke - I have a doubt how far Clarke was
consulted towards the end - the first intimations the
other members of the Council had of the date of the
Rising was when they got the orders in their
respective areas. The Macdermott was in

Prison, somebody asked him to tell the Fratt about
the faked British Order which was used with
some effect, and his reply was "There's many
a thing will die with me and Plunkett".

It is now fully established that this was faked
by Plunkett, and the object of it was, of course, to
create the opinion that the Volunteers were going
to be suppressed and thus to ensure that a
respectable number of them would obey the order
to Rise when they got it.

(4) As explained above, unorthodox though by
men.

(5) No separate decisions.

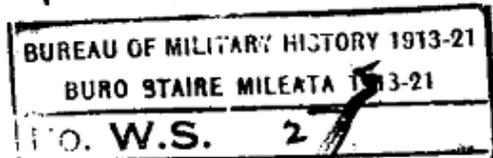
(6) Not connected. The case was notified after
the date had been fixed. The total money
for Volunteer purposes, several times of
£1000, but of this I have no personal
knowledge - see Devoy.

(7) I don't think so, with the possible exception

of Plumbett's visit to Germany. Deny State
categorically that the message the Clan received early
in February 1916 was the first intimation they had of
the Rising, though it may be inferred that the decision
to hold a Rising some time in the year had been
communicated to them - probably by Plumbett in 1915
on his way to Berlin. Letters messages to the Clan
were in code always and carried mostly by Tommy
Stunner, Bob's brother. I do not think
there was any leakage of information

(8) Cosment had no position, save that he
was a member of the Volunteers Executive &
the went to America on 2nd July 1914, before the
war, entirely on his own initiative, and had no
mission. He went, I think, to help to get
funds for the Volunteers, and the DRB gave
his introductions to Deny and Mr Garrity
- though Tom Clarke, then, had described the
notion that he was a "British Spy". He went
from America to Berlin also purely on his
own initiative. The Clan no fact facilitated
him in this but did not send him.

I am aware that much of this is not
evidence. What it is not it can be checked
by reference to the surviving members of the
Council of 1914.



J. S. O'Keefe
3 Oct 47