

Original

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S.....271.....

Witness

MOST REV. DR. FOGARTY

Identity

BISHOP OF KILLALOE

Subject

The attitude of the Catholic Bishops to the  
1916 Rising and the moral issues of the  
later Guerilla Warfare.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Sealed for ten years, at the suggestion of

Dr. R. Hayes, Chairman of the Advisory

Committee. *per letter dated 7 June 1949*

File No. *S...1387...*


Form B.S.M. 2.

The enclosed documents consist of:-

- (a) A memorandum, in typescript, drawn up by Dr. Richard Hayes, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, associated with the Bureau, as a result of a conversation with the Most Rev. Dr. Fogarty, D.D., Bishop of Killaloe.
- (b) A two-line typescript note, by Dr. Hayes, dated 7/6/49, stating that he had submitted the memorandum to Dr. Fogarty, and that he had received from him the letter, listed as (c) hereunder.
- (c) A four-page manuscript letter, dated 25/4/49, addressed by Dr. Hayes to Dr. Fogarty, in connection with document (a).
- (d) A one-page manuscript letter, dated 24/5/49, addressed by Dr. Hayes to the Director of the Bureau, enclosing documents (a), (b) and (c).

The documents are self-explanatory.

Both writers are of the highest standing.

  
30.6.49  
(M. McDunphy)  
DIRECTOR.

The attitude of the Catholic Church in  
Ireland towards the Rising of 1916 and the  
subsequent Anglo Irish War.

As I thought that future historians of the National Movement from 1916-1921 might wish to know what the attitude of the Catholic Church in Ireland towards the Movement was, I sought an interview with his Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, with a hope that he would throw some light on the matter. Through the kindness of Mr. W. T. Cosgrave I was enabled to meet Dr. Fogarty at Mr. Cosgrave's residence at Beechpark on Sunday, 24th April, 1949.

While Dr. Fogarty did not say so specifically, the impression - I should say conviction - left on me from his conversation was that the Irish bishops did not at any time discuss in Council the question of the moral justification of the Easter Rising or the Anglo-Irish Conflict that followed. Generally speaking <sup>his Lordship said,</sup> the opinion or attitude of the bishops individually towards the Anglo-Irish War was a matter of age, i.e. the younger were favourably, the older (~~e.g. Cardinal Hayes and Dr. Moran~~) unfavourably disposed and inclined to be condemnatory. The result at any rate was that the majority of their Lordships favoured it; and Dr. Fogarty gave expression to the view that in any other country except Ireland the clash of Episcopal opinion might have meant a schism in the Church

R.H.

deleted  
R.H.

there. But again I should stress the fact that, according to Dr. Fogarty, the bishops did not at any time in Council discuss the question.

Dr. Fogarty mentioned that in private conversation with Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, the latter maintained that the Rising in 1916 was morally justifiable. And in my conversation with Dr. Fogarty in this connection he quoted (with apparent approval) St. Paul's saying - Nulla Salus (redemptio) sine effusione sanguinis.

During my conversation with Dr. Fogarty I directly raised the question of the morality of the Easter Rising, but it seemed to me that His Lordship showed some disinclination to discuss it - "So much may be said on both sides", he remarked. Immediately after, however, he expressed personal sentiments that showed, I thought, that he was inclined to regard it as justifiable. And when I ventured to put a few points justifying it, he did not contradict and apparently agreed with me.

He said that when the news of the Rising reached his own diocese the people generally condemned it severely. He advised them, he said, "not to be carried away by impulse".

Dr. Fogarty declared that in the Anglo Irish War the National interest would over-ride such unpleasant happenings as the shooting of policemen.

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I asked Dr. Fogarty if he was aware of any English intrigues at the Vatican with the object of securing a Papal condemnation of the National Movement from 1916 to 1921.

He replied that there was none, but he added that there well might have been representations (unofficial) made by individual Englishmen in Rome.

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Canon Cahill, P.P., who accompanied Dr. Fogarty on the day I saw him at Mr. Cosgrave's said that he (Canon Cahill) was a senior student in Maynooth in 1916, and that the students unanimously and enthusiastically favoured the Rising.

Having submitted the foregoing memo. to his lordship  
Most Rev. Dr. Fogarty, I received from him the following letter.

R. Hayes

7. 6. 49

Copy

Ennis.

24.5.49

Dear Dr. Hayes,

You may be able to indulge me when I tell you that in the interval I have been confirming hundreds and hundreds of children, for having left your letter so long without an answer.

You are quite right. The Irish Bishops never discussed in Council the moral aspect of the Easter Rising and Anglo Irish conflict that followed. Individually they would be all for the independence of Ireland; but the shooting troubled some of the older members, whose names need not be recorded. The first outbreak on Easter Monday shocked and annoyed the general public: but this was only for a few days, when it dawned upon the people that the Easter Leaders had deliberately in good faith risked their lives for Ireland's sake, the public rallied wholeheartedly behind them.

The text of scripture that I referred to had nothing to do with moral issues as you will see by referring to the original text "nullas redemptio sine effusione sanguinis" Hebrew 1X 22. It merely states an historical fact that in the old law all the sacrifices for sin were bloody sacrifices, <sup>forms of</sup> crucifixion(?). It was an old P.P. quoted it, I thought very aptly, when he heard of the Easter Rising. As a matter of fact all or nearly all the big civil Revolts that afterwards eventuated in such tremendous results present in their first beginnings moral issues I should not like to have to decide upon. As for "national interests overriding such happenings as the shooting of policemen", that would be so, provided it was carried through by authorization of at least de facto government. Obviously without some such authorization it would not be allowable. It would be in that sense that Dr. O'Dwyer and I would stand over the gurilla

struggle. After a few days the whole nation mobilised behind the Easter Rising, and made it justifiable as far as required.

My experience for 15 years as a lecturer in Maynooth made me feel that one almost invariably fails to pass over his thoughts with entire correctness to an audience in one hearing. It has to be repeated and corrected.

I hope you are well. I am myself tired enough with all these sessions.

Goodbye and God Bless You.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) + Ml.Fogarty.

Dr.Richard Hayes

Woodlands,  
Kill-of the Grange,  
Co.Dublin.



7.6.49

Dear Michael

I am sending for the  
Bureau's archives Enclosed memos &c

Please treat them as strictly  
private — and have them sealed

for 10 yrs.

His Lordship & I, for

one thing, will by then have passed  
beyond the Edge of the world.

Yours

R. H. G.

24 5 1919

Dear Miss

You may be able to indulge me when I tell you that in the intervals I have been comforting hundreds and hundreds of children for having left your letter so long without an answer.

You are quite right. The Irish people have discussed the moral aspects of the Easter Rising and Anglo Irish conflict that followed. In discussing they would be all for the independence of Ireland, but the shooting troubled some of them.

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elder members, whose names need not be recorded. The first outbreak on Easter Monday shocked and annoyed the general public: but it was only for a few days, when it dawned upon the people that the Easter leaders had deliberately in good faith ousted their hosts for Ireland's sake, the public rallied wholeheartedly behind them.

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3 James 2 Confirmed

for sin were bloody sacrifices, it was an old P.P. quoted it, I thought very aptly, when he heard of the Easter Rising. As a matter of fact all nearly all the big civil leaders that afterwards even took in and then our results present in their first beginning moral issues. I should not like to have to decide upon the national interests, over-riding such happenings as the shooting of police men that would be so, provided it was done through by authorization of at least de facto government. Obviously without some such authorization it would not be allowable. It would be in that sense that Dr O'Dwyer or I would stand over the guerrilla struggle after a few days the whole nation mobilized behind the Easter Rising, and made it justifiable as far as business

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Goodbye and God Bless you

Yours truly

Mr. Forster

Dr. Richard Hays

Woodlands

Kill of the Banns

Co. Wick

Under Seal  
until 7<sup>th</sup> June 1959



Four Negatives of W.S. 271 (C) etc. Indexing of letters

Opened by me on the 6th  
December 1960 - for the purpose  
of indexing - the period specified  
in Dr Hayes's Condition having then  
elapsed. R. Brennan

Letter of Most Rev Dr Fogarty

Bishop of Killaloe