

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 354

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 354.....

Witness

Padraig O Glasain,
18 Bothar Villiers,
Rath Garbh, Baile Atha Cliath.

Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers Dublin, 1916;
Courier to Thurles, Easter Sunday 1916.

Subject

- (a) Associations with I.V. leaders 1916;
- (b) Attempt by I.V.'s. to occupy Mansion House on occasion of Asquith's recruiting meeting 1914;
- (c) Meeting in Dr. O'Kelly's Holy Saturday 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.502.....

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STATEMENT BY PÁDRAIG Ó GLASÁIN

18 Bothar Bhilliers, Rath Garbh, Blá Cliath.

I used to go to Mrs. Wyse-Power's restaurant every day for lunch. I used to have my meal with Henry Dixon, Arthur Griffith, Major MacBride. Others would come in now and again. Seán McDermott would only come there when he might have some business with Griffith or Mrs. Wyse-Power. Joe McDonagh used to lunch there. Herbert Pim and Larry Ginnell would come there occasionally.

In conversation little things of current interest would crop up, such as the loyal address to Queen Victoria, and later to King Edward. They would criticise those who advocated them, and relate the steps that were being taken to prevent them by Inghiní na hÉireann and others.

I cannot imagine that I have anything to tell that would not be better told by dozens of others. Nancy Wyse-Power, especially, should be able to give a good account of all those who frequented her mother's restaurant. I felt always that all those people were superior to me and that I was a sort of onlooker, ready, of course, to help them if they wanted me. I felt very small fry among those outstanding men, for whom I had great respect. All I would do was bring the news that happened to be in circulation at the time. Henry Dixon was a brilliant conversationalist. MacBride was a man for whom I had a feeling of hero-worship. I said one day, in my Tipperary way, to a friend, "I don't know in the devil how Mr. Dixon stops talking". The other man said, "I don't know how he continues". We both meant the same thing.

Nancy Power will be able to give you an account of the part her mother and Henry Dixon played in trying to prevent the separation of Major MacBride and Maud Gonne. They went to Paris for the purpose. Their point was to stop its being brought into court.

Paddy O'Keeffe is another person who has a good memory and would be able to give an exact account of the events and personalities of those times.

I was in the Volunteers and drilled in Camden Row. I was in the Gaelic League, in Sinn Féin and other national societies. My first national activity was as a steward at the picnic organised by the Inghiní na h-Eireann for the children who did not attend the fete given by Queen Victoria. I was mobilised by Henry Dixon for this occasion.

I was President of Cumann na hÉireann Óige, which was a Cumann na Gael Club that met in Camden Street. These Clubs were used as a recruiting ground for the I.R.B. They had hurling and football clubs attached to them; they held sgoraidheachta and aeridheachta and ran a manuscript journal every month. Harry and Gerry Boland were members of the St. Kevin Club, which was merely a hurling club affiliated to our Branch. I took charge of an Irish language class, which Harry and Gerry, among others, attended.

At the beginning of the century An Fear Mór and Brian O'Higgins were assistants in two Dublin pubs. and I went with others occasionally to hear them speaking Irish. That is how I picked up the language.

I was Vice-Chairman of the Land Bank in 6 Harcourt Street for a few years until it was smashed up. Alderman

Tom Kelly, who was Chairman, dominated the whole Committee. The Bank was founded for the purpose of financing small Irish industries, but, in fact, it was merely a loan fund that was at the disposal of anybody recommended by Alderman Tom.

We started an Irish class in Messrs. Pims club rooms where I worked. Fiachra Eilgeach (Risteárd Ó Foghludha) was a voluntary teacher there. I subsequently joined the Árd Craobh, where Eamonn Ceannt taught us. He and Sinéad Ní Fhlanagáin (afterwards Bean de Valera) gave up teaching when the rule was introduced that all the teachers should be paid.

In Septa 1914 I was summoned by Seán McDermott to attend in the Foresters Hall, 41 Parnell Square one night. When I arrived there was drilling of Volunteers. Amongst others Tom Ashe and Con Collins came to me, both rather perturbed, and asked me what did I think of this move. "What move?" said I. "Occupying the Mansion House", said they. This was the night before Asquith's recruiting meeting in the Mansion House, and the I.R.B. leaders of the Volunteers had decided to occupy the building. Ashe and Con Collins evidently considered the plan rash and inadvisable. Scouts were going to and fro and one of them knocked at the door of the Mansion House with a view to seeing what was taking place there. The door was opened to him by a British military officer, so the Volunteers were forestalled and the plan could not be put into execution. We were disbanded and we all went home. The majority of the Volunteers who answered the summons that evening were not informed of what was afoot, and they were dismissed without ever knowing anything about it.

On Holy Saturday night, 1916, when I came into the shop, having been to Confession, I found a message awaiting me from Arthur Griffith asking me to call at Dr. O'Kelly's house in Rathgar Road when I had finished work. Some time previous to that I had been told off with Arthur Griffith to remain in 6 Harcourt Street for the night. We were supposed to be holding the lines of communication for the gun-running at Kilcoole. As a result of that, when I was summoned on Holy Saturday night I did not know that it might not be for some such purpose. Also we had been instructed already that there was to be a parade on Sunday with full kit, etc. Therefore I thought this message was connected with that parade, and that this might mean a route march during which an attempt might be made by the British military to disarm us. So I dressed for the occasion and took full equipment, some of which was located at Paddy O'Keeffe's house. He was not at home when I called.

When I arrived at Dr. O'Kelly's it must have been 11.30. The door was only opened with the greatest caution by the doctor himself. I was ushered into a room that was heavily curtained and had the lights dimmed by shades. Before I really understood the purpose of the meeting I heard MacNeill say, "Send for Cathal Brugha". Two went out, I cannot say who they were. One of them could have been Paddy O'Keeffe, as I saw him when I went into the room first. It is strange that I cannot remember who else was there, but Paddy O'Keeffe will be best able to tell you that too. Two people were outside on the lawn when I was going in, but in the dark I did not see who they were.

When Cathal Brugha came in he was full of life.

MacNeill said something about not wanting an abortive rising. "Judge of my surprise", he said, "when The O'Rahilly told me a lady had said to him in the street that she heard they were going to rise on Sunday". MacNeill alluded to the folly of a rising after the arrest of Casement and the capture of the arms ship. Cathal replied that if the Rising proved abortive, it would be due to the action MacNeill was now taking. MacNeill said he had sent Joe Connelly, I think, to Belfast, and was sending Colm O'Loughlin to Dundalk or Drogheda, I am not sure where. I myself went as a courier to Thurles.

There was an excursion train that Sunday morning for Thurles and I took it. I was told to get the message to Pierce McCann. I gave it to the Chairman of the Urban Council, Donnchadha Ó Muirgeán, and got him to hire a car for which the money had been given me by MacNeill - I cannot say now whether it was £10 or £20 he gave me. I had also been told to deliver the message to Countess O'Byrne in Corbally House, Roscrea. I hired a car, went there and gave her the message.

After leaving Thurles I was stopped on the road by the cries of a man evidently in pain. It was Jimmy Kennedy, subsequently Town Clerk of Thurles, who had injured his leg and wanted to be taken to a doctor. I took him back to Thurles and then resumed my journey. This was the man who was detected handing some incriminating papers to Ernest Blythe at an Aeridheacht - I cannot remember where - and as a consequence Blythe was arrested and got a sentence of six months.

From Roscrea I went on to Borrisokane and called on Father Michael Houlihan and gave him also MacNeill's message. I then drove on to Nenagh, my native town, as

my children were staying there in the family home. It was now up to 11 p.m., and I saw no one that night. I went down the street next day and while I was out my people, who knew I was in the Volunteers, opened my bag and found the revolver and ammunition. They buried them in the haggard and sent someone to look for me. When I came back I found Dr. Paddy Grogan from Scariff. He arranged with me that he would bring his car slowly past our door and I jumped in and we drove off to his home in Scariff, where I remained during the week. There were no activities there during Easter Week.

After a few days I went on to the Silvermines where I had some friends. The police started to make enquiries about the stranger in the district, and I went on to other friends near Keeper Hill before coming back to Dublin.

SIGNED *Paddy O'Glasán*
 DATE *16th Lá Beirne Febrúil '50*

WITNESS *P. M. Cusáin*

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