

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BÚRO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 705

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 705

Witness

Christopher Joseph Brady, P.C.,
139 Annamoe Drive,
Cabra,
Dublin.

Identity.

Printer on staff of "The Workers' Republic"
1915-1916.

Subject.

Printing of Proclamation
of Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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Statement of Christopher Joseph Brady, P.C.,

139, Annamoe Drive, Cabra, Dublin.

In April 1915 I was introduced to James Connolly, in Liberty Hall, by the late Patrick Daly, T.C., Compositor. He was the foreman in charge of two compositors and one printer in Liberty Hall. The Compositors' names were William O'Brien and Michael Molloy and I was the Printer. Mr. Patrick Daly gave me the routine of work which I was to print which was the work connected with the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, and also with the paper known as "The Workers Republic". This was a weekly issue. There was also work connected with the National Health Insurance Work related to the I.T.G.W.U. and work on the Membership Cards of the members of the Union and on concert programmes for the weekly concerts which were held in Liberty Hall on Sunday nights. We started to print a weekly paper called "The Workers Republic". It was set up and printed in Liberty Hall. It was set up by William O'Brien and Michael Molloy and printed by myself. This was a weekly issue also.

Coming on to 1916 the Castle Authorities were very active raiding for seditious literature or as they called it Rebel Papers. The papers were "Spark", "Honesty" and the "Gael" and were printed at Joe Stanley's printing works Liffey Street. Stanley's place came in for special attention by the Castle Searching Authorities. When the police would raid the works the typed forms would be smuggled out and brought down to Liberty Hall and printed by me. When this would happen I would often work all night

The activities in Liberty Hall included a co-operative shop run by the members. The late Miss Jane Shanahan was manageress. Helena Molony was Secretary and Miss Rosie Hackett worked as canvasser and traveller and was called on to carry out many confidential jobs. One of the products of the Co-Op., by the way, was a first class workers shirt. It had a crest of the Red Hand on it and was selling for 2/6, and of course papers which the British termed Rebel Papers were also sold there, and which included "The Spark", "Honesty", "The Workers Republic" and other publications. At the back of the Co-op. was the machine room. One could enter the machine room through the Co-Op., 31, Eden Quay, or through Beresford Place which is the front of Liberty Hall.

On the week before Good Friday the police came on from a raid on Joe Stanley's printing works to Liberty Hall. They rushed into the shop and proceeded to seize copies of the "Gael" which was usually printed at Stanley's works. This was regarded by those in the hall as merely an excuse for a general survey for the feeling of an approaching crisis was then in the air. The three women were behind the counter and I was looking through a little door with two spy holes in it in the machine room. I saw the raid and hastily went for James Connolly who was upstairs with Madame Markievicz and others. Connolly came down quickly, walked quietly to the counter with drawn gun in his hand. A few feet away Miss Molony was already covering the police with her automatic. Connolly looked sternly at the police and gave his command to them: "Drop these papers or I will drop you". At this moment Madame Markievicz who had gone out through the front door of Liberty Hall had come round the street corner and appeared at the entrance to the Co-op. behind the raiding

police. As she entered, a hot-headed young policeman was urging his comrades to rush Connolly, but as he spoke Madame came forward. She too had them covered and they realised they were surrounded. At once they changed their tune and said "Of course we are only doing our duty and we have no warrant for this raid". With this they beat a quick retreat. Within an hour of this incident a large contingent of Citizen Army men were mobilised to defend Liberty Hall. I carried a despatch from Connolly to Commandant Michael Mallin at Emmet Hall, Inchicore, for this mobilisation. The Countess wrote the despatch in the Machine Room in Liberty Hall and handed it to me, and she said "Christy, when you get to Emmet Hall and see Commandant Mallin, tell him to see Tom Keane and he is to get the guns". When I arrived at Emmet Hall I found Michael Mallin. I delivered the despatch together with the verbal instructions to him. Within an hour Mallin and his men arrived at Liberty Hall and immediately took up positions of defence around the building. From that onwards everyday that I went into Liberty Hall to work an armed guard of citizen army men was placed protecting me. Also I was handed an automatic by James Connolly for my own protection.

On the Wednesday or Thursday of Holy Week, James Connolly brought Pádraig Pearse into the Machine Room. He introduced me to him and said, "This is my Printer and this is the machine on which he works". They had a general chat on the printing room and both of them departed. Seán McDermott was a weekly visitor to Liberty Hall. He would drop in on Thursday night usually, for an advance copy of the "Workers Republic" as he himself very often was responsible for some articles in it. Other occasional visitors were Tom Clarke, Joseph Plunkett and Pádraig

Pearse. These would be to James Connolly who had rooms upstairs.

On Good Friday James Connolly told me to call to his office as he wanted to see me very privately. I went to his office and he told me that he was speaking to my colleagues Michael Molloy and William O'Brien and he asked me if I could be in Liberty Hall with them on Easter Sunday morning between 10 and 11 a.m. He didn't say what he wanted us for. He met us on the steps of Liberty Hall on Easter Sunday morning, brought us upstairs to one of the rooms and introduced us to Tomás McDonagh. James Connolly said "These are my three workmen here". Then Tomás MacDonagh said to us, "Well men, the time is about opportune to strike a blow for Ireland". He said, "I will read to you first the manuscript which I want you to produce in print". When he had read it over to us he handed me the manuscript first to read and when I had read it he asked me to pass it on to my two colleagues. When he had finished reading he asked for a decision. I said, "As a humble workman I consider it a great honour to be entrusted to do such a heroic job". The others answered in a similar manner. When I read the document I fully understood that it was a document proclaiming an Irish Republic and that it meant war, but my colleagues and myself were unanimous in our decision. Tomás McDonagh then said, "If we can hold out in this fight in order that Ireland's voice may be heard at the Peace Conference and you boys will not be forgotten". McDonagh then said to Connolly, "James, will you have those men sworn in". Connolly replied, "No, I will vouch for those men's secrecy". He shook hands with us and gave the manuscript to Michael Molloy, the Composer and Billy

O'Brien also Compositor, who got the case of type from the front kitchens in which the men worked. They were brought from the front kitchens to the machine room for setting. The men proceeded to set the type for the proclamation and started off the work. When they had half of it set the shortage of type was so great that wrong fonts had to be used and I had to make a new letter by converting an 'F' into an 'E' from sealing wax to make up the supply. The type which was used in the printing of the proclamation was obtained from an Englishman by the name of West, a printer of Stafford Street. The machine was ready for first printing at about ^{8.30 b.b.} 10 p.m. on Easter Sunday night and the job was finished between 12 and 1 on Easter Monday morning. We had then run off 2,500 copies. I gave the first proof to James Connolly at 9 p.m. and he checked it with the manuscript and I never saw the manuscript after that. When Connolly was checking the first proof the name "Eamon" was spelled incorrectly.

When the printing of the Proclamation was completed I made up two parcels of the printed copies, 1,250 in each, and brought them to Miss Helena Molony who was lying on a couch in the Co-op. shop room in Liberty Hall. She told me to ^{put} ~~upt~~ them under her pillow. She was armed with a revolver. Although I read the manuscript I could not say in whose hand-writing it was. It certainly was not Connolly's as I was familiar with his scrawl.

The 2,500 copies printed were the only ones which were taken from the original manuscript. There were further reprints afterwards but they were from different fonts of type.

The two compositors and myself were hampered in our work by the inevitable mishaps of using such an old machine. The shortage of type compelled us to set up the Proclamation twice. *in two sections b b*

During the printing progress the Citizen Army were as usual, guarding the machine room. Lieutenant Partridge was in charge. Suddenly the Countess Markievicz knocked at the door of the machine room and asked to be allowed to come in. She was stopped by the Officer in charge until Commandant James Connolly came. When we had finished the printing of the Proclamation and everything was cleared the Proclamation was parcelled up and delivered to Miss Helena Molony. The Countess was then admitted into the machine room. She said to James Connolly, "I will shoot Eoin MacNeill", and James Connolly replied, "You are not to hurt a hair on MacNeill's head. If anything happens to MacNeill I will hold you responsible". She was in a raging temper and she showed Connolly a telegram. What the telegram contained I do not know but she was acting on whatever was in this telegram. In the early hours of the morning large bodies of Volunteer and Citizen Army men were arriving at Liberty Hall. They were fully armed. They were accommodated there. At this stage my comrades and myself left the premises and returned home.

Signed: *Christopher J. Brady P6*
(Christopher J. Brady)

Date: *3rd July 1952*
3rd July 1952

Witness: *William Ivory Comdt.*
(William Ivory) Comd't.

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