

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILITÁIRÉ 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 1058

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,058

Witness

Seamus Bevan,  
Colaiste Mhuire,  
Ballygar,  
Co. Galway.

also Ballydavid, Co. Kerry.

Identity.

Member of Fianna Eireann, Dublin,  
1914 - .

Subject.

The Flags over the G.P.O., Dublin,  
Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.467...

Form B S M 2

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STATEMENT BY MR. SEAMUS BEVAN,

Coláiste Mhuire, Ballygar, Co. Galway.

From the establishment of the Volunteers in 1913, my father and two eldest brothers were in "C" Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, and I, being a schoolboy, was attending the Irish classes in the McHale Branch of the Gaelic League where I usually met a good number of those men who afterwards became famous in the Movement.

In 1914 I joined the Fianna, but spent most of my time running on messages between the officers of the Companies of the 1st Battalion.

Somewhere around the beginning of 1915 a dispute arose amongst the members of the Fianna of the North City which concerned the manufacture of the hats of the Scouts. Those who favoured a stiff-brimmed hat, which could not be procured in Ireland, were in the majority; and the minority, who would not compromise, formed a new organisation which numbered about 40 and which was known as "The National Guard". I was with the minority. Amongst the National Guard we had Alec Thompson, Malachy Kelly (a brother of Seán T. O'Kelly, now President of Ireland) and Gibson whose Christian name I have forgotten. The latter was wounded in the evacuation of the G.P.O. and, as far as I know, all the members of this National Guard took an active part in the Rising. *(Also - Mattie & Eddie Connolly - brothers of Seán Connolly, who was shot hoisting the flag over the City Hall)*

In those days I had a keen interest in the Flags of Nations and their significance. And hence, when on the

Wednesday of Easter Week I arrived within sight of the G.P.O. with a dispatch from Commandant Daly of the Four Courts area, I was immediately struck by the appearance of the flag which flew from the Henry St. corner of the G.P.O. I have a vivid recollection of that flag. It was very large, much larger than any flag I had ever seen. It blew in a stiff breeze almost half-way across Henry St. and the bottom edge of this flag almost touched the top of the balustrade.

Having delivered my dispatch I made my way back along Henry St., continually turning back to admire this flag.

At the entrance to Williams & Co., Tea Merchants, some doors beyond Moore St., I stopped to talk to a sentry who was standing in the porch of this shop. I believe his name was Keating, but I am certain he belonged to "F" Company of the 1st Battalion. He was a low-sized man of slight build with ginger hair and a small moustache. He might have been about 25 years of age. My remark to him was "I see we have a new flag". His reply showed he was not interested and I passed a few more remarks to show him that I thought it was rather important and that the flag had been deliberately altered to mark the beginning of a new era of history.

The colours of this flag were the green, white and orange arranged in horizontal rows with the green on top and the three colours touching the mast.

When I arrived back in the Four Courts the boys were all anxious to know how things stood in the city. But my big news for them was the new flag that we had.

Immediately after the Rising small flags for bicycles were sold by Whelan of Ormond Quay. This was a well-known shop, and I associated Whelan with the 2nd Battalion. I purchased one of these flags which was a replica of the above-mentioned flag and which I flew on my bicycle every day for at least 12 months.

On the Princes St. corner of the G.P.O. there flew a green flag of a normal size. I believe there was a harp in the middle; but my only reason for believing this is that if it had been anything else it would have attracted my attention. Of this I am certain,— above the harp circularwise were the words "Poblacht na hÉireann" in Gaelic characters, and below the harp also circularwise the words "Irish Republic".

Being interested in the Irish language I was used to hearing discussions on the correct interpretation in Irish of the words "Irish Republic" and consequently I was interested in the three words "Poblacht na hÉireann". I studied this flag for a considerable time as I was intrigued by the fact that it was not clear whether the lettering was in gold or silver. This also interested my young mind as we were used to discussing the uses of yellow for gold on flags containing the sunburst. Whether the letters were in gold or silver I never decided. My attention was focussed on the letters rather than on the harp as the letters caught the light and on these occasions appeared to be silver.

At the time I felt convinced that the arrangement of the colours was no mere accident by Pearse. I believed Pearse had them placed in this order in

accordance with a pronouncement of his in an article in The Irish Volunteer a few weeks beforehand where he stated that when the Republic would be proclaimed, the inhabitants of the North would have to come in or "go under".

Signed: Seamus Bevan  
(Seamus Bevan)  
Date: 7th. January '55

Witness: Sean Brennan Lieut. Col  
(Investigator)

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