

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1108

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,108.....

Witness

Jeremiah Joseph O'Leary,
54 Marlborough Road,
Donnybrook,
Dublin.
Identity.

Sinn Fein Director of Elections,
Pembroke Constituency, 1918.

Subject.

National activities, London and Dublin,
1905-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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W.S. 1108

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STATEMENT OF Mr. JEREMIAH JOSEPH O'LEARY,
54 Marlborough Road, Donnybrook,
Dublin.

I was born on the 4th September, 1889, in Colchester. My father, James Aloysius O'Leary, was from Enniscorthy, County Wexford, and served his time to the grocery with Bolger's of Ferns. After some time in Ireland, he went to Liverpool, and afterwards set up a business in Cardiff where he met and married my mother, Catherine Hurley, whose people came from Drimoleague, County Cork.

We came to London when I was fairly young, and I joined the Gaelic League in London about 1905 at the Clapham Branch. I was living in Clapham at 11 Trenadoc Road. My name and that address appear in the Rebellion Handbook, where a list of all the prisoners is given. It is perhaps the only London address which figures in the whole list.

There was nobody of particular interest in the Gaelic League Branch when I first joined it.

Shortly after getting into Irish affairs in London, my brother, David O'Leary, had joined the I.R.B. and about the year 1908 I was brought into the I.R.B. by Dick Connolly, who was employed in the Post Office in London. (I met him about a week ago. He lives somewhere on the north side. I could get you his address. He is a pensioner - Post Office.) I was sworn into the I.R.B. by Richard Connolly. He was the Centre of our particular local Circle. As far as I understand it, Sam Maguire was the Head Centre in London at that time and P. S. O'Hegarty and Michael Collins were prominent in it, and a number of other well known people. Probably Dick Connolly could tell you a great deal more about it than I could.

We were all mainly associated with G.A.A. Clubs. Collins, of course, was one of the leaders of the Geraldine Club. I think it was somewhere in North London they functioned - Highbury. Most of the South London men were members of the Thomas Davis Club, and we had the use of a field at Mitcham where the Club used to practise. I did not do much, of course. It is very important to explain now that, when I was about eight or nine years of age, I was tripped up in the school yard and suffered an injury to my hip which involved a good deal of hospital treatment. Eventually my right hip joint became fixed so that, throughout the greater part of my life, I was lame; and that had an important effect on some of the things I did later. I was an honorary member of the Thomas Davis Hurling Club which had its ground at Mitcham.

About 1910 a young man joined the Clapham Branch of the Gaelic League. His name was Edward Turnley, but he adopted the Irish form, Eamonn O'Tierney. He was employed in a ship brokers' office in the city and, as I was also working in a shipping office close by, we became close friends and associates.

One of the first activities that we engaged in was to organise a Committee amongst the Irish Associations in London to relieve distress in Dublin during the 1913 strikes. Eamonn O'Tierney and I built up this organisation, first through the influence of the Gaelic League and on through the rest of them. Our body was called The United Irish Associations in London.

The Volunteers started in 1913; and I think it must have been very early in 1914 that a Company of the Volunteers was started in London. The Company met at the German Gymnasium in Highbury. Michael Collins and other members of the I.R.B. were active agents in establishing it.

After a short while, a number of men living in South London felt that it was too far to go to North London, and they commissioned me to write to Volunteer Headquarters in Dublin with a view to starting a South London Company. I did so, accordingly, and received from Bulmer Hobson authority to organise and carry on a South London Company. We took the use of St. George's Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, which belonged to the Southwark diocese, and men from various parts of South London, including Dock Head and Camberwell, attended; usually on Saturday afternoons. A Committee was formed to carry on the affairs of the Company. William McCarthy, a furniture manufacturer of Peckham, was invited to act as Chairman. Joseph Cassidy, a prominent member of the Dock Head Branch of the Gaelic League, acted as Treasurer and also as Instructor of Training to the Company, and I acted as Secretary.

Early in 1914, O'Tierney and I had been approached by Michael Collins, or some other members of the North London Company who were aware that we were both engaged in shipping, and we received instructions to go and see Mr. Darrell Figgis, who, at that time, was staying somewhere in Highgate. I visited Darrell Figgis, who asked me various questions about shipping procedure, without giving me any information as to why; and he then made an appointment for me to go to Roger Casement, who was staying at the time with Mrs. Alice Stopford Green somewhere in Victoria - that is as much as I remember now of where she lived.

When I was about to visit Roger Casement, a youth named Robert Emmet Whelan happened to call on me. He lived in Forest Gate and was organising a Company of Fianna there. (There was an active Branch of the Gaelic League at Forest Gate, and a group of enthusiastic Gaels lived in that district). I took young Whelan with me when I went to see Casement. The latter was very interested in the development of

Volunteer
 the/organisation in London and asked me to keep in touch with him;
 and, accordingly, when it was decided to form an independent South
 London Company, I wrote to him and told him so. I received a
 reply from him from McMahon's Hotel, Derry, dated 27th May, 1914
 acknowledging my letter. (Letter handed over, which read as
 follows :-

"MacMahon's Hotel,
 Derry.

27th May, 1914.

Dear Mr. O'Leary,

I am delighted to hear that the Irishmen of South London are
 taking steps to form themselves into a branch of the military
 organisation being so steadily developed in Ireland - the Irish
 Volunteers. We need the help of Irishmen everywhere.

I got a letter from New York today to say that a "Dublin Corps"
 had been formed there.

I am very glad to hear that you, too, are forming a Corps in
 Bermondsey and I trust that every Irishman in your locality who
 loves his country will step into the ranks, and take his place to
 shoulder a gun on the side of Ireland.

Yours,

(Sd.) ROGER CASEMENT."

I arranged to visit Belfast and the North of Ireland during
 my holidays in 1914; and I wrote and told Roger Casement so. He
 wrote to me on the 4th June, making a tentative appointment for me
 to meet him at the house of Mr. F. J. Biggar, Antrim Road, Belfast.

(Hands in letter which reads as follows:-

"June 4, 1914.

A chara dhil,

If you come to Belfast, call on Mr. F. J. Biggar, Ardrigh, Antrim Road, Belfast - or at his offices - Royal Avenue. He is a solicitor and well known. I may be here - but I am going round all over the land at present on Volunteering. Things are going well in Derry.

Give my regards and kind thoughts to the Fianna na h-Eireann of London and their youthful leader who came to see me.

Mr. Biggar will put you on good lines here.

Your letter reached me too late to write the lines you wanted for the meeting. I was on the move thro' Tyrone all last week and for some days of week earlier and away from letters. I hope the meeting was successful.

Forgive this hurried line - but I am up to my eyes with delayed correspondence - and have been a bit ill for some days with a bad cold caught last week from which I have not yet recovered.

I hope all went well at the meeting and if I am in this part of Ireland when you come North, I'll be glad to see you -

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) ROGER CASEMENT.

at

Ardrigh,
Antrim Road,
Belfast".)

When I eventually called at Mr. Biggar's house, and told him that I had come to meet Roger Casement, he pointed down to Belfast Lough where the Cross-Channel steam, "The Viper", was making out to

sea and he said, "You have just missed him. Your friend is on that boat". Roger Casement had just gone to Glasgow on the first stage of his journey to New York.. I noticed all around me movements connected with the mobilisation of military and naval forces. That was in July of 1914, just before the outbreak of the war.

My mother's brother, James Hurley, was steward of the Irish Club in Charing Cross Road. This Club was mainly theatrical and had been acquired by a North of Ireland man named Sam Geddes. It was frequented by artists looking for employment, and they gave concerts there a couple of times a week, which my mother regularly attended. I sometimes went with her, and one Wednesday night in the early summer of 1915 we returned home about eleven o'clock and I found a man waiting for me, a short, plump, clean-shaven, pleasant-looking man who spoke with an American accent. He asked me did I remember visiting a certain person in Victoria sometime previously in company with a young man, when certain observations were made - I forget what the exact observations were - which he recounted to me as they occurred. I said I did remember such an incident, and he then informed me that he was Anthony James Brogan, the editor of a paper in New York called the 'Irish-American'. He had come to Europe ostensibly to sell outboard motors for boats; and he had proceeded through France and Switzerland to Germany, where he had got into association with the German authority, and he proposed to assist in their intelligence organisation. When in Germany he had contacted Roger Casement, and the latter had given him my name and address as a London contact. He had only landed that day and said he had travelled in company with a German officer who was proceeding to New York. The latter, he said, was very anxious to get some information as to the military position in Great Britain at the moment, but he was proceeding to Liverpool the following day.

Brogan asked me whether I could manage to see this man quickly, and when. I said I would go and see him immediately.

Although it was about midnight, I proceeded to a hotel in Russell Square alone and went up to the room indicated. I tapped on the door and a voice said, "Who is there?" I said, "A friend". I entered and found a man in bed. I told him Mr. Brogan had sent me, and we discussed the war position in England. He was anxious to know the strength of the new Kitchener army that had just been launched in Great Britain. This matter had been the subject of some discussion in I.R.B. circles. P. S. O'Hegarty, Michael Collins and Dick Connolly were all in the Postal Service, and had a certain amount of inside information. They estimated that, at that time, about two million men had been enlisted. I told this officer that the figure would be about two million. He expressed surprise that it should be so high - but at a later date Brogan told me that he had gathered information from other sources and had learned that my estimate was fairly accurate. I believe that this officer later formed part of Captain Boy-Ed's Intelligence staff in America.

I immediately consulted with Dick Connolly about the visit, and he passed the word along. A week or so later, he informed me that Seán MacDermott had come to London, and wanted to see me.. Connolly brought me to Seán, and we arranged a meeting with Brogan which took place in a large restaurant in Oxford Street where Seán MacDermott, Michael Collins, Brogan and I had dinner together.

Connolly later gave me the judgements of the organisation on the position. It appears that Brogan was some kind of a free-lance journalist who carried on a small Irish paper in New York, but was not a member of the most national organisations there and he was rather distrusted by the latter. They felt that he had gone to Europe

merely to act as a German spy. Connolly said that the I.R.B. organisation would have nothing to do with Brogan officially, but it did not preclude any individuals from co-operating with him if they so desired.

Brogan was anxious to build up an organisation in Great Britain. O'Tierney and I decided that we would give him any help we could, but naturally gave him absolutely no information about our own organisations.

At a meeting of the South London Company one of our members, Tomás O'Donoghue (who was then employed in the Home Office and who was later Vice Chairman of the Kerry County Council), enquired publicly whether anyone knew a man named Brogan. O'Tierney kicked his heel, thus distracting his attention, and we drew him aside. It appears that Tomás O'Donoghue had access to the Aliens' Records in the Home Office and had noted a report of the arrival of Brogan from the Continent at a North of England port - I think it was Hull but I am not sure. It appears that, while the authorities had a certain natural suspicion, they actually had no definite information against Brogan.

When I next met Brogan, I impressed him highly by recounting the circumstances of his arrival in the country. Of course, I gave him no clue as to the source of my information.

Brogan gave O'Tierney and me the names of certain prisoners-of-war in Germany to whom, or in whose names rather, we might address communications bearing certain given signatures, such letters being intercepted by the German authorities, as they were established codes. O'Tierney and I did our best to gather information and to enlist others in the service. We visited Dublin during the summer of 1915 and contacted people from Scotland whom we enrolled, and I visited Glasgow, Edinburgh and other places later that year to gather anything that I could.

Brogan went back to Germany and returned to England again a couple of times. He informed me that Roger Casement was not in good health and was not succeeding very well in his projects.

After Casement's arrest, he was represented by Gavan Duffy, and sometime later, the latter informed me in Dublin that Casement had become suspicious of, or dissatisfied with, Brogan and had come to the conclusion that he might be "no good"; and he had, therefore, become anxious to warn me. He had enquired from Gavan Duffy about me and learned that I had not suffered from being connected with Brogan. Gavan Duffy informed me that Casement had written a document, giving some details or information about Brogan, which Casement wanted passed on to me. Gavan Duffy said, however, that he would retain the document for the time being - and actually I never saw it.

Brogan evidently had other contacts, because he introduced ^{to} me in London James Johnston of Belfast, a brother of Eithne Carbery and son of a well-known Belfast Fenian. Johnston and I met in Frongoch, and he said he had heard that Brogan had been captured in Italy. This proved not to be the case, however, because after the Truce Brogan turned up in Dublin, full of the idea of getting arms for the Volunteers. Through Jack Plunkett, I got an interview with Liam Mellows, but I do not think that any business materialised.

After the outbreak of war and the "adoption" of the Volunteers by John Redmond, considerable controversy arose. Many of the men in the two London Companies were old British Army reservists, and were supporters of the Parliamentary Party. Redmond offered their services to the British Government, and many of them rejoined the British colours. The Government had closed the German Gymnasium in Highbury, and the loyal remnants of the North London Company came down to us at St. George's Hall.

When in Dublin in the summer of 1915, O'Tierney and I were in close contact with the Volunteer officers at 2 Dawson Street; where, incidentally, I was first introduced to Lieutenant de Valera. I was left in charge of the Volunteer offices on the day of the O'Donovan Rossa funeral, as all the staff were taking part in the procession. A newsreel company took pictures of the funeral procession from the offices, and these were shown to us the following morning in the firm's offices in Lower Exchange Street, underneath where the Corporation Rates offices are now.

Bulmer Hobson instructed me to visit The O'Rahilly at Northumberland Road. The latter gave me instructions to organise the passage of arms and ammunition through London for the Volunteers. Seán McGrath, one of our members, was a sorter on the travelling Post Office going regularly to Birmingham, and he took regular deliveries of material from firms there and brought them to London for us to distribute and get to Dublin. They were mostly revolvers and ammunition. We got a number of rifles, not so much from Birmingham as from individual merchants. We passed them to one of our men, Michael Murphy, who had come back to Dublin and was working with Micheál O'Hanrahan. When we arrived on the Good Friday of 1916 with the last loads, Micheál O'Hanrahan was very disgusted. They wanted ammunition at that time, but it was mainly revolvers in the consignment we brought. Of course, our messengers had no choice: they had to take what was given them by the merchants. We had picked up a few rifles here and there, by stealing from the military and various other ways. I had acquired a good Lee Metford rifle, or whatever was the pattern at that time, when Liam Daly was leaving for Dublin at the beginning of 1916, on account of conscription, he brought the rifle with him and it remained with him. He used it in Easter Week in the G.P.O.

The members of the Company I can recall at the moment are Seán and Ernie Nunan, Tom Donoghue; Joe Cassidy of Dock Head Gaelic League was our Training Instructor (His widow is living in Dún Laoghaire and she might be a possible contact for information, but he died shortly after 1916). She belonged to a family named O'Reilly, which included Mary O'Reilly, a great singer, of Bermondsey, who married Seán O'Sullivan, one of the members of our Company.

We sometimes held meetings of the Company committee in Joe Cassidy's house at Bermondsey; and one night a Zeppelin raider passed over the district, dropping bombs all around. It appeared to pass right over the house in which we were meeting. We followed the trail of destruction it had caused across the City of London.

In the beginning of 1916 the Conscription Act came into operation and most of our young lads decided to leave for Dublin. On account of my lameness, I easily got an Irish doctor in Clapham to exempt me from military service. Others who were in the Post Office and various Government services, like Seán McGrath and Collins, who had become a stockbroker's assistant, were not eligible for military service and quite a number stayed on in London at that time. We went on with the work of the Volunteers as best we could, with the remnants of the Company.

We had a Volunteer ceilí which we organised. It must have been some time before Christmas, 1915, or the New Year, 1916. I am handing in a statement and final notice demanding payment of account, which read as follows :-

"THE DUNDALGAN PRESS,
DUNDALK, July 25th, 1917.

Irish Volunteers,
per Mr. Diarmid O'Leary,
11 Termadoc Rd., Clapham,
London, S.W.

TO WM. TEMPEST, DR.

1916			
Jan. 1.	To 250 Tickets - ceilidh, etc.	- 5 -	
	postage	- - 5	
		<u> </u>	

From W. TEMPEST, DUNDALGAN PRESS,
DUNDALK,

October 8th., 1916.

FINAL NOTICE.

Sir (or Madam,)

If your Account amounting to £0. 5. 5., about which I have written you several times is not paid by return of post, I must hand it to my Solicitor for collection, without further notice.

Yours truly,

W. TEMPEST.

Mr. Diarmid O'Leary,
11 Termadoc Rd.,
Clapham, London, S.W."

On the back of the Final Notice is a copy of the reply my mother sent to the firm, which reads as follows :-

"13.10.16.

Sir,

Mr. Diarmuid O'Leary of Termadoc Road, Clapham, being interned since early May, cannot see to your account till he is released, as he has not been informed of its being sent. It is such a trifling amount, I think it can wait until he is at liberty to see to it.

(Mrs.) K. O'Leary."

Larry Ginnell and his wife maintained close contact with us. Captain Lynch, the M.P., - the man who fought with the Boers - also contacted us, but I find it very difficult to hark back and pick

up the various incidents that happened. One of my recollections, for instance, is that Jerry Lynch, a London detective, tried to get into one of our meetings, but was kept out at the point of a bayonet by Liam Daly, who was on guard at the time. We were rather an informal army. We never applied for commissions. I don't think any of us had commissions. Joseph Cassidy was more or less in charge of the training, but I was virtually in charge of the whole organisation, and I do not know what I would be called.

The approach of conscription was a matter that gave us a great deal of concern, and I think we were told, through the I.R.B., that there was a place in Kimmage. We told the lads and they went off. You probably would have a better list of the London lads than I would have - the Ninan's, Seán Donoghue, Johnny O'Connor, Mick Collins. I have a photograph here which was taken after Frongoch and a copy of which is now in the National Museum. Some of the London-Irish Volunteers are in the photograph: George Lyons, Seán MacMahon, one of the Fitzgerald's, Charlie Murphy, Seamus Donncadha, Ryan, myself, David Begley, one of the London Company, Dómhnal Ó Buachala, Eamon Waldron of Mayo, Jerry Malone.

There were various prominent people in contact with us. We had ceillis, dances, drills. Jerry Lynch, the London G-man, tried to get into one of our drills, but Liam Daly relates with great glee that he happened to be on sentry on the stairs and had great pleasure in preventing Lynch and keeping him out. Lynch was not too bad.

After Easter Week my people in London had destroyed practically all correspondence that was in the house, about the Volunteers, except for two letters from Roger Casement that Dick Connolly's sisters insisted should be kept. They concealed them inside the leg joint of a kitchen table. They pulled the leg out of the table and hid them in the leg socket of the table. There were a bandolier

and belt on top of a press which could have been seen, but Jerry Lynch apparently did not see them; and there were large bundles of Griffith papers of the day; he simply took a few of the nationalist newspapers, as a sample of what was in the house.

The lads went to Dublin in the beginning of 1916. We carried on as well as we could, getting stuff over to Dublin. On the Maundy Thursday of Easter Week a party of eight people, with twelve trunks containing arms and ammunition, left London and arrived in Dublin on Good Friday. They were Seán McGrath, Liam O'Kelly, a member of the Clapham Gaelic League, Eamon O'Tierney, my brother David, and myself, that is, five men and three women, i.e. two sisters of Dick Connolly (Sheelagh, who had been just widowed; and the other who is a nun now in the Charity Convent, Enniscorthy) and Gráinne O'Sullivan. Gráinne O'Sullivan was a teacher and the other two were nurses.

We all happened to be staying in the same digs at 11 Upper Gardiner Street. We passed on our stuff, through Michael Murphy, to Micheál O'Hanrahan, who remarked that he wished we had brought ammunition rather than revolvers, as that was the pressing need. We, of course, had to take what we were given.

That evening Michael Collins came down to see us and said he wanted somebody to go back to London with an important message. After some debate, one of the Miss Connolly's was deputed to go. I think she was instructed to tell all the I.R.B. people in London that they should proceed to Dublin as quickly as possible. As she was only able to get a boat on Saturday, I think the message inevitably reached London too late for any action.

After arriving in Dublin that week we were very interested in everything that we observed going on, but we had no actual functions at the moment. We were expecting to see a big mobilisation on Sunday;

but we saw, with regret, a letter in the 'Sunday Independent', signed by MacNeill, cancelling the arrangements.

I went to Mass at Gardiner Street chapel on the Sunday morning and, as I was going in, I met Padraig Pearse and another man coming out. Pearse had visited London in the previous September to speak at the inaugural meeting of the Gaelic League winter session, and I had the privilege of making his acquaintance there and of discussing our Volunteer organisation with him. We stopped and spoke on the steps of Gardiner Street chapel, and he asked me had I seen the morning paper. I said I had and that there seemed to be a serious upset. I asked what was going to happen now. He said he was going down to Liberty Hall where a meeting was to be held and that I might gather any information there ultimately. Consequently, most of our London group spent the Sunday in the vicinity of Liberty Hall watching the various activities of the Citizen Army and others, but, as nothing happened, we eventually left.

On the Monday morning, Michael Murphy called to tell us that his Company had been mobilised. Eamon O'Tierney, who happened to meet him, went off with him and spent the week with the Volunteers in the North King Street area, eventually retreating on the Four Courts, where he was taken prisoner. He was always of a very highly-strung nature and, at the end of the week, he collapsed and was taken to the Dublin Castle hospital.

I had gone down to Liberty Hall at about twelve noon on Monday. The two Kimmage Companies arrived there and halted before the steps. I saw Seán MacDermott on the steps and went up and shook hands with him. He said they were starting the "racket" and asked would I go out with them. I said, "Certainly". He said, "You had better stay in Liberty Hall for the time being and you will no doubt get later orders". The two Companies then left Liberty Hall and marched away.

After some time, one of the girls who had come from London in our party came to me and said that David Begley had a quantity of ammunition at his uncle's house at Seville Place and he wanted us to recover it. I accordingly went to the G.P.O. and there picked up Seán McGrath and Liam O'Kelly. We went to Seville Place and got the ammunition. When it was found that we were gathering it openly, other people came along, and so we had to arrange to pick up a fair quantity in different places. We brought the ammunition back to the Post Office and found that a barricade had been thrown across the end of Abbey Street. A Citizen Army man stopped us and presented a bayonet at us when we tried to get through; but, when we showed him the ammunition in our bags, he was only too anxious to facilitate us. We deposited the ammunition in the General Post Office, and somebody came along with a number of copies of the printed Proclamation. We took copies of them and helped to post them up in various parts of the city.

We were naturally very excited over the events that were taking place and wanted to see everything that we could. We were running about, therefore, in different parts of the city to try to see what we could and to give a hand where we could.

In the late afternoon (Monday) I observed big crowds in Earl Street and Abbey Street, breaking shop windows and beginning to loot the contents. I went into the General Post Office which, at that time, was apparently a quite easy thing to do, and saw Padraig Pearse and James Connolly sitting on high stools in a little enclosure in the middle of the main hall drinking tea and eating sandwiches. I had also met Connolly previously, because Marie Perolz and Miss Moloney had contacted me in London earlier about getting Ernest Blythe and other deportees back to Ireland; and I had subsequently undertaken the supply of certain arms, including bayonets, to the

Countess Markievicz at Liberty Hall.. I reported to Pearse and Connolly that disorders were breaking out. Connolly was rather abrupt and probably resentful of my butting in, but Pearse said that there was a shortage of men, that he had none available to take up police duties, and he asked me to try and organise a Volunteer Force to take up the task. He indicated a box of wooden batons which lay in a corner of the main hall and said I might arm the men with these.

I went out to the front of the G.P.O., stood up on one of the stones that front the pillars and made a short speech, denouncing the looting and calling for volunteers to help to suppress it. A number of men came forward whom I lined up in front of the G.P.O. and, taking one or two of them in, we collected the batons and distributed them to the men. I then instructed them to parade the main shops and thoroughfares opposite the G.P.O. to try to keep the crowds on the move, and prevent them doing damage. We moved over towards Earl Street, but there was such a dense, milling crowd there that we became broken up and submerged by the crowd immediately. I spent the rest of the night vainly trying to keep people on the move and prevent looting, but with very little success.

About midnight the crowds melted away and, as I was very tired, I felt the need of some rest. The General Post Office building was in darkness and all doors shut, and I felt diffident about attacking the building at that hour of the night, so I went back to the digs we had in Gardiner Street.

The following day (Tuesday) I met Seán McGrath and O'Kelly, and we went down to the Post Office. We were glad to see that the tricolour was still flying. McGrath contacted Michael Collins who suggested that, as we were strangers, we might try to gather

information about the city. I went to Amiens Street Station, pretending to be a stranded English tourist, and asked questions as to what was happening. One of the things I was told was that the viaduct at Malahide had been blown up and that no trains could come through. We noted the formation of cordons of British troops in different parts of the city, and passed whatever information we could gather into the Post Office.

I felt, at this stage, that I ought to take a more decisive part in the proceedings; but I was anxious to see all that was going on and hesitated to attach myself to any one particular position. I also felt a certain responsibility for the two London girls in view of the unsettled state of the city. I consequently stayed a second night in Gardiner Street.

On the following morning (Wednesday) we found that we were ringed round by cordons of British troops and we could not get through. We were consequently held up in the vicinity of Gardiner Street till the end of the week.

My brother David, early on the Monday morning, had gone across to Rathmines to visit a friend of his. On his way back, he passed through Stephen's Green and observed the Citizen Army digging trenches there. He attached himself to the Citizen Army and spent the remainder of the week on the line between the College of Surgeons and the corner of South King Street, under the charge of Captain Seamus Kavanagh and Frank Robbins. He was mentioned by Frank Robbins at a later date in an article in the 'Voice of Labour' as having gone on to the roof of the College of Surgeons under heavy fire from the Shelbourne Hotel and brought down a wounded man. When the surrender took place on Sunday morning and the Citizen Army marched out from the side door of the College of Surgeons, a big crowd of people surged around them, and Seamus Kavanagh pushed my

brother into the crowd, saying, "You get away. Your accent will save you". I am sure that David at the moment had no idea of being saved, but he was carried away by the crowd and so was not brought under arrest. He later joined us at Gardiner Street.

On the following Wednesday the party walked out to Dún Laoghaire and most of them left by boat. I decided to stay in Dublin in case any of the London boys had escaped; and Cathal McDowell, who had come down with us to see them off, and myself, walked back into Dublin.

I went through the morgue to see if anybody I knew was there, and spent some time around the city, trying to pick up traces, but eventually was arrested by a detective who had been sent out to find me.

I was lodged in the Bridewell where I spent about twelve days, while they were communicating with London. Then I was lodged in Richmond Barracks where I had the privilege of sharing blankets with Seán McEntee. After a number of days, I was sent with a consignment of prisoners to Wakefield Prison in Yorkshire; and, after a period there, to the Old Distillery at Frongoch. I remained in the Camp for a considerable part of the time, under penal conditions, until Christmas when the general release took place, and I came with the men to Dublin.

While we were in Frongoch, strong efforts were made by the British authorities to segregate men who had been living in England. Seán and Ernest Nunan had been called out on some innocent pretext and had been put under military arrest and sent to London, under the Conscription Act. As soon as this was known in the Camp, it was decided that the prisoners would refuse to answer all roll calls.

This led to punishment of various kinds. Many prisoners were released from time to time and, eventually, the smaller number left in Frongoch were moved to huts in the upper camp. When the conscription troubles arose, a general roll-call was ordered and the prisoners refused to answer their names and numbers. Some few who had been performing various fatigues were known and identified by the Camp authorities, and all the remainder were ordered down to the Distillery where we were deprived of letters and parcels and similar amenities.

When I returned to Dublin at Christmas, I found that my brother David was lodging in Oriel Street with Paddy and Johnnie McDonnell of the O'Toole Club, and I went and stayed there too. They were members of "E" Company of the 2nd Battalion, and I joined that Company.

After some time "E" Company commenced outdoor training and activities, but the Captain, Tom Ennis, would not allow me to participate in such movements. He pointed out to me that, as I was lame, I would be a potential danger not only to myself, but to the whole Company, as I would be easily recognised and the Company would be identified through me in any activities they might be undertaking. He, therefore, confined me to indoor duties, collecting subs., etc.

The returned prisoners and Volunteers who were being relieved by the National Aid organisation met daily at premises in 11 South William Street, and they had formed a committee to advocate their particular interests. Very soon after my return from Frongoch, I was asked to act as Secretary to this Committee and carried on in that capacity for a considerable time.

Early in 1918 my parents moved from London to Dublin, and we took a house in Sandymount.

When John Redmond died about February, 1918, I was called into the Sinn Féin office at 6 Harcourt Street and commissioned to proceed to Waterford as clerk to Dan MacCarthy, who was being sent to organise the election campaign. I carried on in charge of the Sinn Féin offices in Waterford throughout the election.

There was great opposition to Sinn Féin in Waterford, where the Redmond family had a very strong hold and were actively supported by the pig jobbers. Consequently, election organisation was carried out under great difficulties. One of the Sinn Féin staff, Seamus Doyle, had been active in Dublin some time previously in stopping the export of pigs to Great Britain, and the Waterford pig buyers had a particular animus against him. One night a small party of the office staff were proceeding after midnight from the Sinn Féin Committee rooms off The Mall to the Metropole Hotel. Seamus Doyle and P.C. O'Mahoney were walking together, and I was following with a local man named Pizzau. A small group of pig jobbers standing in Broad Street commenced shouting at Seamus Doyle and eventually ran over to attack him with stones. P.C. O'Mahoney, who had been engaged in canvassing in outlying regions of the city and had borrowed a revolver from me in case of emergency, drew the revolver and fired a shot along the street. The attackers ran away, and we returned to our hotel. Within a half-an-hour the hotel was surrounded by a large force of police who entered and searched the premises. We had barely time to stuff the revolver under the mattress of a vacant bedroom before they came in, but, although the revolver was found by the police, they could not identify any person with it and they made no arrest. Some time after the election, however, Pizzau was charged with firing the revolver but was

acquitted for lack of evidence.

Mr. de Valera came down to address one of the public meetings in Waterford, and a large and hostile crowd gathered around the hotel. When the time arrived for a parade from the hotel to The Mall, a distance of about a mile, the officer in charge of the R.I.C. approached the party and asked that the parade and meeting be cancelled, as he could give no guarantee for the safety of the personnel, in view of the hostile crowd. Mr. de Valera told him that he could remove his policemen, as his own party could take care of themselves. Volunteers had been drafted in from Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford, and the parade was formed and marched to The Mall. It was strongly attacked by hostile elements, but these were resisted and a successful meeting was held.

When Michael Collins was appointed Secretary of the Irish National Aid and Volunteers' Dependents' Fund, he opened offices at No. 2 Bachelors Walk, and this address became one of the centres of Volunteer organisation.

Early in the year 1918, Michael Collins was arrested for some speeches he made in the Midlands, and he was lodged in Sligo jail.

One evening Captain Morkan and another officer came to see me, and asked me if I would take charge of the Bachelors Walk offices while Collins was away. I was working at the time for a small publisher in Dublin, Thomas Kiersey; but I got leave of absence from him and went to Bachelors Walk.

After a time, Collins came back; but he kept me at Bachelors Walk to assist him.

One of the jobs I was requested to do was to type copies of a new form of I.R.B. Oath which had been drafted to suit the new

conditions created by the setting up of the Dáil.

One Saturday morning in May of that year, Joseph O'Doherty and I were in the offices, and O'Doherty needed change to meet some expense or other. He proposed to change a pound note in an adjoining hostelry, and asked me if I would join him in a drink. I accepted, and we went to get the change, and were away about ten minutes. As we came out of the bar, we saw several lorries filled with troops draw up along Bachelors Walk, from which the soldiers dismounted and rushes into our offices.

We walked innocently past the Column and then dashed away to give the alarm; but we quickly learned that raids were very general, and that day a large number of prominent Republicans were arrested, on Lloyd George's notorious "German Plot" scare, and were quickly deported and imprisoned in England.

In August, 1918, I married Philomena Plunkett, the eldest daughter of Count Plunkett and moved to Marlborough Road, Donnybrook. I was appointed the Sinn Féin Director of Elections for the Pembroke constituency and organised ^{there} the 1918 general election campaign. As there was apparently not a sufficient number of qualified men available in Dublin to appoint as Election Agents to all the constituencies, I was appointed official Election Agent for the Pembroke constituency as well. At that election Desmond Fitzgerald, who was then a prisoner in England, was returned with a substantial majority.

The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union were organising a new head office staff and my brother had been appointed cashier. As I had secured only one or two small positions by way of employment, he asked me would I care to join that staff. I agreed, and I worked

for the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union from 1919 to 1927, when I secured a position as Industrial Inspector in the Department of Industry and Commerce.

During the intensive campaign of 1918 to 1921, my lameness prevented me from taking part in active field operations, but my house was a constant centre of operations and activities of the Plunkett family in their various military responsibilities. Frequent meetings of Engineers, Cumann na mBan and other groups took place. Dumps of explosives, ammunition and arms were passing regularly in and out. The 'Irish Bulletin' had their longest stay of any premises in my house. Secret recesses in furniture held maps and documents of the various councils. When Active Service Units were formed, some regularly used my house for rest; and we also had wounded men for long periods.

As I was an active official of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, I travelled frequently in all parts of the country without hindrance from the Crown forces and was able to give useful help in maintaining communications for the I.R.A. For instance, I visited Cork City within a couple of weeks of the burning of Patrick Street, when curfew was in force, and I made various visits to Galway and the West when the trains would be held up on the line and searched by Auxiliaries.

My house was raided and searched by the British forces on various occasions, but they never discovered anything incriminating, as we had efficient hiding-places.

I am inclined to think that the British authorities were somewhat afraid of the Trade Union movement in Great Britain, and as a consequence were rather chary of too much interference with Trade Union organisation in Ireland.

The Auxiliaries raided Liberty Hall; but while they held some of the prominent men a few hours for questioning, they made no definite arrests, and I think I often escaped arrest for that reason. Whenever I found myself in Mountjoy it was for addressing public meetings in defiance of military proclamations.

In general then my services during the Black & Tan period, while useful, were far from spectacular.

Nevertheless, I received the honour of being awarded the Easter Week and Black & Tan Medals, for which recognition I am, in all the circumstances, truly grateful.

(Mr. D'Leary hands in two sheets of letter paper, bearing the following heading:-

"UNITED IRISH SOCIETIES IN LONDON COMMITTEE
FOR THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN DUBLIN - REPRESENTING -

The Ancient Order of Hibernians; The Gaelic Athletic Association; The Gaelic League of London; The Irish Athletic Club; The Irish Club; The Irish Literary Society; The Irish National Foresters; The London Irish R. Football Club; The Union of the Four Provinces, Ltd.; The United Irish League of Great Britain; The United Irishwomen.

President:

The Rt. Hon.
Lord Ashbourne.

16 John Street,
Adelphi, W.C.

Supported by:

The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor
of Dublin.

The Most Hon.
Marchioness of
Downshire.

Lord MacDonnell, G.C.S.I.,
K.C.V.O.

The Lady MacDonnell,
The Rt. Hon. Lord Pirrie,
K.P.

The Lady Pirrie,
Sir Roger Casement, C.M.G.
Mrs. Sophie Bryant, LL.D.
Mrs. Frederic Mackarness.
Charles Ryall, F.R.C.S.
and many others.

Chairman:

Art O'Brien.

Vice-Chairmen:

Dr. J. S. Gubbins
Richard Murray.

Hon. Treasurers:

Mrs. Cavanagh.
Mrs. O'Malley.

Hon. Secretaries:

Diarmid O'Leary.
Eamon O'Tierney.

Bankers:

The National Bank, Ltd.,
Charing Cross, S.W."

Mr. O'Leary also hands in one sheet of letter paper bearing the following heading :-

"COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED IRISH SOCIETIES IN LONDON
FOR THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN DUBLIN.

Representing the Executives of :- The Ancient Order of Hibernians; The Gaelic Athletic Association; The Gaelic League of London; The Irish Association; The Irish Athletic Club; The Irish Club; The Irish Literary Society; The Irish National Foresters; The London Irish R. Football Club; The Union of the Four Provinces, Ltd.; The United Irish League of Great Britain; The United Irishwomen.

OBJECT - To raise a Fund in London for the relief of innocent sufferers by the Industrial Dispute in Dublin, especially Women and Children.

16, John Street, Adelphi, W.C.

President:

The Rt. Hon. Lord
Ashbourne.

Chairman:

Art O'Brien.

Vice-Chairmen:

Dr. J. S. Gubbins.
Richard Murray.

Hon. Treasurers:

Mrs. Cavanagh.
Mrs. O'Malley.

Hon. Secretaries:

Diarmid O'Leary.
Eamonn O'Tierney.

Bankers:

The National Bank,
Ltd.,
Charing Cross, S.W.").

(Signed) Diarmuid Joseph O'Leary
(Diarmuid Joseph O'Leary)

Date: 2/3/55

Witness: Sean Brennan Lieut-col.
(Sean Brennan)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 1108

