

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
DURO STAIRE MILITARIA 1913-21.
S. W.S. 99

ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.



BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 99.....

Witness

Dr. Patrick McCartan

Identity

I.R.B. and I.V.

Subject

Comments on Bulmer Hobson's statements.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. S/.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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Mountjoy
Newtown Mt. Kennedy,
Co. Wicklow



April 5th 1948

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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A Coops:

~~for whom we thank you~~

Typecript with a few corrections & some additions which may not be important but Bulwer's statements reminded me of them & I scrawled them down. They may be useful to the future historian.

Yours sincerely
Patrick W. Castan

P.S.

Nothing I have scrawled
→ Confidential

P.W.C.

(1)

King's Visit & Loyal Address.

In writing of above last night
I forgot to mention a large meeting
in Beresford Place to protest against
Loyal Addresses. The speakers
at that meeting were Major McBride
Lawrence Binell & myself. As
usual I preached open Republicanism.
Mr de Valera in America told
me that was the first time he
heard an Irish Republic advocated
& that he went home thinking
it was a fine ideal but one
not likely to be attained.

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ORIGINAL

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" Re Griffith's resignation from the I.R.B. the story I heard is as follows but I cannot vouch for it personally. I forgotten from whom I heard it but I think it was from a brother of Helen Malone's Mrs Maude Gonne MacBride may be able to verify it as she was the only woman who was ever a member of the I.R.B. I understood she partly financed Griffith's United Irishman. She left the I.R.B. for another reason which she told me but which I only half remember.

When Queen Victoria was coming to Ireland to drum up recruits to go to fight the Boers an article was published in the United Irishman ^{by George Lame} entitled "The Famine Queen" for

this article the issue of the United Irishman was suppressed by Dublin Castle & Madame Donee hung out a black flag from her house which caused the police some trouble.

As was stated by Hobson's instalment on the I.R.B. Fred Allen was an important man in the I.R.B. & during Victoria's visit he was Secretary to Lord Mayor Pile. He went out with the Lord Mayor to meet Queen Vic. at the entrance to the City. O'leary, Burns, a nimous poet, walked along the Lord Mayor's carriage shouting: "Mock Dennis" at Allen

Alice Milligan wrote an article on this in the United Irishman and it appears Allen did not like it. On this account Griffith resigned.

Allen & his friends contended
that there was a plot to blow up the
Mount St Bridge (I think) where
the Queen was to enter the City & that
Allen's presence was in connection
with that conspiracy. The bridge
was not blown up & I never believed
the Allen version of the story.

Page 4 - National Council

Hobson is a bit mixed regarding
dates I think. The Dungannon Club
was founded in Belfast before 1905 -
& the "Students' Dungannon Club" was
not founded by me but by Dr Dan
Sheehan & John Elwood who were
members of the I.P.B. also. It was
started in 1904 & I joined it in 1905 -
I attended the Conference in the
Rotunda in 1905 - It must have been Nov -
~~and~~ electeds of the National Council

and was elected a member of the Executive.
At the first meeting I was appointed
to two Committees on one of which Dr.
Oliver St John Gogarty was a member.

It meant two meetings a week for
at least five or six months when the
majority of the members dropped away.

Andrew Byrne was a whole time
Secretary. It was the failure of the
North Leitrim election in 1907 where
D. J. Dolan of Monaghan Hamilton
resigned from the House of Commons
& contested his seat as a Sinn Féin
Candidate that was partly responsible
for the collapse of the National Council
to my mind. The the failure of the
Sinn Féin daily also contributed.
That at least is my opinion.

Dennis McCullough had an uncle
in Philadelphia who had a shooting

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match with the police during the riots
of 1886 I think. When returning home
in 1905 he told me to get in touch
with his nephew. Whether he wrote to
Denis or not the Dr Hobson sat in
touch with me and I sat in touch with
them I don't remember but I met both
during the Christmas holidays of 1905.

During the Christmas Summer
Holidays of 1906 both came down
to speak at a meeting in my
native parish. We preached open
Republicanism and 40 men
joined the Dungannon Club after
the meeting.

The Hibernians were all powerful
& at the next meeting we had only
the half dozen I had brought into
the S.R.B. previously. Later it
was rumoured among the Hibernians

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that I was in the pay of Dublin Castle
& got a salary of £400-0-0 a year.
Perhaps some believed it & some
pretended to believe it.

When the Dungannon Clubs appointed
Sean McElmott as organiser he went
to Tyrone & worked round Omboe (if
that is the spelling). He stopped with
George Morris (an I.R.B. man) at
Tullymore, Basketown free of charge.
He got good meetings until the
Hibernians began to get after him & in
the end of three months he had no
members but those already in the I.R.B.

Page 9 King Harry Flannigan

I don't remember this declaration by the
National Council. Sniffitt was never
hostile to a Republic nor Republicanism
but a Republic did not appeal to the masses
as they considered its attainment impossible.

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Hence Griffith in turn then demanded
Repeal of the Union & took his stand on
the Renunciation Act. He believed this
policy would appeal more to the people
as an alternative to Parliamentarianism.
Though the Dungannon Clubs openly
preached Republicanism I was
associated with both. The immediate
aim of both was to withdraw the M.P.s
from Westminster & meet in Dublin.
Outside the I.R.B. there were few
Republicans & Griffith knew it & so
did we. We were mere propagandists
& we realized it.

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Irish freedom was started in 1910

I was in ^{almost} weekly communication with
Devoy whence the invitation to him
to go on a lecture tour to the U.S.

April 5th 1928 Patrick McCarren

GENERAL STATEMENT

W

DR. JAMES MCDONALD.

In 1900 I started, in Belfast, the first national organization with which I was connected. It was a Nationalist Club for boys, called the Ulster Debating Club. It held both private and public meetings and lectures, but its principal value to me was that it brought me in touch with a number of like-minded people. One of these, William McDonald, helped me to start another Society called the Protestant National Society, the object of which was to try and convert young Ulster Protestants and to recruit them into the National Movement.

I had long known Alice Milligan, the poetess, and, as a schoolboy, had subscribed to the "Shea Van Vecht", the paper which she and Ethna Carberry conducted in Belfast.

I was tremendously influenced by Ethna Carberry (Johnston) and met at her house the local leaders of the Gaelic League, as well as many well-known people, like Douglas Hyde, Russ Gonne and John O'Leary.

I joined the Tir na nG Brunch of the Gaelic League in Belfast, which at that time consisted of a lot of young people working very enthusiastically together.

Michael Cusack came to Belfast to spread the Gaelic Athletic Association in Ulster, and, representing the Tir na nG Branch, I became a member, and shortly afterwards Secretary, of the first County Antrim Board of the Gaelic Athletic Association. I left this position because the Board refused to do anything for the junior Hurling Clubs, a refusal which induced me to

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leave them and start in Phoenix Street. Also as a representative of the Tir na nGael Branch I became a member of the Celtic Committee of the Gaelic League in Belfast, and after some time I took on the Secretarship of that as well.

At this time, between 1901 and 1905, I was usually employed in a Belfast printing house from 8.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m., and so had only the evenings, and sometimes a good part of the night, to attend to those various activities.

The Protestant National Association had a brief and unimportant life, but it did bring in a group which subsequently formed the Ulster Literary Theatre, a body which exerted considerable influence on the Mental development of the North of Ireland. It was started by David Portchill and myself, with the definite intention of writing and producing distinctively Ulster plays, which would be a commentary on the political and social conditions in Northern Ireland. In the meantime I had also joined Cumann na mBanach in Belfast. This body was founded by Arthur Griffith and William Rowan in 1901 in Dublin, and largely became an open propagandist movement for the I.R.B. For some years I was a member of the I.R.B., but resigned from the organization over some point of difference with which I am not acquainted. That all happened before I came to Dublin.

As representing Belfast Club I came to Dublin to annual Conventions of Cumann na mBanach, and became a member of the Executive of that body.

From 1904 onwards a series of annual Federations were held in various parts of the Glens of Antrim. At

The first of these I met Major Conner (1804) and formed an intimate friendship with him, which lasted until his death. He was not a member of any of these bodies, although he supported the Gaelic League generously with funds.

At this time Conner was a distinguished member of the British Consular Service, and was home on holidays in the Glens, where his people had lived since the middle of the eighteenth century. He spent his holiday at Beghington, outside Ballycastle, County Antrim.

Conner was much away from Ireland in the succeeding years, but, in whatever part of the world he was, we corresponded regularly and frequently, and I still have many of his letters.

On March 4th, 1890, Arthur Griffith started the "United Irishman" and it was read by all the young Nationalists and profoundly affected them.

Griffith was an excellent propagandist, but was extremely dogmatic and I found him difficult to work with. He did not appear to want co-operation, but defiance. I had many differences with Griffith, but there was no man more sincere, or more completely and disinterestedly devoted to the country than he.

About 1894 Griffith published in the "United Irishman", and later as a pamphlet, "The Restoration of Hungary", in which he described the Hungarian National movement under Kossuth and Deak. The Hungarians had refused to send representatives to the Imperial Parliament in Vienna, and, by means of an abstention policy and active agitation at home, had succeeded in getting the restoration of the Hungarian Parliament.

Dennis MacAuliffe and I started the Dungannon Club and were shortly joined by two men who played a prominent part in the National movement in the following years. One was Dr. Patrick McCarter, then a medical student in Dublin, and soon after he got in touch with us he started a Dungannon Club in Dublin among his fellow-students. The other was Sean McEntee. McEntee was a native of Glanfane, in County Leitrim, and he began his career as a pupil teacher in the local National School. A quarrel with one of the clergy led him to emigrate to Glasgow, where he worked as a bar-tender. Shortly afterwards he came to Belfast, where he first worked as a bar-tender, and then as a conductor on one of the city trams. When I first met him he was an enthusiastic member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and he never quite got over their habits of intrigue and whispering behind the scenes.

About the end of 1900 I started a small fund, mostly subscribed to by men who could only afford a few pence per week, and made McEntee the whole-time organiser for the Dungannon Club. He established a number of Clubs in various parts of Ulster. P.D. O'Regarty also started a Club in London, of which the other principal members were Robert Lynd, Herbert Paget, the musician, and George Cavan Duffy.

In the Dungannon Club we advocated the policy of abstention from the British Parliament, on the same lines as Griffith in Dublin. We were violently attacked by Tom Kettle and other parliamentarians, who accused Griffith of falsifying Hungarian history. I was much too busy to find out whether Griffith's account was entirely accurate or not, but I declared at public

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the three of us going for a walk just before the first meeting, and it must be admitted that we were frightened out of our lives. We borrowed a four-wheel cart from a small coal merchant called John Quigley, who had been a Fenian all his life. He was willing to lead us the cart but not the horses, for fear the latter should receive injury. Consequently we had to pull the cart ourselves down the Falls Road to the place of meeting. I went up and persuaded Francis Joseph Digger to part with his single lantern and we prepared a number of slides containing statistics about emigration and the general decline of Ireland, and some made from cartoons drawn by Jack Henson and other artists among our friends. We put up the lantern at one end of the cart and a screen at the other, and putting statistics and cartoons alternatively on the screen we spoke on these subjects. The lantern was often battered with stones thrown by hostile crowds, but we never got out of action. When one has learned how to handle a hostile mob in Belfast, other audiences soon pretty easy.

McCarter, McCollough and I addressed many meetings in various parts of Ulster, and on one occasion when the three of us were spending the night in McCarter's father's house at Carrickmore, County Tyrone, McCarter suddenly said "What about arranging an American tour for Hoban?", I did not take this very seriously, but said I would certainly go if I were asked. I was greatly surprised, however, to get a wire at the end of 1906 from John Devoy in New York asking me if I would be ready to sail in a week. A week later I started off on American tour.

In the beginning of 1907 I set sail for New York

to introduce the Sinn Fein movement to America. On my way through Dublin I called to see Griffith and was surprised at the coldness and hostility of his attitude. When I told Devoy in New York about this he showed me a letter from Griffith, suggesting that he himself should be invited to America, and I regretted that I had inadvertently spoiled his chance.

At this time Griffith and his National Council had declared as their aim the Repeal of the Union and the establishment of the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland as the Irish Government, on the lines of 1782, and he laid great stress on the Act passed by the British Parliament in 1785, in which they formally renounced their right to govern this country.

In the Dungannon Club we were not so impressed with formal renunciations by the English Government, which, in any case, had not been carried into practical effect, and we set as our aim an Independent Irish Republic, not because we were doctrinaire Republicans, but because we did not see how complete independence could take any other form in Ireland.

This difference, of course, added to Griffith's annoyance that I had been asked to explain the Sinn Fein policy to America.

In New York I addressed a meeting of about four thousand people in the Grand Central Palace, and then followed a series of meetings in Brooklyn, Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Boston and many other towns. These meetings were reported in "The Gaelic American" at the time.

After three months Devoy wanted me to Lecture

in the Pacific slope towns, but I was anxious to get back to work in the Dungannon Clubs and to prevent "The Republic" from collapsing. It was always in financial difficulties, and was financed by the chilings and pence of our members, by a few pounds from Roger Casement, and several larger sums which were presented to me personally in various American cities.

In America I renewed my acquaintance with O'Donovan Rossa, became friendly with Devoy, and met many others who had taken a prominent or active part in the old Fenian Movement. Amongst these was Richard O'Gallivan Burke, who, at that time, was Harbour Master in Chicago. Burke was the organiser of the Manchester rescue in 1867. I also met P.J. Ryan, who was connected with the Invincible Movement. I would have liked to have talked to him, but saw at once that he was not persona grata with Devoy and the others who were acting as my hosts, and I had no further opportunity.

While I was in America the Sinn Fein League of America was started, although it never grew to any size or importance. Our friends in America felt strongly that it was absurd to have three small organisations in Ireland all advocating the Sinn Fein policy, and, as I agreed with them, I endeavoured on my return to arrange for an amalgamation.

We arranged a meeting in Dungalk in the autumn of 1907. Arthur Griffith and Walter Cole represented the National Council, Denis McCullough and I represented the Dungannon Clubs, and I do not now recollect the representatives of Cumann na mBan.

Several individuals were quite ready to join in

an amalgamation, but Griffith and Cole would not agree on any conditions. As a result, the Cumann na mBan and the Dungannon Club amalgamated and became the Sinn Fein League, and in the following year we out-voted Griffith in the National Council and the resultant union of the three organisations became known as Sinn Fein. As far as I recollect, the membership of the different organisations overlapped a good deal. For instance, P.S. O'Regarty and I were members of the governing body of all three and Denis McAllough of the Dungannon Club and Cumann na mBan also. John O'Leary was not a member of any of these organisations. Edward Martyn was President of the Sinn Fein Organisation, and John Sweetman and Griffith the Vice Presidents. Shortly afterwards, Martyn, who was really not very much interested in politics, retired, and Sweetman became President, and Griffith and I the two Vice Presidents.

In the following two years we were busy with meetings in various parts of the country, forming new branches of the Sinn Fein organisation, and had endless Committee meetings which went on night after night, but a good many of us were very dissatisfied with the progress we were making, and we felt that many of the Committees in Dublin were far more interested in winning a few seats in the Dublin Corporation than they were in getting the country organised. In 1916, feeling that these endless Dublin Committees were becoming more and more futile, a number of us, including O'Regarty, McAllough and myself, decided to quietly drop out of the Sinn Fein organisation, and as we could not run it with Griffith we thought he had better try and run it alone. Then

we left there were about 155 Branches in the country, in the following year there were six, and a year later there was one.

Gumann na nGearbhaidh and the Dungannon Clubs were frankly separatist, but although most of the members were republicans and many were members of the I.R.B., their stated aim was to win the independence of Ireland, and they did not want any narrow definition that would exclude anybody. Griffith and the National Council, on the other hand, definitely wanted the Repeal of the Union and the re-establishment of the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, and they were very reluctant to give this up, but in the Sinn Féin organisation we kept the winning of the independence of Ireland as the stated aim and left the Repealers and the republicans each to take their own meaning out of it.

After we had left the Sinn Féin organisation, I devoted my energy to the I.R.B. and the Fianna, and formed a number of Clubs, which were called Freedom Clubs, and subsequently, at the end of 1911, started the paper "Irish Freedom". I have dealt with "Irish Freedom" in a separate statement.

(Signed) CHARLES HARRIS.

26.1.48.

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY.

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