

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILÉTA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 246

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S.246.....

Witness

Marie Perolz (Mrs. Flanagan)
St. Lawrence Cottage,
Strand Road, Sutton, Co. Dublin.

Identity

Member of Inghini na hEireann;
" " Cumann na mBan;
" " Citizen Army.

Subject

Despatch Work
Holy Week and Easter Sunday 1916,
Dublin - Waterford and Cork.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

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STATEMENT BY MARY FEROLZ (Mrs. FLANAGAN).

I am 71 or 72 years old. My father, a Protestant always, was born in Dublin. I was born in Limerick because my father went to work there and married a Catholic called Carter. We lived in Tralee and I went to school in Moyderwell Convent. Then we went to Cork and I attended the Presentation Convent. I had two sisters and one brother who was a monitor in the Presentation College next door. It was the Presentation nuns who made a rebel of me, Sister Bonaventure especially. Father worked on the Cork Examiner. An aunt, who married a D.I., objected to my being brought up with a Cork accent and made us come to Dublin where we would meet genteel people. I was reading Knocknagow one day to the horror of my aunt who said the author had been incarcerated. I did not know the meaning of the word and looked it up in the dictionary. My aunt was a narrow Protestant.

We came to Dublin and I went to George's Hill Convent which I did not like. I was more advanced in knowledge than the Dublin girls. I joined the Gaelic League first where I met O'Neill-Russell, Dr. Sigerson, Pat Nally and Douglas Hyde. Pat taught me whatever Irish I knew.

I saw the 1898 procession. That thrilled my heart, which nearly burst with joy at the sight of the flags, tableaux, etc. I attended classes in Irish in 87 Marlborough Street. There was a royal visit: Madame Gonne got up a picnic for children who did not go to the Queen's party. I joined Inghinidhe na hÉireann about 1900. I took part in everything. My father was in the 1898 procession. He was

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the first I heard singing 'West's Awake'. I was in Cumann na mBan, took part in the National Players, played Irish parts, taught classes in Irish in Strand Street. What I learned on Monday I taught on Thursday. I was Secretary of Inghinidhe for a time. I joined Sinn Fein. The Dungannon Club had a room in Inghinidhe house in 22 North Great George's Street. We called the house 'Dún na n-Inghinidhe'.

I joined the Citizen Army at its inception. I loved Connolly, Mallin and Madame Markievicz. I worked in a fruit shop at the corner of Ely Place and Merrion Street, also in Capel Street before that. I took part in providing arms for them. I met a soldier from the Castle regularly in public-houses and got pieces of machine guns from him and paid for them. The Countess told me about a fortnight before the Rising that the scrap was definitely fixed for Easter. I took part in route marches to take Dublin Castle etc. I know nothing about Connolly's disappearance

Some time before the Rising there was a big Fianna Rally at the Rink in Tralee to get money for guns. I took Madame's place. She was banned by the authorities from going to Kerry. I met her and she said to me "Perolz! we had a meeting to-night and we have decided that you will impersonate me". I went and I met Austin Stack. When I entered the hall I explained why the Countess could not come and I read her speech.

About a fortnight before the Rising I said to Connolly there was a job in Singers as Assistant Accountant and I would like to get it. I had no job for a long time. He said it was not worth while as the Rising would soon take

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place and after that I would have a choice of all the jobs in Dublin.

Sean McDermott sent for me on Thursday - it might have been Wednesday - of Holy Week to go on a message. I did not know what was written but I knew it was important. I had a verbal message which said "Dublin is rising on Sunday evening at 6.30". I was very proud to be sent on this message and went to Waterford to Seán Mathews who took the news indifferently, then to Paddy O'Mahony in Dungarvan. His wife said he was on night duty and he was now asleep. I said I did not care, I'd have to see him, and walked into his bedroom. That time we did not think about sex or anything else. We were all soldiers and I was only bothered about what I could do for Kate Houlihan. When I told him, "Thank God, at last", said he. He was in bed because he was on night duty at the Telegraph Office. I left Dublin at 9.15. I did not go to Cork that time, I think, but my mind is confused about the two journeys. I met Jack McDonagh at Cloughjordan or some place. He was on the same work and he told me not to be talking as there were soldiers about. He did not see me home after arriving in Dublin: it was by the night mail, I think, because I remember the lovely sunrise as I came along the Quays. I don't remember how I got home. The people at home never knew what I was doing. I hardly ever had a meal those times, a cup of tea here and there. I always found a glass of milk and a couple of pieces of bread and butter waiting for me whatever time I went home at night. There were five or six of us and no one earning except my brother-in-law, Matt McNamara. I did not look for a job because I was all the time engaged in something or another for Kate Houlihan. Jim and I always call Ireland Kate

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Houlihan. It was chiefly intelligence work I was engaged on. I did not care about money. When Pearse offered me £5 for the journey, I said to him, "Give me 30/-, my train fare, that is enough". When I got your letter I was with my sister in Rathfarnham, as I was ill and went to her for a rest, but I made sure to come back as I thought there might be something to do for Kate Houlihan. Those were great times and I would crawl on my knees to do it all again. Of course I am poor but I am not bitter.

After the Rising in 1917 and 1918 we were trying to jizz up the feeling for Ireland and to do something. I remember talking to Seamus Robinson about it in Belgrave Road. Do you know Seamus? He is a great soul, one of nature's gentlemen. That was before the Soloheadbeg affair. My head is very confused about dates. I mix up my two journeys to the South. I don't know whether it was on the first or second ^{journey}/I was in Cork and saw McCurtain's brother. He was a brat. I did not see himself. I think it was on the second journey on Easter Monday. I heard that the Macroom men had been dispersed. I asked McCurtain how many men he had. "About 20", he said. "You can start something with that many" said I.

I never yet went out on a job that I did not complete it satisfactorily. At that time with Nellie Gifford I was running a bureau for Irish fellows to get them jobs and get them out of the British Army. I got a lot of soldiers to desert and I used to go around collecting garments for them. I got in home jaded and worn out. I went to get a sleep and who came along but Kitty O'Doherty. That was Good Friday morning. "Perolz, you are wanted" she said "in No. 2 Dawson Street". "I am only after coming in and

"I want to get a wash and a cup of tea" said I. "You are wanted immediately. Have you a heavy coat?" I swallowed a cup of tea and put a dash of water on my face. When I was in No. 2 Dawson Street for a while Kitty O'Doherty (Gibbons) came to me "It's all right Miss Perolz. They have got someone else." I think she said the name was Ryan. She may have been telling lies. Kitty O'Doherty was in very close touch with those members of the Executive who did not want to fight and I feel sure she was sending messages for Hobson. She was fooling me to the top of her bent. I went back home and lay down saying to my sister to wake me up if anyone called.

Later I went to Liberty Hall in case I might be wanted again. I reported to Connolly. We spent that day getting in food and laying in stores in Liberty Hall; 6 loaves of bread here, 4 loaves there. We brought them in a pram. Constant coming in and out.

I had told Connolly once that Myles, a policeman in the Castle, had offered to be of use to us. "Can I use him?" I said, "Yes, but don't let him use you." Tom Clarke too had great confidence in me. Myles used to give me a lot of information walking along the street without pretending we knew each other.

I don't know where I slept on Friday night. On that night Mallin came to me from a meeting in Liberty Hall and told me what my position was to be in the Citizen Army, and that the fight was to start on Sunday evening at 6.30. I was to leave Liberty Hall before the others. I was to take up my position at the Equestrian Statue in the Green at 4.30. The rest of the Citizen Army were to

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follow. Any message that was to be delivered would be given to me. Said Mallin with his heavenly smile "Is it dangerous enough for you?" I felt very proud. But afterwards I had a bitter feeling of frustration, as I did not take part in the fighting.

On Saturday morning Connolly came to me with a bundle of notes in his hand. I was always afraid of the responsibility of money for fear I would do something wrong, for fear I would be tempted to buy tea or something which I adored. He gave me a bundle of money, about £20 - I did not count it. "There is a fellow named Grant" said he "and he promised to get us some stuff." "I don't know him" said I "and where will I get him." "You might get him at Stephens, the bicycle shop. Rustle the notes; he would do anything for money." I went to Stephens. He was not there. The shopman told me he had just gone. "Give me an idea," said I "what is his favourite pub". He told me a pub in Fleet Street. I went there but he was not there. He was not in the first or second but I found him in the third drinking. I whispered "Are you Mr. Grant?" "Yes". "I want to talk to you when you have finished your drink." We went around the corner outside and he said "Are you from the Countess?" "Yes" said I. "What does she want?" "She is short of revolvers". "I'll do my best" he said. We separated and he came back and told me he could not get any. They had been distributed. I must have told this to Connolly because he told me to hold on to the money and try again. All this time they were burning the papers etc. in Liberty Hall. I tried Henry O'Hanrahan's, got nothing there. The next hike then - sent by him - was to Father Matthew Park, all on foot. Inside the gate on duty was Mr. W. O'Reilly, Captain, an awful cod but a nice cod. Through

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Through the gate, while he sent up someone to try could he get something, we started to swop yarns. Nothing doing there. I was heartbroken to go back to Liberty Hall without doing my job. I went home to get a cup of tea, as it was on my way. I don't know who told me about it, but I went to Sheriff Street to a Mrs. Ward who had a sort of boarding-house where people from the other side stayed. A Mr. Murphy, who had come that morning from Liverpool or Manchester or somewhere, was there. He had so many revolvers for me that I could not carry them. I went back home to my brother-in-law, Matt McNamara, and told him there was such a lot of revolvers and ammunition at Mrs. Wards that I wanted him to help me to carry them. He came and we got loaded up. It was late on Saturday night. Murphy would not take the money and I put it into a book in the book case. I had the stuff, Glory be to God, I kept it in the house that night. The following day at Mass time, I took my little niece who was dressed in a blue velvet coat and bonnet, a basket with the "stuff" in it, and the money, and went to Liberty Hall. My brother-in-law Matt McNamara asked would he come with me but I said no. I told my little niece that we were going to drive out the English from Ireland the following day. "O Mamma, can I come too to drive out the English" said she to her mother. Don't talk to me about Sunday morning at Liberty Hall. The first who came to me was Tom Hunter. He threw his arms around me and said "We are fooled again". That day I didn't want to live any longer. We were all in a state. Tom cried like a baby. I asked them what was I to do. "Can I go home to sleep" I asked Connolly. "Do" he said "but report to-night. We are having the concert as usual." I came that night to the concert. A desultory
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affair it was, their hearts broken and they pretending to be singing and playing. I saw Mr. Connolly on the stairs after the concert: perhaps it was during the concert. "Don't go away Miss Perolz yet, we may want you" said he.

That night they had a meeting at Liberty Hall - the last. Connolly must have come straight from it. "Miss Perolz" he said, "I want you to get Sean McDermott and bring him here." I hiked off. "In God's Name" said I to myself "where will I get Sean McDermott." I did not say it to Connolly, I was too well trained. I think it was Jim O'Neill who told me where I might get him. He was flying round the corridors too. I went to Wyse-Powers and gave a kind of a cryptic knock. I was told McDermott had been there and gone. I knew they sometimes met in 25 Parnell Square and the girl who opened the door at Wyse-Powers told me to try there. Miss Drennan was working at Powers then. He was not there. Then I remembered that he used to lodge up in Mountjoy Street. I went there and the landlady there told me I might find him in Frederick Street. I think the Keating Branch met there at 28 or 29. That was the beginning of my misfortunes. I went to Frederick Street and was shown upstairs. I said I was looking for Mr. McDermott. I went into the room. Ned Daly was on guard outside the door with a rifle. All I remember seeing in the room were Patrick Pearse and Willie, a man named Tobin, Sean Tobin, I think. He was a kind of orderly in the place keeping the fire going and so on - and Sean McDermott. There were some more there - about two. I do not know who they were. If ever I saw a heartbroken man I saw him that night, Patrick Pearse. He nodded at me. They struck me like men going out into a losing cause. They asked me to sit down. I

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said "Is there anything I can do?" "We want to get messages sent to places." "If you trust me, I can get you reliable messengers" said I. "Give us their names and addresses." I did. Mrs. McGarry of Fitzwilliam Street: she went to the Dalys at Barrington Street, Limerick. When she got there she was told the Volunteers had gone to Killonan. This was not Mrs. Sean McGarry but Milo's mother. They afterwards lived in Fitzwilliam Square. Elizabeth Farrell to Athenry and Galway, Julie Grennan to Carrickmacross where I advised her to see Pat McCartan. Maeve Cavanagh, 30 Oxford Road. I don't know whether she went to Wexford or Waterford, but she went to Kilkenny where she saw De Loughrey. I went to Cork because I knew it well. I said I would go on to Macroom. I got a bit of paper and £5 for each one. I also got the verbal message that Dublin would rise at noon on Monday.

I could afterwards have bitten my tongue out because by leaving Dublin I missed the job assigned to me. I told Sean McDermott that Charlie Power was downstairs and that he would escort me, as it was now very late, (Gregory Murphy was also in the house). That night we went around with the messages. Farrell and Grennan were asleep. They were delighted and each said "Thank God, I'll get up for fear I'd fall asleep again." I went home. Mr. Pearse told me to go on the 9 train. I remembered that there was a 7 o'clock train. I did not go to bed at all. I made my preparations and walked to the Gresham and took a car to Kingsbridge. When I got to Cork about 10.30, I went to McCurtain's shop at Capwell. I saw Mrs. McCurtain and Tomas's foxy brother and while Mrs. McCurtain was nice to me, I knew she did not want me. "Where is Tomas?" "I don't know." I told them what I came for and somebody - who he was I don't know, I think he was second in command,

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said he would try to find him. I did not see Terence McSwiney. My impression was they did not want to find him. They said Cork will do its duty. I came to the station for the mid-day Dublin train. I was extravagant for once in my life and came in a covered car. I did not want to miss the train. When I got to Mallow we were all ordered out of the train. I recognised quite a few fellows who were in the Movement. They were making for Dublin. (I want to point out that I got to Capwell in plenty of time at 10.30. Mary McSwiney afterwards said in America that a woman with a foreign name arrived in Cork too late with the message). They wanted to be in the Rising. One fellow called Scully I spoke to. I asked him had he a gun. He said "No". I asked him would he take mine and I gave it to him. I did not want the gun I did not know what to do with it. I never could shoot. I expect he went back to Tralee.

I went to the chapel to pray that the Rising would be a success. Then I remembered people called Keppel. They were Germans. One of them I had helped to get out of the British Army and away to America. The Keppels did not receive me well and would not keep me for the night. I stayed in pub lodgings. I came to the station the following morning to try for a train. My one anxiety was to get back to Dublin to take part in the Rising and I did not get back till Thursday night or Friday morning. I went to Tralee, I think, but I had no message for there. I was like a lunatic thinking "Oh, my people, my pals, my comrades". I saw Scully again there. I did not go to the people I knew, deliberately, for fear of getting them into trouble. I did not go to Tralee in Holy Week. I did not see Fartridge there.

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When I arrived in Dublin by train on Thursday night or Friday morning at Kingsbridge, it was dark and I got home somehow in great distress. I was dead tired. I tried to get to G.P.O. I met a fellow and said to him "If you can get to the G.P.O., say I delivered my message and the answer I got was that Cork will do its duty." I spent the subsequent days looking in the hospitals and prisons for the people I knew. I found a lot of them in James' Street marching through the street, Helena Molony, Dr. Lynn etc. on their way to Richmond Barracks. I was so delighted to see them that I wanted to go with them, but they would not let me fall in. They told me to go home that I might be wanted. I went home, but did not take off my hat and coat as I expected to be arrested. I told my people not to get excited or to give anything away. I was arrested the day Tom Clarke was executed. A tommy told me about the execution. I was brought to Richmond. Brigid Foley, O'Leary Curtis were already in the lorry which took me away. From Richmond I was sent to Kilmainham, from there to Mountjoy. I was a couple of months or three in Mountjoy. From there we were sent to Lewes where we were well treated. Helena Molony said we should not admit we were well treated.

At Kilmainham I was very depressed when I knew the men were being executed. I could neither eat nor sleep. Only for Brigid Foley I would have died. She kept up my courage and tried to force me to eat. I was let home before the others, I don't know why. At my trial in London Lord Midleton said "And how did you come to get mixed up with this business?" Another man put a similar question and I said "If I only saw two dogs fighting in the street I'd have to take sides." "And which side would you take?" "That of the bottom dog, of course."

On that occasion Alfie Byrne gave us a grand tea,
including strawberries and cream, at a Lyons' shop.

After my release I was interested in everything
that was going on as usual.

Signed

Thomas Fenally

Date

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9.5.49*

Witness

S. M. Crossan

Date

9th Oct 1949

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