

# THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS 1913-1915

*Recollections & Documents*

Edited by  
F.X. Martin

Forewords by Éamon de Valera and Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D.



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**RECOLLECTIONS & DOCUMENTS**

Originally published in 1963 by James Duffy & Co., Dublin  
This edition published in 2013 by Merrion  
an imprint of Irish Academic Press

8 Chapel Lane,  
Sallins,  
Co. Kildare,  
Ireland

© This edition Merrion 2013

**[www.iap.ie](http://www.iap.ie)**

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
An entry can be found on request

ISBN 978-1-90892-825-2 (cloth)  
ISBN 978-1-90892-828-3 (Ebook)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
An entry can be found on request

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Printed by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

# THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS

## 1913-1915

### RECOLLECTIONS & DOCUMENTS

EDITED BY F.X. MARTIN, O.S.A.

New Foreword by ÉAMON Ó CUÍV T.D.

New Introduction by Ruán O'Donnell and Mícheál Ó hAodha





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# New Introduction

The political character of Ireland underwent a remarkable transformation in the first decade of the Twentieth Century. A national entity which sat, albeit uneasily, in a London dominated United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, began to display unmistakable signs of frustration with the continued denial of self-determination. In hindsight it became clear that early signs of renewed ferment during the closing years of the previous century were symptomatic of much deeper disaffection with Westminster.

If the vast bulk of Irishmen deployed in Southern Africa between 1899 and 1902 wore the khaki uniforms of the Imperial forces arising from such factors as economic inducement, tradition and the disproportionate presence of such men in the reinforcements drawn from the Army of India, the presence of two modest Irish recruited volunteer pro-Boer brigades was not insignificant. More seriously, approving coverage of the commandoes in the *United Irishman* and ephemeral republican organs reflected Irish hostility to the crass militarism of the British Empire that ran counter to the conservative tone of the mainstream print media. Prior to 1900 it was patently obvious that neither local government nor approved 'Castle' newspapers represented large sections of the inhabitants of the Irish Nation. The massive Irish Diaspora was free to coalesce as it saw fit, an underestimated matrix of unreconciled communities.

Monuments in Ireland's public spaces and official forums were expressly conceived to serve the interests of the same colonial elite which had abolished the pre-democratic Dublin Parliament in 1801 and had spectacularly failed to safeguard the lives of their nominal constituents during the catastrophic Great Famine (An Gorta Mór) of 1845-1850. From 1899 the novel inscription on stone-built memorials of phrases such as 'God save Ireland' and '1798, 1803, 1848 and 1867' proclaimed the very different agenda of a dynamic element among the survivors. This avowedly radical litany, from Sydney to Manchester, was understood to connote the past distress, cultural heritage and political aspiration of a people who had braved the atrocious extremities of the 1840s.

Sophisticated yet ineffectual efforts to secure for Ireland comparable rights of self-governance enjoyed by the 'white settler' dominions of Canada and Australia by 1900 were periodically dashed in the reactionary House of Lords. This safety net permitted posturing on Ireland in the Commons where insincere parliamentarians co-existed with genuine progressives and liberals. All those

elected entered on the basis of an exceptionally narrow franchise prior to 1918. Constitutionalism in a United Kingdom bereft of any such document had rarely seemed so unpromising. The oratory, cohesion and individual brilliance of the Irish Parliamentary Party was unequal to the majoritarianism and strategic self-interest of the British Establishment. In Ireland the Royal Irish Constabulary HQ in the Phoenix Park and 'Special' Branch in Dublin Castle monitored closely those who advocated an alternate path to popular democracy, as well as patriotic sportsmen and Irish language revivalists.

The RIC were aware that the republican message of Fenianism was undergoing a discreet and tentative revival following the risings and invasions of the 1860s in Ireland and Canada and 'dynamite war' of the 1880s in England. In its cultural mode, the influence of the Irish Republican Brotherhood pervaded the Gaelic Athletic Association and, to a lesser extent, the Gaelic League. The IRB rapidly increased its capacity for proactive political intervention in the early 1900s when the sinews of Philadelphia, Chicago and New York reconnected with the networks in Dublin and London. Whereas a combination of factors stymied, to some extent, the potential of the 1898 celebration of the United Irishman Rebellion of 1798 in Dublin, the 1803 centenary of Fenian icon Robert Emmet was conspicuously successful.

By 1907 a plan of action was being pursued by a refreshed and reinforced IRB leadership, not least Tom Clarke, the mentor of Séan MacDiarmada and later, P.H. Pearse. The famous anti-imperialist Roger Casement, republican feminist Countess Markiewicz, educator Eoin MacNeill and Hiberno-Scot militant socialist James Connolly began to move in a common radical milieu from which the revolutionary talent of their generation could be harnessed. Rising men such as Éamon de Valera and Richard Mulcahy were drawn towards the clandestine circles inhabited by Liam Mellows, Harry Boland and Michael Collins to create a revolutionary resource that sustained the Volunteers and Irish Republican Army into the 1920s.

From its origins in 1858, the IRB consistently attempted to work through front groups and satellites to further its revolutionary ambitions. Na Fianna Éireann were a case in point serving the dual purpose of providing a rival grouping to the standard pro-imperial boy scouting organization, as well as creating an ideal platform for indoctrination and recruitment of suitable acolytes. Arthur Griffith's 'Sinn Féin' ('ourselves') provided an ideal vehicle to unite disparate republican elements. Yet such was the scale of the task that all bodies favourable to the modest political objectives of Irish Nationalism and 'Home Rule' had the potential for utility in support of more ambitious ends steered by IRB infiltration, co-option and propaganda. In 1912, however, a rare opportunity arose for a poised and authoritative leadership numbering Clarke, MacDiarmada and Bulmer Hobson.

Attempts by the Ulster Unionist Council to create an anti-Home Rule bulwark from 1905 were beneficial for the IRB in that the egregious prospect of a hostile minority sabotaging a Westminster initiative designed to placate a strong majority enhanced the acceptability of extra-parliamentary responses. When the Parliament Act of 1911 eventually altered the relationship between the Commons and Lords in such a way as to ensure that the upper house lost its absolute right to veto legislation, the prospect of an imminent contest on the Home Rule issue became all but certain. In April 1912 the introduction of the Third Home Rule Bill vindicated the Irish Parliamentary Party who were primed for an historic triumph within two years of its clearing the Commons. Unfortunately, the 'conditional loyalty' of militant Unionism, encouraged by quasi-treasonous commentary from right-wing quarters in Britain, promoted a culture of political violence on a scale unseen in twentieth-century Ireland.

The January 1913 formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force and their dramatic armament from Germany in April of that year spurred a desire for a counterweight from ordinary Nationalists. They sought to ensure, at very least, that Westminster would not succumb to the betrayal of its own legislative protocols. No credible moral or sustainable legal argument could be cited to inhibit the mass mobilization of Nationalists under arms once the supremacist UVF had manoeuvred. Two new paramilitary forces emerged: the Irish Citizen Army socialist militia and much larger Irish Volunteers (Óglaigh na hÉireann) in November 1913. The Volunteers, as founder member Éamon de Valera noted, revived the name of a body raised during the American War of the 1770s, which readily seized the window of chance events to pressurize a reluctant colonial Irish Parliament in College Green into granting major civil rights reforms.

On 25 November 1913 the Irish Volunteers convened at the Rotunda, Dublin, a venue used by their eponymous precursor, to effect similar objectives in a different context. The hidden hand of the IRB was present in Dublin from the outset and, while by no means capable of imposing their ultimate goal of a sovereign, independent Irish Republic on the broad church of patriotic opinion gathered in the Rotunda, their members and fellow travellers secured key officerships. By the summer of 1914 the Volunteers were arguably the most substantial political organization in modern Irish history. Impressive gun-running operations into Howth, County Dublin, and Kilcoole, County Wicklow provided the Volunteers with the means to aggressively resist suppression just as the calamity of the Great War engulfed the Continent.

The story of the origins, foundation and development of the Volunteers is recounted in this important historical text which was edited and released by Augustinian academic Fr. F.X. Martin in 1963. His endeavours to collate such information served to compensate for the retention of essential data surveyed in the then closed Bureau of Military History archives and more detailed 'Pension

Files'. When first published in 1963, the year following the termination of the IRA's 1956 'Border Campaign', the eyewitness accounts and insights of earlier republicans remained vital and relevant to contemporaries. Fr. Martin would have been mindful that 1963 also marked the bicentenary of the birth of Theobald Wolfe Tone, founder of the republican United Irishmen from which the Volunteers and IRA drew their core ideology. The unfinished business of Wolfe Tone concentrated the minds of many who wished to celebrate the 1966 anniversary of the 1916 Rising fomented by many of the Volunteer leaders cited in Fr. Martin's pioneering volume.

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# F.X. Martin: A Life

F.X. (Francis Xavier) Martin O.S.A. (1922-2000) was an Irish cleric and historian who also came to wider public attention through his appearances on television and his role as social activist in attempts to preserve aspects of medieval Dublin during the 1970s. He was born in Ballylongford, County Kerry one of a family of ten children (five sons and five daughters), although his family claimed descent from the well-known Martyn family from County Galway.

His father Conor Martin was a medical doctor while his mother, Katherine, was a Fitzmaurice and a native of County Kerry. Martin was raised in Dublin and educated at Belvedere College, after which he joined the Augustinian order of friars in 1941. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1952. He studied for his BA at UCD, where Aubrey Gwynn and R. Dudley Edwards were among his teachers. He wrote his MA thesis on the Capuchin friar Francis Lavalin Nugent, one of the driving forces for the counter-reformation in Ireland and earned a travelling studentship from the NUI (National University of Ireland) to Peterhouse, Cambridge. It was in this college that he completed his doctoral thesis on Giles of Viterbo, the prior-general of the Augustinian order during the era of Martin Luther. He completed his doctorate in 1959 and published it as the monograph *Giles of Viterbo 1469–1532* in the following year.

Martin then returned to Ireland where he joined the teaching staff of the Department of History in UCD and quickly earned a glowing reputation among the student body, both for the erudition and liveliness of his lecturing style and his warm and friendly nature as a person. He became the first Professor of Medieval History in University College Dublin on the retirement of Aubrey Gwynn in 1961 and soon set about building up one of the most highly-regarded medieval history departments of any third-level college in Europe. His publications with respect to contributions to medieval and early modern history included: *Friar Nugent, Agent of the Counter-Reformation 1569–1635* (1962) and (with A. B. Scott) an edition of the *Expugnatio Hibernica by Gerald of Wales (Giraldus Cambrensis)* (1978). Martin was an unusual historian for his era since his interests extended across a number of historical periods and specialisms. Ironically, it was his research into the Easter Rising and the years immediately prior to the rebellion, rather than his work in relation to the Medieval era, that cemented his reputation in the eyes of Irish readers of history. Among his writings in this field were the current volume relating the experiences of the Irish Volunteers between 1913 and 1915 and a monograph relating to the Howth

gun-running – *The Howth Gun-Running, 1914* (1964), an event, in the absence of which the Easter rebellion would have proved extremely unlikely. He had a particular interest in the revolutionary and political career of Eoin MacNeill and published *The Scholar Revolutionary: Eoin MacNeill 1867–1945 and the Making of the New Ireland* in 1973. Working in collaboration with T. W. Moody and F. J. Byrne, Martin worked on the nine-volume series *The Course of Irish History*, a book project which became a staple in most Irish households with an interest in history.

Martin was thrust into the public eye again in 1976 through his seminal role in the 'Save Wood Quay' campaign. An excellent communicator and orator, he was ideally suited to his new role as chairman of the Friends of Medieval Dublin, a group who campaigned to save this ancient Viking site from the ravages of developers intent on the erection of a series of buildings at the behest of Dublin Corporation. While this conservation campaign would ultimately end in failure – the civic offices were duly built on the site of these early Viking settlements – the campaign, as bravely-steered by Martin, did ensure valuable delays in the planning and building stages, thereby allowing important excavations on this site to be concluded. Not only did the Wood Quay campaign highlight Martin's talents as historian and social advocate but it was the first conservation campaign of its kind in Ireland to achieve national prominence. In 1994 his collaborative project (with Clare O'Reilly) with respect to the history of his own religious order – *The Irish Augustinians in Rome, 1656-1994 and Augustinian Missions throughout the World* – saw publication. A member of the Irish Manuscripts Commission from 1963 onwards, Martin was also elected to the RIA (Royal Irish Academy) in 1967. He died in Dublin in February 2000, and is buried in Glasnevin cemetery.

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# New Foreword

by Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D.

The founding of the Irish Volunteers, one hundred years ago, in 1913, was one of the most important events in the achievement of Irish Independence. Secret military organisations had existed throughout the previous century but they differed in character significantly from the open military organisation of the Volunteers that laid down the template for our present-day army in so many respects. It is ironic that the refusal of the British authorities to prevent the organisation and the arming of the Ulster Volunteers was the catalyst for the nationalist community in Ireland and the indication to them that the time had come to establish a national volunteer army. In setting up the Volunteers, a body which commanded widespread support across all sections of nationalist opinion, a clear marker was put down that Ireland's long-term desire was for complete independence from Britain and having its own army. While it drew some of its inspiration from the Volunteers of Grattan's day, the instigation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 was very different in many ways. This new organisation represented a much broader cross-section of Irish society and inculcated the rich philosophy of the Gaelic League within its rank-and-file.

To Eoin MacNéill we owe a particular debt as he was central not only to the founding of the Volunteers but also to the foundation of the Gaelic League. His in-depth knowledge of Irish history and the Irish language ensured that the Volunteers would be a truly Irish organisation from the outset and not just an Irish imitation of the British Army. The name *Óglaigh na hÉireann*, the use of the words *Fianna Fáil* on the cap badge thereby connecting the Volunteers to the *Fianna*, the standing army of the high king; all of this enhanced a growing sense of nationhood and self-determination in Ireland.

It is interesting to note that the uniform, buttons and cap badge of our present Army are all very similar to those designed for the Volunteers and provide us with an important sense of continuity over the last century.

The development of our nation over the past century has seen some great landmarks. None was greater than that night in November, 1913 when our present-day Irish Army was established. The purpose of this army – to protect our independence and act as a peoples' volunteer army – has not changed in a hundred years. The 1916 rising and the foundation of Dáil Éireann were other very significant events on our road to nationhood. It was during the 1919-1921

period that the Volunteers came under the control of the Dáil, thus creating the model of the army coming under the auspices of the Oireachtas (Dáil) which has served Ireland so well.

Looking to the future I hope that those who serve in our army in years to come and those that direct policy at the political level will never lose sight of the importance of remaining true to the ideals established by its founders, and will always see our army as a peoples' volunteer army, one that is dedicated to the welfare of the Irish people and to the development and preservation of peace worldwide.

# Original Foreword

THE MANNER in which any great event has occurred, and its origins, immediate and remote, are always of interest.

Some of the great events of our time were: the founding of the Gaelic League, the founding of the Irish Volunteers, the Uprising of Easter Week, the establishment of Dáil Éireann and the Declaration of Independence.

The manner in which the Irish Volunteers, Óglaigh na hÉireann, came into being is the theme of this book, and anyone who reads it through will be satisfied, I think, that he knows exactly what occurred.

Appropriately, the book is being published to coincide with the Golden Jubilee of the date on which the Volunteer Organisation was formally established.

Three main currents of thought combined in the foundation of the Volunteers. First, there were those who, seeing our people being robbed of the fruits of decades of patient constitutional endeavour by an arrogant defiance of constitution and law, simply wanted to counter force by force. The Manifesto made it clear that defensive and protective, not aggressive, action was intended, but if force could be used to prevent Home Rule then a greater force could be used to secure it. Those who felt thus, formed, I believe, no inconsiderable part of the recruits who flocked to the Volunteer standard the moment it was raised.

Next, there were those who saw in the situation a heaven-sent opportunity to repair the mistake made when the Volunteer Organisation of 1782 was allowed to lapse. The circumstances of 1913 made the creation of a similar organisation again possible, and this time it would not be allowed to collapse. It would be preserved as a guarantee of civil rights and national freedom.

Some of those who thought like this fondly hoped that, in view of their tradition, the Volunteers of the North would, one day, stand shoulder to shoulder with their brothers of the South in common defence of their motherland and of their liberties as freemen. They felt sure, moreover, that the English Tories and the feudal lords who instigated and directed the arming of the North would quickly learn that they had made a fundamental mistake in assuming that the rank and file, the “wage earners and rent payers” of the North could be retained for long as subservient tools.

Finally, there were those whose thought went deeper and was more direct. They were those who believed that the occasion should be seized to establish a disciplined armed force that would be ready at any favourable moment to

strike another blow for Ireland's freedom. This group, though probably not the largest section of the early recruits, were, all now know, the most earnest and persevering, and it is to their devotion and sacrifice that we are most indebted for that freedom which we here enjoy today.

Éamon de Valera  
November, 1963

# Introduction

by Rev. Professor F. X. Martin, O.S.A., University College, Dublin

FIFTY YEARS ago the modern Irish army was founded by acclamation in the Rotunda Rink, Dublin. From its first hour of existence, when the enrolments began on the night of the 25th of November, 1913, the army was given the title, *The Irish Volunteers*, or *Óglaigh na hÉireann*. That title has persisted in its Irish form, and was re-affirmed as the official name of the army in the Defence Act of 1954.

The Irish Volunteer movement could not have been launched successfully but for the extraordinary situation created by Sir Edward Carson and the Orangemen of Ulster. Rather than allow the Unionists and the Protestants of Ulster to be ruled by a lawfully-elected Home Rule Parliament seated in Dublin, Carson and the Orangemen called into being an armed body, "The Ulster Volunteer Force." They threatened rebellion within the British Empire and civil war against an All-Ireland Home Rule government in Dublin. Carson, a skilled lawyer and formerly Attorney-General for Ireland, was in this matter calculating rather than brave. Behind him he had a host of fearless Orangemen, the wealthy industrialists of Ulster, and he was assured of the support of the powerful Conservative Party in Great Britain. He flaunted armed defiance in the face of a perplexed Liberal Government in England. The Conservative Party of Great Britain was playing its own devious political game, fostering the illegal procedure of the Ulster Volunteer Force to secure the overthrow of the Liberal Government. It was this which convinced a growing number of nationalists in Ireland that strong action must be taken if the hard-won liberties of the country were to be maintained, let alone the promised measure of Home Rule secured.

With this purpose in view the Volunteers were founded, "to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland." This would apply equally to the Orangemen. The lesson of Carson was not lost on the rest of the country. If the North could arm, and go unpunished, why not the rest of the three provinces of Ireland? Eoin MacNeill's article, "The North Began," published in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, of 1 November, 1913, was an appeal which was taken by the Irish people as a clarion call to arms. MacNeill was ill in bed with a heavy cold, and O'Rahilly, business manager of *An Claidheamh Soluis*, had asked him to write an article on some topic of general interest. MacNeill, with an unerring sense for the popular concern of the moment, penned a commentary on the political situation in Ireland, and

pointed out that there was now no reason why the other counties of Ireland should not follow the example of the North.

MacNeill's appeal was timely; and for the advanced nationalists, particularly for the members of the secret oath-bound society of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), it presented a heaven-sent opportunity. They aimed at the overthrow of British rule in Ireland and the establishment of an Irish Republic. The I.R.B., stimulated by the example of the Ulster Volunteer Force, had already begun drilling in secret, and was awaiting an occasion to appear under an unchallenged guise in public. No time was lost once MacNeill's article appeared. The head of the I.R.B. in Dublin was a Belfast Quaker, Bulmer Hobson, who was also a member of the Supreme Council. At his instance O'Rahilly revisited MacNeill to query whether he would be willing to translate his appeal into action. MacNeill agreed, and it was these three men, none of them professional soldiers, who invited a dozen nationalists to meet at Wynn's Hotel on 11 November. From that gathering was born the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers, which organized the public meeting on 25 November, 1913. Enthusiasm was the very spirit of the meeting, and over 3,000 men were enrolled in this public summons to arms.

The notable characteristics of the new military body were that it was voluntary, democratic, national, and non-sectarian.

Armies have often been used to suppress democratic rights, but the Irish army was founded expressly in response to a popular urge. It was a people's army. It was not a professional or conscript army, but a Volunteer force. The Company and Half-Company officers were elected by the men. MacNeill in his article, "The North Began," suggested that the twenty-eight counties outside the Orange area form what he described as "citizen forces." The manifesto of the Irish Volunteers, drafted by MacNeill and issued at the meeting in the Rotunda on 25 November, called upon nationalists to form "a citizen army." As late as May 1915 when Pearse published an appeal, "Why we want recruits," on behalf of the Volunteers, it bore the caption "Ireland Needs a Citizen Army."

The manifesto declared that the ranks were open to all able-bodied Irishmen without distinction of creed, politics, or social grade. Both MacNeill and Pearse in their speeches in the Rotunda on 25 November explicitly stated that the Irish Volunteer movement was not being founded in opposition to the Ulster Volunteer Force. Both of them added that they would welcome the opportunity for the Irish Volunteers to cooperate with the Ulster Volunteers for the common good of Ireland. The manifesto stated that the duties of the Volunteers "will be defensive and protective, and they will not contemplate either aggression or domination." The importance played by the I.R.B. in the foundation of the Volunteers has been challenged, and on the other hand has sometimes been over-stated. In reality, the governing factor in the creation of

the Volunteers was the will of the uncompromising nationalists of Ireland, irrespective of whether or not they belonged to the I.R.B. But it must not be forgotten that the Volunteers were founded as a military organization, and that the I.R.B. was the only body at that moment capable of forming a hard core within the movement. In fact the members of the I.R.B. secured a majority of key positions in the Volunteers. From the beginning the Volunteers were visualized as a permanent army, not just a temporary expedient. MacNeill in his article in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, having advocated the foundation of such a force affirmed the necessity of maintaining it, and pointed out the mistake made by the Volunteers of 1782 in disbanding their forces once legislative independence had been attained. The manifesto of 25 November summed up the intentions of the Volunteers— “They have rights who dare maintain them.” The O’Rahilly in an article in the *Irish Volunteer* of May, 1914 announced that the Volunteers were to be “the Army of Ireland.” Pearse in a speech at Tralee in June 1914 declared that the Volunteers were a dream coming true, “creating on Irish soil again an Irish army.” It was the Volunteers who went out to do battle with the British in Easter Week, 1916, and it was they also who formed the military arm of the national resistance to the British forces during the struggle for independence, 1917-1922.

Bulmer Hobson, who was the key figure in the foundation of the Volunteers, has lived to witness the fiftieth anniversary of an event which changed the course of Irish history. To state any more would be to take from the tribute he deserves. It may also be overlooked by many that five other members of the Provisional Committee which launched the Volunteer movement in November 1913 are still alive: Piaras Béasláí, Liam Gógán, Éamon Martin, Séamus O’Connor, and Colm Ó Lochlainn.

It is a happy coincidence that the President of Ireland, Éamon de Valera, who graciously consented to write a foreword to this volume, was one of those who enrolled as a Volunteer in the Rotunda on the night of 25 November, 1913. As a Commandant of the Volunteers and Adjutant of the Dublin Brigade he commanded the soldiers of the republic who were centred on Boland’s Mills during Easter Week, 1916. The day on which he was released from Pentonville Prison, in June 1917, he was handed a telegram informing him that he had been selected as the candidate for the forthcoming bye-election in East Clare. There was eloquent symbolism in the fact that less than a month later when he appeared on the platform at Ennis as the newly elected representative of the people it was in the uniform of the Volunteers. He was elected president of the Volunteers at their Third Convention held on 19 November 1917. Over three years later, on 11 March 1921, he proposed, as head of the government, that the Dáil should formally agree to the acceptance of a state of war with England, and should publicly take full responsibility for the military operations of the

Volunteers, as the army of the republic. The proposal was unanimously adopted. Later, on 30 March, President de Valera explained to newspaper representatives:

one of the first governmental acts was to take over the control of the voluntary armed forces of the nation. From the Irish Volunteers we fashioned the Irish Republican Army to be the military army of the Government. This army is, therefore, a regular State force, under the civil control of the elected representatives, and under an organization and a discipline imposed by these representatives, and under officers who hold their commissions under warrant from these representatives. The Government is, therefore, responsible for the actions of this army.

Pearse, at Tralee in June 1914 had described the Irish Volunteers as “at long last an Irish army” and “like a dream coming true.” By 1921, with the public recognition from Dáil Éireann, that dream had come true.

# Acknowledgments

THERE ARE obvious difficulties, as also commensurate advantages, when the subject of a book is contemporary, or near-contemporary, history. A number of men are still alive who helped to bring the Volunteers into existence. Their opinions differ, in several instances, on various incidents and developments in the early history of the movement. On the other hand we are able to draw on personal recollections and on original papers which may not be available in ten years' time. For these reasons it was decided that the volume should not attempt a full history of the Irish Volunteers, 1913-1915, but would present a selection of recollections and of original documents.

It is a stroke of good fortune that Bulmer Hobson, who played a central part in the foundation of the Volunteers, is not only alive but has preserved a fairly complete collection of papers on the movement up to 1916. In addition, he published *A Short History of the Irish Volunteers* in 1918, though its content was necessarily restricted by the fact that it had to be passed by a British military censor. Thirteen years later Hobson revealed a certain amount of the inner story of the foundation of the Volunteers in two articles which appeared in *An tÓglach* of March and June 1931. He added still more details in a series of written lengthy statements to the Bureau of Military History in 1947. For the purpose of this book he generously placed no conditions on the use which could be made of his published and unpublished papers.

It was decided, therefore, to present in the first part of this book, in five chapters, an account of the Volunteers for the years 1913-1915 from Hobson's published work and from his statements to the Bureau of Military History. His statements to the Bureau were written, by request, as personal recollections. They have been reproduced in that form.

So that the early history of the Volunteers may be viewed from different, though nationalist, points of view, a number of contemporary speeches and statements, as well as later recollections, by other participants in this drama of Irish history are reproduced in the other parts of the book. These participants include MacNeill, Pearse, O'Rahilly, Ceannt, and Béaslaí. A selection of documents is also presented, so that the readers may recapture the spirit of the time and view events as they then happened.

Garry Houlihan and Éamon Martin proved of unfailing help whenever a name or date needed to be checked. I am indebted to Mrs. Kitty O'Doherty

for advice and information. Mrs. E. Comyn, widow of Colonel Lewis Comyn, gave permission to republish her husband's statement on Sir Bryan Mahon's dealing with John Redmond in early August 1914. The *Irish Independent* has allowed an article by Major-General Piaras Béaslaí on the early days of the Volunteer movement to be republished. The O'Rahilly family and the Trustees of the National Library permitted the publication of one of The O'Rahilly's papers. By permission of the Minister for Defence. Captain Noel Clancy, editor of *An Cosantóir*, and Commandant Ambrose Nestor, its manager, facilitated my use of the Hobson articles in *An tÓglach*. Finally, let me record my debt for the information and encouragement given by the six surviving members of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers: Piaras Béaslaí, Liam Gogán, Bulmer Hobson, Éamon Martin, Séamus O'Connor, and Colm Ó Lochlainn. They were members of a group of idealists whose hopes have been largely fulfilled. Thanks are also due to Rev. Father Henry, O.F.M. Cap, Editor of *The Capuchin Annual* for permission to use the article by Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh. The credit for suggesting the publication of a volume in honour of the foundation of the Irish Volunteers belongs to Eoin P. Ó Caoimh. Also, as director of the firm of James Duffy he has ensured that the book will appear in time for the anniversary date. In achieving this he has had exceptional help from the printers, Cahill & Co. Ltd.

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Acknowledgements for assistance in the making of the present edition are given to Fr. Gerry Horan, James Langton of the Irish Volunteers Commemorative Organisation, Niall Bergin at Kilmainham Gaol Museum, Mary Feehan at Mercier Press, Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc and Éamon Ó Cuív.

# **Part I**

## **Foundation and Growth of the Irish Volunteers, 1913-14**

*By Bulmer Hobson*



# 1. The Rise of Carsonism— Political Philosophy of Carsonism—The English Tories—British League for the Support of Ulster

THE YEAR 1913 was an eventful one in Irish politics. Twenty years of political agitation conducted upon the most constitutional lines conceivable, had followed upon the more virile Parnell period, and after huge labour had produced an emaciated measure of Home Rule supported in a half-hearted and insincere manner by the Liberal Party and Government in England. This measure passed the English House of Commons in January, 1913, and was thrown out by the House of Lords a few weeks later. Under the leisurely operations of the Parliament Act it might hope to outlive the power of the House of Lords to prevent its passage, if the Liberal Government lasted long enough, and if it could be made to fulfil its oft-repeated promises to the Irish people.

Such was the state of affairs when a new factor, introduced into Irish politics by Sir Edward Carson, began to have important results both in Ireland and in England. The opposition of a section of the people of Ulster to Irish self-government was nothing new, but the organisation of that section into a military force, armed, trained and officered, claiming to dictate to both Ireland and the English Government, and declaring its readiness to enforce its dictation by military measures, was a departure that has already had momentous results, and which may have yet more momentous results in the future.

The people of the eastern counties of Ulster were, prior to the legislative union of Ireland with England, largely in favour of Ireland's claim to independent national life, and the sacrifices which many of them made as members of the Society of United Irishmen will be remembered as long as Irish history is read. During the whole of the nineteenth century, however, every effort was made to alienate their descendants from the rest of Ireland; religious bigotry, which the Society of United Irishmen had laboured so successfully to dispel, was assiduously propagated among them by their political leaders, with the active assistance and approval of the English Government. The ghosts of

long dead feuds were galvanised into new life for the purpose of inflaming party passions and religious feeling was prostituted to the basest of political ends. Unfortunately also the political action of the Irish majority tended rather to facilitate than to prevent this determined policy of alienation. The agitation for Catholic Emancipation gave an opportunity and a text to its authors and advocates, of which they made the fullest possible use. Had O'Connell agitated for Repeal instead of Emancipation in the early part of the century, he could have won at least as much as he did and at the same time have prevented the alienation of the Protestant community in Ulster. When later he took up the question of Repeal it was too late, and the efforts of Young Ireland, the Fenians, and the Land League to draw Ulster to the national side met with practically no response. The Ulster Protestants became the blind tools of the English Tory Party, and their leaders became in Ireland the self-appointed custodians of their peculiar version of the English constitution, and the guardians of law and order. The law which they respected, however, was the law that favoured their ascendancy, and they were prepared to be orderly so long as that ascendancy was not threatened.

The slow progress of the Home Rule movement at last seemed to threaten their cherished power, and so with the advent of Sir Edward Carson "law and order" went by the board, and the difficulty of Ulster, which the English Imperialists had so long and so skilfully prepared, confronted Ireland in a new and more menacing form. In plain terms, the Carsonite movement in Ireland was Fenianism without the noble political ideals of the latter. Fenianism organised and armed to establish the independence of a nation; Carsonism organised and armed to maintain the status quo in the joint interests of the English Garrison and the Belfast manufacturers. The novelty of the Carsonite movement lay not so much in the methods it adopted as in the people who adopted them.

The great mass of the Irish people had been taught by their leaders to rely solely on constitutional agitation of a sort that was so constitutional that it agitated nobody save an occasional English premier looking for votes in Westminster, and at last, when that method seemed likely to secure for them a poor instalment of the political autonomy their country so urgently needed, those great, if self-appointed, champions of the constitution, the English and Irish Tories, suddenly adopted the methods that the last generation of Irishmen had been taught to discard, and met their constitutional demand and procedure with threats of rebellion and civil war. The doctrines enunciated by Sir Edward Carson and his principal adherents may be briefly summarised here:

I don't hesitate to tell you that you ought to set yourself against the constituted authority in the land . . . I am told that the [Provisional] Government will be illegal. Of course, it will.

Drilling is illegal. The Volunteers are illegal, and the Government know they are illegal, and the Government dare not interfere with what is illegal. And the reason the Government dare not interfere is because they know the moment they interfere with you, you would not brook their interference . . . Therefore, don't be afraid of illegalities. There are illegalities that are not crimes . . . They are illegalities taken to assert what is the right of every citizen—the protection of his freedom.—(Sir Edward Carson, at Newry, September 7th, 1913.)

I desire to repeat that in a cause involving their whole future men are entitled, if they will take the risk, to go any length, to promote any resistance, legal or illegal, in order that they may preserve for themselves the elementary rights of citizenship . . . If the Government interferes with our preparations, I shrink from no collision.— (Sir Edward Carson, at Omagh; August 6th, 1913.)

Speaking from the same platform as Sir Edward Carson at a meeting at Kilkeel, September 17th, 1913, Mr. F. E. Smith, of England, said:

They were advancing to the crisis which lay in front of them in the spirit of men who had counted all costs and anticipated all risks, and prepared to face those risks and pay the cost which was their attendant condition.

And again:

The attempt to force Home Rule would create one of those crises in history in which even law abiding citizens claimed the dissolution of the ties of ordinary law . . . A Provisional Government will be declared in Belfast on the day that the [Home Rule] Bill becomes law . . . It is plain that nothing but the employment of overwhelming military force could defeat the resistance to which I have referred. I am convinced that no Government . . . would be in a position to employ such a force. I am convinced that the instrument would break in their hands, and that the people of England would exact a ferocious reckoning on those who attempted to invoke the crude verdict of artillery.—(Smith, at West Bromwich, October 10th, 1913.)

Another leading Carsonite, and one who was appointed Legal Assessor to the Ulster Provisional Government, spoke as follows:

There have been times in the history of your Nation when rebellion became a sacred duty. That time will arrive for us if we are going to be put under the heel of a Government we hate and abhor.—(Rt. Hon. J. H. Campbell, at West Hartlepool, October 22nd, 1913.)

Here we have in brief space the political philosophy of the Carsonite movement, as laid down by its chief leaders. I have quoted these three gentlemen in particular, because, besides being the principal exponents of Carsonism, they may be considered to have some claim to speak with authority on the constitutional and legal issues involved in their doctrines.

Within four years of these startling public threats Edward Carson became Chief Law Officer of the English Crown, and was twice nominated a member of the British Cabinet. F. E. Smith became Solicitor-General, then Attorney-General, for England, and duly received a knighthood. J. H. Campbell also soon received his rewards. He became a baronet, was appointed Attorney-General then Lord Chief Justice and finally Lord Chancellor of Ireland. It will thus appear that their doctrines, when expounded by the right people, are not looked on with disfavour by the English Government.

Sir Edward Carson did not solely rely upon his force of armed Volunteers in Ulster, but had powerful allies in England as well. These were the Tory Party and the officers of the English army and navy. Speaking at Dungannon on the 1st October, 1913, he announced:

They had Mr. Bonar Law's promise that if the battle came it would not be confined to Ireland.

And again:

The case of Ulster is strong, because, even in the threat of armed resistance ... we have behind us in that armed resistance, under present and existing circumstances, the whole force of the whole Conservative and Unionist Party.—(London *Times*, June 11th, 1913.)

The leader of the Conservative Party in England was not slow to endorse the claim put forward by Sir Edward Carson. As early as 1912 Mr. Bonar Law stated in a public speech that

They [of Ulster] would be justified in resisting by all means in their power, including force . . . If the attempt be made under present conditions, I can imagine no length of resistance to which

Ulster will go in which I shall not be ready to support them.—  
(Speech at Blenheim, July 27th, 1912.)

This statement was made in the earlier stages of the Carsonite movement. It was repeated time after time as the movement proceeded, and Mr. Bonar Law never showed any disposition to recede from the position he then took up.

Two years after the speech at Blenheim from which I have quoted he made the following remarkable statement:

We are drifting inevitably to civil war...It is the determination of the people of Ulster to resist by force if necessary the imposition of this Bill. The ground on which our American Colonies took up arms seems to me utterly trivial in comparison to the wrong with which Ulster is threatened. We have given a pledge that if Ulster resists we will support her in her resistance. We intend, with the help of the Almighty, to keep the pledge, and the keeping of it involves something more than the making of speeches. — (Speech at Bristol, in *Manchester Guardian*, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1914.)

Finally, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, 1914, in a speech in Parliament, he committed the English Tories to support Ulster, no matter what that wayward province should undertake to do.

Yesterday I authorised Sir. Edward Carson to deliver to the people of Ulster a message without conditions. We made conditions before, but we make none now. Without conditions, we shall support them to the utmost in whatever steps they think necessary to take for the maintenance of their rights.

Mr. Bonar Law was the leader and had the support of the entire Tory Party in England when he made these pronouncements, and gave his blessing to insurrection, provided it was *against* Ireland, and his followers vied with each other in the effort to outdo their leader in violence, if not in indiscretion. One sample of these utterances will suffice here. Colonel Hickman, the Unionist M.P. for Wolverhampton, said at a meeting in his constituency:

You may be quite certain that these men are not going to fight with dummy muskets. They are going to use modern rifles and ammunition, and they are being taught to shoot. I know, because I buy the rifles myself. You can take it from me that they are the best, and if the men will only hold them straight there won't

be many Nationalists to stand up against them – (*Daily News*, November, 27<sup>th</sup>, 1913.)

Colonel Hickman and his tribe did a greater service to the Nationalists than they knew. To an Ireland spell-bound by the fetish of a moribund Constitutionalism, such speeches came as a very necessary and wholesome douche of cold water. Their salutary effect was seen in the rapid rise of the Irish Volunteer movement.

Following the lead of Mr. Bonar Law, “The British League for the Support of Ulster” was organised. Its aims were announced with the same frankness as those of Colonel Hickman.

The British League for the support of Ulster and the Union has been formed for the purpose of organising those of our fellow countrymen who will reinforce the Ulstermen in their armed resistance to the tyranny of the Government. The League has upwards of one hundred agents in different parts of Great Britain, and will be glad to receive the names of all who will give their active support to the cause. – (*Morning Post*, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1913.)

Men were openly recruited in England, Scotland, and the English colonies for the purpose of levying war on the Nationalists of Ireland. An English “Covenant,” which pledged its signatories to take or support “any action that may be effective,” and “to prevent the armed forces of the Crown being used” against the Ulster Volunteers, was issued and signed by Field Marshal Earl Roberts, Admirals Sir Edward Seymour and Lord Charles Beresford, and a large number of dukes, earls, lords, members of Parliament, and private individuals of more or less eminence. Field Marshal Lord Wolesley stated that to use the army against the threatened Ulster insurrection “would be the ruin of the British army.” Sir Edward Carson stated at Antrim (September 21st, 1913):

We have pledges and promises from some of the greatest generals in the army that when the time comes, if it is necessary, they will come over to help us.

To this theme he returned constantly:

A day never passed on which he did not get at a really low average, half a dozen letters from British officers asking to be enrolled. . . . The army was with their Party.—(Speech at Craigavon. *Times*, July 14th, 1913). Action on the part of the Government against Ulster will I believe

smash the army into pieces, because it will divide the army.—  
(Speech at Ballymena, *Morning Post*, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1913).

In the course of his campaign Sir Edward Carson repeatedly challenged the English Government to take action against him, but the Government declined his challenge. We now know, on the authority of Mr. Birrell, who was then Chief Secretary for Ireland, that this "was a grave Cabinet decision." All the forces of the English Crown that would have been invoked in a moment had it been an agitation of Irish Nationalists to regain some of their rights remained passive, and most of the officers of the police in Ireland, as well as those of the English army, applauded and approved, and in many cases joined in a movement which Sir Edward Carson himself proclaimed as illegal from beginning to end.

The Ulster Volunteer Force, acting as the instrument of the English Imperialists, rapidly became a very real menace to National Ireland. Politically it barred, as has in turn its successor the Northern Government, a unified rule for the whole country. At inflamed and highly excited meetings in Ulster speakers repeatedly threatened war on the unarmed and disorganised Irish people, and as the Ulster Volunteer Force became trained and equipped they rapidly came into possession of the material means which would make such threats easy of execution. Sir Edward Carson himself talked about the Ulster Volunteers marching to Cork, and it was announced in the newspapers (principally English) which supported the movement that a "striking force" of Ulster Volunteers had been organised for service outside Ulster, "who are intended to act in the same manner as the expeditionary force of the British army."

In the face of a campaign of this kind, there was but one thing for the Irish people to do, and that was to prepare to defend themselves. The Irish Parliamentary Party advised the people to put their trust in the English Prime Minister, although that gentleman was visibly shaken by the vigour and boldness of the Carsonite campaign. The elderly lawyers who for the most part governed England had great veneration for blue blood, and they were considerably startled at the prospect of an insurrection of peers, led by field marshals and admirals, all pledged to sacrifice their lives in the cause of Ulster. They could not be sure that Carson did not mean what he said, and at any rate the Ulster Volunteers very probably did. Carson knew his elderly lawyers and knew how to handle them.

Instead of immediately creating a force in Ireland which would outweigh the Ulster Volunteers, Mr. Redmond's Party met the new situation with a gibe about wooden guns. They pinned their faith to the English Liberals, and when the Irish people spontaneously created the necessary force in Ireland they made no good use of it. They were as a result ultimately driven to accept the partition of Ireland under pressure from the Liberal Government, which was itself acting

under pressure from Sir Edward Carson and the English Tories. It became apparent at this time that the sincerity of the English Liberals about Home Rule was as suspect as their courage in face of the Carsonite campaign, and had it not been for the Irish Volunteers it is doubtful if the Liberals would have even stopped at partition; their concessions to Carson would have probably kept pace with the vigour of his agitation until the already emasculated Home Rule Bill was reduced to utter nullity and by general consent allowed to fade slowly out of sight like its predecessor, the Irish Councils Bill. The Irish Volunteers sprang out of the political necessity of the moment; they were created to meet a new situation, and they met it so far as it was possible for them without the co-operation, of the Parliamentary politicians. It was not the fault of the Volunteers that self-government in some form was not won in 1914. They, while doing their own work, placed a weapon in the hands of the Parliament men—a weapon that was far superior for their purpose than ever Carsonism could be for the English and Irish Tories, and the Parliament men, instead of using it, seized it but to break it. Such were the conditions that called the Irish Volunteers into being.

## 2. The I.R.B. and the Fianna

THE CARSONITE movement in Ulster, which culminated in the Curragh mutiny and the gun-running episode at Larne, made the fact patent to the meanest intelligence in Ireland that the strength of a Nation lies in the last resort in the number of its trained and armed men rather than in the number and vehemence of its politicians, and that lung-power and manpower are not synonymous terms. This lesson was very badly needed in the Ireland of 1913. The Ulster Volunteers succeeded in over-aweing the Asquith Government in England, and though the latter still pressed forward with their Home Rule proposals, their simulated enthusiasm for Home Rule was little more than window-dressing, designed to retain Irish support for them in the English Parliament. In spite of this rather apparent fact, the Irish Party still professed belief in the good faith of the English Ministry; they still advised the Irish people to rely solely on the sympathy and fair-mindedness of the English Liberals, and took no steps in Ireland to deal with the very real menace to Home Rule which had arisen. At this juncture the good sense of the great mass of the Irish people demanded that a force should be created in Ireland to balance the Ulster Volunteer movement, and I have little doubt that if the men who organised the Irish Volunteers had not taken the preliminary steps in October, 1913, many weeks would not have elapsed before others would have come forward to undertake that necessary task. There was much discussion of such a move throughout the country, and many letters were published in the newspapers advocating the establishment of a National Defence Force for some weeks prior to the organisation of the Provisional Committee.

Though fundamentally the Irish Volunteer movement was a spontaneous creation of the Irish people, the particular form it took in the circumstances of the Ireland of 1913 was due to three factors, one political, one military, and one personal. The political factor was the combination of the Unionists and the Orangemen of Ulster, with Carson as their mouthpiece. I have discussed the Ulster question in the first chapter. The military factor was the combined effort of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.) and the Fianna. The personal factor was Professor Eoin MacNeill. In the next chapter I shall deal with MacNeill and his timely intervention in November, 1913. Here I wish to consider the I.R.B. and the Fianna.

## The I.R.B.

The I.R.B. was founded at Dublin in 1858, as an oath-bound secret society, with the uncompromising intention of overthrowing English government in Ireland by force of arms and of establishing an Irish republic. It came to be known popularly as "The Fenian Movement", and its members as "Fenians", due to John O'Mahony, who belonged to the American wing of the organisation and was a Gaelic speaker, familiar with the legends of the Fenian warriors of ancient Ireland. But its members spoke of it as "The Organisation".

The Fenian movement, after the debacle of 1867, was re-organised in 1873, and thereafter remained constantly in the background of Irish politics, a secret organisation whose sole aim was the establishment of an independent Irish Republic. In the years which followed the re-organisation it dwindled rather than increased; the times were not favourable and the whole energy of Ireland was divided between the struggle for possession of the land and the Home Rule movement led by the Irish Party in the English Parliament. During the period of Parnell's leadership many members of the I.R.B. supported him and were the backbone of his following after the split had shattered the Irish Party. After the death of Parnell they held aloof from other parties, unable to do more than maintain a small and scattered organisation, a nucleus round which something bigger might grow when conditions once again became favourable.

The centenary celebration in commemoration of the United Irishmen in 1898 was the first thing that turned the minds of many Irishmen from the futile faction fighting of Parnellite and Anti-Parnellite. In organising the commemoration the members of the I.R.B. took the most active part. Thereafter many of them joined the newly started Gaelic League and were among its best and most enthusiastic workers. The Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association both owed much to men who were devoted members of the secret Republican Movement, and these two organisations in turn became the chief recruiting ground for the I.R.B. The Gaelic League in its early years generated an intense enthusiasm for the national cause. The result was a great accession of strength to the secret movement. There was no very rapid increase of numbers for, as the young men came in, most of the older generation dropped out, but the increase in morale and in enthusiasm was very marked.

When Griffith and Rooney founded the *United Irishman* in 1899 the movement became possessed of an organ in the Press, and the ablest paper at that time in Ireland, to support and propagate its views. The establishment of Cumann na nGaedhael, in 1900, gave them an open political organisation in which members of the I.R.B. could work without reserve.

Unfortunately, the early death of Rooney deprived Cumann na nGaedhael of its natural leader, and arrested its development, and Griffith, who had had some

difference with the I.R.B., started a new organisation, the National Council, to work his Hungarian Policy—which later became more widely known as the Sinn Féin Policy. Members of the I.R.B. were the most active element in the Sinn Féin Movement from its inception until they quietly dropped out about 1910, dissatisfied with the progress it was making. After this they concentrated on building up their own organisation and started *Irish Freedom*, a monthly paper as their organ in the press. *Irish Freedom* was owned and controlled by the organisation, and most of the contributors were members.

In 1911 the I.R.B. had, probably, not more than 2,000 members in Ireland and in a few of the English cities, but they were picked men, and most of them were active workers in other and public organisations. *Irish Freedom* had given them a rallying point, a unity of outlook and conviction, but they were still too few to play any decisive part in Irish politics and had to be content to wait until some new situation should arise of which they could take advantage to emerge as a definite force which would have to be reckoned with. There were two possible eventualities to which, at that time, they looked forward, either of which would transform the existing situation. These were the passage of a Home Rule Bill by the English Parliament, and the outbreak of war in Europe. To this second possibly the I.R.B. had given most thought.

Although Roger Casement was not a member he was in close touch with some of the leading members of the organisation and, largely owing to him, they were not unacquainted with the trend of European affairs. That war, in which England, and most of Europe would be involved, would come within a few years was apparent, and how Ireland might fare, and should act in such an eventuality was becoming a matter of urgent importance. To turn the minds of Nationalists to this question I wrote two articles in *Irish Freedom* in October and November, 1911, entitled: "When Germany fights England," in which an Irish policy was outlined as far as this could be done in the public press. Only the paralysis of the Castle Government in face of the growing complexity of the Home Rule situation enabled so much to be said publicly without having the paper suppressed.

Casement at the same time was preparing a memorandum which we proposed sending to the German Government as a first move in any negotiation to get Germany to recognise Irish Independence when the war, which we felt to be inevitable, should burst upon Europe. This memorandum was given, at the beginning of 1914, to Count Von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador in Washington, and was forwarded by him to his Government in Berlin.

In the meantime a new factor arose in Ireland which was watched by the I.R.B. with the deepest interest. This was the decision of the Orange Party in Ulster to resist Home Rule by force of arms. Here was a development of

the first importance, for if the North could arm against Home Rule, and get away with it, the rest of Ireland would soon be shaken out of its foolish belief in Constitutional agitation and would be compelled to arm also; and if on the other hand, the Ulstermen were suppressed by English forces the wayward loyalty of the Northern province would probably take some new orientation which would enable North and South to come together on a basis of common antagonism to English interference in the affairs of Ireland.

The new move of the Northern Unionists was very disconcerting for the English Government and their allies the Irish Parliamentary Party, but the I.R.B. hailed it with deep satisfaction. In the issue of *Irish Freedom* dated December, 1910, P. S. O'Hegarty commented on the Arming of Ulster in the following terms:

Good! O nobility and gentry, farmers, shopkeepers and artisans, men of property and men of no property in that part of Ulster which is afraid of the rest of Ireland, we drink a health to your arming. May you get arms, plenty of them, good and cheap, and may you get men to use them, and may they make as good use of them as did your forefathers who took up arms a hundred and thirty years ago. . . History has a fashion of repeating itself, and we welcome with a shout this revival of public arming in Ulster. One hundred and thirty years ago it began also in Ulster, but it did not end there, it only ended where the four seas of Ireland stopped it.

This action of the Tory politicians in Ireland, with the active assistance of their friends in England, brought a period of Irish history to a definite end. During the nineteenth century the Irish people were not only disarmed; they had been really brought to believe that armed resistance to the English occupation of Ireland was both insane and immoral, and this belief was so firmly held and so widespread that the small minority that clung to the Fenian tradition could make very little headway against it. The Carsonite movement in Ulster shattered this futile reliance on legal agitation and on the manoeuvring of an Irish Party in the English Parliament; it rudely broke up the political make-believe on which the majority of the Irish people had subsisted for years, and compelled them to face realities.

The effect of the arming of Ulster on the rest of Ireland was not immediate, but as Carson's movement gathered momentum a growing alarm spread through the country. Instead of realising that a new portent had appeared in the Irish skies the Parliamentary Party emitted a few gibes about wooden guns and buried their heads still deeper in the sands of English politics. But in the I.R.B. we knew that Carsonism had opened a door that could not easily be closed

again, and that we had but to wait and get ready to take advantage of the new situation that was rapidly emerging.

By way of getting ready the Dublin Officers of the I.R.B. ordered the members in the city to be taught military drill. This had to be, and was, carried out secretly at the Hall in the rear of 41 Parnell Square. The instructors were the officers of Na Fianna Éireann (Irish National Boy Scouts), a body which had been started in 1909, and which was directed by some of the younger members of the I.R.B. At the same time the I.R.B. began to buy a few rifles, but the funds available for such purposes were very small.

### *Fianna Éireann*

There were two distinct organisations, both for boys, which bore the name Na Fianna Éireann, both founded by me but on different dates, one in Belfast in 1902 and the other in Dublin seven years later.

#### *I. Fianna 1902*

The earlier one, confined to Belfast, was founded on 26th June, 1902, at a mass meeting of junior hurlers assembled at the Catholic Boys' Hall, Falls Road, Belfast. The meeting was convened by me, and I acted as chairman.

The purpose of the organisation was to serve as a Junior Hurling League to promote the study of the Irish language and to make the boys sound nationally.

I was elected Chairman, Richard McDaniel Vice-Chairman, Thomas Aquinas McKenna and Arthur Robin as Honorary Secretaries, and Thomas Collins as Honorary Treasurer.

I have in my possession the manuscript minutes of this body from 22nd June, 1902 to 2nd December, 1903.

The members wore no uniform, and as far as I can recollect there was no provision for drilling or any other type of military training.

The organisation was called Na Fianna Éireann, the playing field was called Cnoc Áluinn, and each branch took the name of one of the Warriors of the Fianna, e.g., Oisín, Fionn, Oscar, Caolite, etc.

At the date of the formation of the Fianna in 1902, I was then nineteen years of age, I was not then a member of the I.R.B., which I joined at Belfast in 1904. I was introduced to the I.R.B. by Denis McCullough, and sworn in by the then Belfast Centre, Patrick Dempsey.

The Fianna continued to exist for many years with various efforts from time to time to infuse new life into it. In the *United Irishman* of the 1st December, 1906, a notice appeared to the effect that the Fianna had been started in Belfast and that I was President. I have no recollection of the matter to which the

notice refers; it may have been one of the attempts to revive the organisation. Remnants probably existed up to 1909 when the new body of the same name was established in Dublin. So much for the earlier body.

## II Fianna 1909

Early in August, 1909, in Sherrard Street, Dublin, in the house of Frank Moloney, brother of Miss Helena Moloney, I told the Countess Constance Markievicz of the organisation which I had founded some years before in Belfast, and she suggested that a boys' national organisation should be started in Dublin on the same lines.

On my explaining that the chief difficulty was one of money, she said that she would rent a hall at her own expense. This she did, the hall chosen being in 34 Lower Camden Street, Dublin, formerly the home of the Irish National Theatre Society.

Notices convening a meeting of boys to be held at 34 Camden Street on the following Monday (16th August) to form a National Boys' Organisation to be managed by the boys themselves on national non-party lines appeared in *An Claidheamh Soluis* on 14th August, 1909, and in other papers at the same time, and the meeting was duly held in that place and on that date. A brief report of the meeting appeared in *An Claidheamh Soluis* on the 21st August, 1909.

About one hundred boys attended in addition to Countess Markievicz, myself and some other adults.

I presided and was elected President of the organisation. Countess Markievicz was elected Vice-President and Pádraig Ó Riain as Secretary.

In my opening speech, I stressed that the control of the organisation should be wholly in the hands of the boys themselves. When the election of officers was taking place at the meeting, there was obviously a certain reluctance among the boys against the election of the Countess to office, principally on the grounds that she was a woman, and I had on many occasions to point out privately that they could not accept her financial help and refuse her membership or office. This feeling against the presence of a woman in the organisation continued in varying degrees of intensity for many years and probably never completely disappeared.

A story which had been told that there was an open protest at the inaugural meeting by some of the boys against her election may be true. I have no recollection of it. Present at that meeting, in addition to those already mentioned, were:

Con Colbert, who was executed in 1916,  
Michael Lonergan, now in the U.S.A.,  
Éamon Martin.

The militant character of the Fianna is indicated by the first three clauses of the Constitution of the Fianna as amended by the Ard-Fheis 1913—*Fianna Handbook* 1914, page 167.

*Object*

To re-establish the Independence of Ireland.

*Means*

The training of the youth of Ireland, mentally and physically, to achieve this object by teaching, scouting and military exercises, Irish history, and the Irish language.

*Declaration*

I promise to work for the Independence of Ireland, never to join England's armed forces, and to obey my superior officers.

In an article by Major H. L. Murphy entitled "Countess Markievicz", which appeared in *An Cosantóir* of June 1946, it was stated that Pádraig Pearse and Roger Casement were associated with the foundation of the organisation in 1909. This is not correct. Both of them came in time to develop a benevolent interest in the body, but they were neither associated with its foundation nor were they connected with it officially at any time.

At this time, 1909, I was an ordinary member of the I.R.B. but that body took no part in the promotion of Fianna Éireann and was not consulted regarding it. It was nevertheless my personal aim to recruit suitable members of the new Fianna into the I.R.B., of which I subsequently became both Dublin Centre and Leinster Centre.

A few weeks after the foundation of the Fianna, I went to Belfast where I stayed for a year, returning on and off to Dublin, and while I was away the Countess was elected President in my place. During my absence I continued to maintain my interest in the Fianna and on my return to Dublin I resumed my active association with it.

The Fianna were mainly self-supporting from the boys' subscriptions, but they were helped by gifts of money from Roger Casement and by funds raised by me in various ways, and sometimes in a small way by the I.R.B. through me.

As already stated, however, the I.R.B. had no direct connection with the Fianna.

As the boys grew older, certain selected ones were recruited into the I.R.B. at the age of 17 and upwards, and after my election as Dublin Centre of the I.R.B. in 1912, I formed a Special Fianna Circle of the I.R.B., the members

of which continued as members of the Fianna, which was, of course, an open organisation. Included in the members of that Fianna Circle of the I.R.B. were, as far as I can remember:

Con Colbert, Harry Ward, Pádraig Ó Riain,  
 Éamon Martin, Paddy Ward, Éamonn Bulfin,  
 Barney Mellows, Michael Lonergan, Liam Mellows  
 Garry Houlihan, Frank Burke, Paddy Houlihan,  
 Seán Heuston, Frank Reynolds, Séamus Cashin,  
 Desmond Ryan, Jack Reynolds, \_\_\_\_ Shallow  
 Joe Sweeney, Séamus Fox, \_\_\_\_ Stynes.

The head of that Circle was Con Colbert, who was executed in 1916.

In preparation for the formation of a national volunteer armed organisation, at my suggestion arrangements were made about July of that year by the Dublin Centres Board of the I.R.B., which was presided over by me, for the military drilling of its own members in order to be ready to take over the military control of the new body. Drilling took place chiefly in the house of the Irish National Foresters, 41 Parnell Square, Dublin, where Padraig Ó Riain's father was caretaker. Members of the Fianna circle of the I.R.B. who were themselves highly trained, acted as instructors. These included Michael Lonergan, Pádraig Ó Riain, Con Colbert and Éamon Martin.

After the formation of the Volunteers in 1913, some of the older members of the Fianna passed into that body. Cooperation between the two organisations was always close, but at no time prior to the Rising was there any formal affiliation.

### *III. Arms*

Prior to the formation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 there was no serious effort to arm the Fianna. Side arms, i.e., bayonets, were common, but there were no firearms. On the foundation of the Irish Volunteers, five members of the Fianna became members of its Provisional Committee on my suggestion, viz., Pádraig Ó Riain, Con Colbert, Éamon Martin, Michael Lonergan and Liam Mellows.

### *IV. Howth Gun-running*

The Fianna played a very important part in the landing of arms at Howth on 26th July, 1914.

I was in charge of the landing. I anticipated vigorous police opposition and as a precautionary measure got some 200 oak batons about two feet long made,

with which to arm the Volunteers. These were made at night by carpenter members of the I.R.B. some time beforehand. They were fitted with a leather strap to fasten to the wrist. I felt that it would be too serious a risk to allow rifles and ammunition to get into the hands of untrained Volunteers.

The batons were brought to Howth in a trek-cart by the Fianna, of whom there were some 200 under the command of Pádraig Ó Riain, and distributed to the Volunteers at Howth.

The rifles, when landed, were distributed to the Volunteers, but the ammunition, except for some 2,000 rounds, was sent separately to Dublin. These 2,000 rounds were brought back in the trek-cart by the Fianna, who were at that stage the only body with sufficient discipline to be entrusted with ammunition.

#### *V. Official Journal*

On the question of an official journal of the Fianna, I have no recollection that there was any. There may have been a typed or manuscript paper circulated by hand among the boys, but I have no information on that point.

#### *VI. Pádraig Ó Riain*

From the foundation of the Fianna in 1909 to the Rising in 1916 Pádraig Ó Riain was the dominating personality in the Fianna. He had a natural capacity for leadership and did an enormous amount of work, and was to a great degree responsible for its success.



### **3. Ireland's Hour of Destiny—The Dublin I.R.B. Decision, July, 1913—Eoin MacNeill and The O'Rahilly—The Provisional Committee—Public Meeting at the Rotunda, 25 November, 1913—I.R.B. Participation**

IN THE middle of July, 1913, I told the Dublin Centres Board of the I.R.B., of which I was chairman—I was then a member of the Supreme Council—that in my opinion the time was rapidly approaching when it would be possible to start an Irish Volunteer organisation. As a preparation, I suggested, and it was decided, that the members of the I.R.B. in Dublin should commence drilling immediately.

Members of the Dublin Centres Board who were at that meeting in July, 1913, included

Séamus O'Connor, Solicitor.

Seán Murphy, Housekeeper, Dublin Castle.

George Lyons, Stationery Office.

Gregg Murphy, Formerly a messenger in Government Buildings.

Val. Jackson, Waterworks Department, Dublin Corporation.

I mention them in particular because they were still alive in November, 1947, when I supplied their names to the Bureau of Military History so that they might be questioned to corroborate my statement about the important meeting in July, 1913. Members of the Fianna Circle of the I.R.B. were used as drill instructors.

The formation of the Volunteers was entirely distinct and separate from the Citizen Army, and the decision to form one was in no way influenced by the formation of the other.

In October, 1913, we decided that the time had come to start the Volunteers, but that the I.R.B. must not show its hand. We were looking around for a respected figure who would become the focal point of a public movement, when an article entitled "The North Began", which appeared in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the official organ of the Gaelic League, on 1st November, 1913, provided us with the necessary opening. It was written by Eoin MacNeill, Professor of Early and Medieval Irish History in University College, Dublin.

This article of MacNeill's was certainly not inspired by the I.R.B. MacNeill, who was an avowed adherent of John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, was never a member of the I.R.B. and was not in any way in touch with them. His article was for that very reason providential.

I went immediately to The O'Rahilly, who was then manager of *An Claidheamh Soluis*, and proposed the formation of a National Volunteer Force. O'Rahilly said that if I could get fifty reliable men he would join them. I said I could guarantee five hundred, and although he, like MacNeill, was not a member of the I.R.B., he realised what I had in mind and at once consented.

At my suggestion he asked MacNeill if he would preside at a committee meeting to discuss the formation of a Volunteer body. Next day he said that MacNeill was quite willing to take the chair.

MacNeill's value lay in the fact that he was a great intellectual figure, able, clear-headed, sincere and well liked, that he quarrelled with nobody and could pour oil on the most troubled waters. These qualities made him an ideal chairman in the early stages of the movement, and enabled him to keep the Volunteer Committee and the Volunteers together in circumstances of great difficulty in the year that followed the start of the movement.

Having secured the co-operation of MacNeill, The O'Rahilly and I selected a number of men to attend a preliminary meeting. I drafted invitations to them and they were issued by O'Rahilly over his signature.

I engaged a room in Wynn's Hotel, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin and the first meeting took place there on Tuesday 11th November, 1913, Eoin MacNeill being in the chair.

In his pamphlet *The Secret History of the Irish Volunteers* (8th April, 1915) page 3, The O'Rahilly says that the following eleven persons were invited to the meeting:

Eoin MacNeill, Éamonn Ceannt,  
 Bulmer Hobson, Seán Fitzgibbon,  
 P. H. Pearse, James A. Deakin,  
 Seán McDermott, Piaras Béaslaí,  
 W. J. Ryan, Joseph Campbell,  
 and The O'Rahilly himself.

This tallies with my own recollection. I did not attend this first meeting. I was generally regarded as an extreme nationalist, and thought it better at this initial stage to absent myself from Dublin on business that evening. My precaution proved wise. Later that evening two detectives called on the management of Wynn's Hotel, and advised them against allowing any further such gatherings on the premises.

The O'Rahilly says in the same pamphlet that another man, D. P. Moran, editor of the *Leader*, was also invited but that he did not attend. I do not remember that Moran was invited.

Of the original ten who met on the 11th November, three subsequently dropped out and did not become members of the Provisional Committee, namely:

W. J. Ryan, Joseph Campbell, James Deakin.

As far as I can recollect the reasons for their discontinuing were:

<i>Ryan</i>	was a commercial traveller in the boot trade and was not easily available;
<i>Campbell</i>	a poet, was not very interested in the movement;
<i>Deakin</i>	a chemist, found it hard to attend. He was a member of the I.R.B.

The rent of the room for these early meetings in Wynn's Hotel was paid for by subscriptions from those present, but it was not realised that a sum of £1 which was provided both by Séamus O'Connor and myself, came from the funds of the I.R.B.

In my own book *A Short History of the Irish Volunteers*, pp. 17-18, I mentioned three other people as having been present at that first meeting, namely:

Robert Page, Séamus O'Connor, Colm O'Loughlin.

In fact their first attendance may have been at the second meeting, on Friday, the 14th November, when we had a larger gathering. Actually there were several meetings, fresh names being added until the original committee of eleven had reached its final total of about thirty.

On page 19 of my book I have given twenty-eight names, but I omitted by mistake the names of Séamus O'Connor and Piaras Béaslaí. This would bring the total to thirty.

A further name has been mentioned to me, viz., Ted Sheahan, but I have no recollection whatever of his being present at any meeting.

On 20th November, 1913, a circular letter was issued by Eoin MacNeill and Laurence Kettle to national organisations requesting them to put the aims of the Volunteers before their members, and a copy was sent to the Press. The text of this is quoted on pages 25-26 of my book.

A report of the meeting held on 14th November appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* on Monday, 17th November, stating that at that meeting a Provisional Committee had been formed to organise a body to be called the Irish Volunteers "to secure and maintain the common rights and liberties of Irishmen", and that Eoin MacNeill and Laurence J. Kettle had been appointed Hon. Secretaries. This is a misquotation. The stated object of the Volunteers was "to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to the whole people of Ireland".

A summary of this circular appeared as an advertisement on page 1 of the *Freeman's Journal* of 21st November, 1913, attention being called to it in a note on page 4 of the same issue:

A public meeting for the purpose of establishing a corps of Irish Volunteers will be held in the large Concert Hall of the Rotunda at 8 p.m. Eoin MacNeill, B.A., will preside.

The *Freeman's Journal* of 24th November contained a notice that the venue for the meeting had been changed from the Rotunda Concert Hall to the Rotunda Rink, and that a manifesto from the Provisional Committee would be read. A list of those who would speak was given:

P. H. Pearse,      Alderman Macken,  
T. P. O'Brien,      Professor Henry, Belfast.

Professor Henry was never asked to speak. I do not know who T. P. O'Brien was. It was probably a mistake for William O'Brien.

The arrangements for the meeting in the Rotunda were made by me. I went to the then Lord Mayor, Lorcan Sherlock, and asked him for the use of the Mansion House. He refused. I then engaged the large concert hall in the Rotunda. This hall held only about five hundred people, as at first we were too dubious of the amount of popular support we would get to risk taking a bigger room. As the day approached for the holding of the meeting I took the Rotunda Rink, a large temporary building in the grounds of the Rotunda Gardens. The Rink was then the biggest hall in Dublin and held about four thousand people.

At the meeting the stewards who were equipped with pads of enrolment forms, of which I still have copies, were mostly members of the I.R.B. We got 3,000 of those forms signed that night.

In addition to the 4,000 people inside the hall a crowd of about 3,000 were unable to gain admission. The path from Cavendish Row down to the entrance of the hall was a steep slope and we were much afraid that the pressure of people would smash in the doors which had been closed. Traffic in Cavendish Row was blocked by the crowds, and MacDermott and some others went out and addressed them.

Amongst those who spoke were MacNeill, who acted as chairman, Laurence J. Kettle and P. H. Pearse. I decided not to speak as I was looked upon by many people as being very extreme. It is interesting that at the beginning of the Volunteers, P. H. Pearse warned Eoin MacNeill of the danger of allowing extreme nationalists like me to gain control of the Volunteer movement.

A brief report of this meeting is given on pages 27-28 of my book *A Short History of the Irish Volunteers*. The text of that book was read before publication by Seán Fitzgibbon and Eimar O'Duffy, and it may be taken as accurate except where supplemented or corrected by this statement. It must be remembered that the book was published at a time when there was strict censorship against national publications, and that it had in fact to be passed by the military censor at the time.

In the course of our approaches to various organisations prior to the formal inauguration of the Irish Volunteers on 25th November, it became clear that John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, was hostile to the movement. There is nothing on record, but in personal contacts there was no mistaking the atmosphere. Redmond offered no direct opposition, however, but a prominent member of his party, Richard Hazelton, M.P., obviously speaking with official approval, later attacked the movement in the *Freeman's Journal* of 17th December, 1913.

I have recently heard it suggested that, following the formation of the Volunteers on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, 1913, the Provisional Committee sent MacNeill to London to see John Redmond, to offer him the allegiance of the Volunteers, and to offer to disband them if Redmond did not approve. There is no truth whatever in this story. It is possible that MacNeill, as an individual follower of Redmond, may have informed Redmond of what had taken place, a thing which he was quite entitled to do as an individual, but if he did so, he did not go with any authority from the Provisional Committee. The Committee were neither consulted nor asked for their approval of any such mission, nor would they have authorised it if they had been consulted. Certainly the I.R.B. would never have permitted the disbandment of the Volunteers. I have been asked whether James Connolly, who was executed in 1916, was a member of the I.R.B. or whether he was invited to become a member of the Provisional Committee. He was not then a member of the I.R.B. nor was he asked to be a member of the Provisional Committee, nor was he consulted about its organisation at this period.

As to the disturbances made by labour men at the inaugural meeting in the Rotunda, this arose merely out of a local labour dispute with which one member of the Provisional Committee, Laurence Kettle, was connected in some way.

As a result of the steps taken by the I.R.B. earlier in the year, those members of the Volunteers who were members of the I.R.B. were nearly all well drilled. Ex-British Army men were employed as instructors by the Volunteer Committee and these used to meet frequently, presided over by me, and I told them to pick out the promising men and train them specially as officers. I insisted that in their selection they were to have regard only to efficiency and to choose the best material irrespective of party affiliation or otherwise. The result was that the trained members of the I.R.B. came into prominence and became officers. The control of the I.R.B. was not apparent in this nor suspected, but it operated in practice.

The office staff of the organisation was also I.R.B. It included:

Liam Mellows, paid secretary (in succession to Liam Gogan who was not a member of the I.R.B.), Eimar O'Duffy, Barney Mellows (brother of Liam).

I have been asked what part the I.R.B. played in selecting or appointing the men who came to the first meeting in Wynn's Hotel and those who were subsequently appointed as the Provisional Committee. There was no formal control. The I.R.B. were satisfied to see the Volunteer movement started and run on a practical basis, and they left the selection of the Provisional Committee to me. An analysis of the affiliation of the members of the original Committee and the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers may be of interest.

Of the twelve men mentioned by The O'Rahilly as having been invited to the original meeting, the following analysis indicates who were members of the I.R.B. at that stage and who were not:

<i>I.R.B.</i>	<i>Non-I.R.B.</i>
Bulmer Hobson	Eoin MacNeill
Seán MacDermott	P. H. Pearse
James Deakin	W. J. Ryan
Piaras Béaslaí	Seán Fitzgibbon
Éamonn Ceannt	Joseph Campbell
(5)	The O'Rahilly
	D. P. Moran
	(7)

Of the Provisional Committee of thirty set up on the formation of the Volunteers, the following is the analysis, as far as I can remember:

*Members of the I.R.B.*

Béaslaí (Piaras)	Macken (Peadar)
Ceannt (Éamonn)	Martin (Éamon)
Colbert (Con)	Mellows (Liam)
Hobson (Bulmer)	O'Connor (Séamus)
Lonergan (Michael)	Ó Riaín (Pádraig)
MacDermott (Seán)	Page (Robert)

*Members of the United Irish League—Irish Parliamentary Party*

Gore (John)	Kettle (T. M.)
Kettle (Laurence)	Moore (Colonel Maurice)
O'Reilly (Peter) Walsh (George)	

*Ancient Order of Hibernians*

Judge (Michael J.)	O'Reilly (Peter)
Lenehan (James)	Walsh (George)

*Not formally affiliated with any party*

Casement (Roger)	Ó Lochlann (Colm)
Fitzgibbon (Seán)	O'Rahilly (The)
Gogán (Liam)	Pearse (P. H.)
MacDonagh (Tomas)	Plunkett (Joseph)
MacNeill (Eoin)	White (Peadar)

Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett later became members of the I.R.B. Liam Gogán was brought in to the Volunteers by Eoin MacNeill. He was a student of MacNeill's in the Faculty of Celtic Studies. He acted for a while as secretary, being succeeded by Liam Mellows. MacNeill and Kettle were honorary secretaries, but they were not members of the I.R.B.

There was no formal executive until after the Volunteer Convention of 1914. MacNeill, Fitzgibbon and I, however, met almost daily and were often joined

by Casement, Moore and O'Rahilly. We frequently met in MacNeill's house in Herbert Park.

Casement was not present at the meeting in the Rotunda, on 25th November. He came over from London a week afterwards.

MacNeill played a very big part in the formation and control of the Volunteers. He attended practically every meeting of the Provisional Committee. He missed a few in the summer of 1914, as he was head of the Irish College at Omeath, but whenever he was available, which was nearly always, he was a regular attendant up to late 1915 when he began to get a little slack, but even at the slackest period he attended three-fourths of the meetings. It was sometimes difficult to get him to a meeting, but he usually got there. The manifesto of the Volunteers and most of the early Volunteer documents were drawn up by him.

The first official notepaper of the Provisional Committee formed in November, 1913, bore the address of my private office, 12 d'Olier Street, where I worked as a freelance journalist. After I left this address it was taken over by MacDermott.

## 4. **Gun-Running at Howth and Kilcoole, July-August, 1913—Preparations in London and Antwerp—Figgis and Casement—Childers—The Panther in Dublin Bay—The March to Howth—Landing the Guns—Fracas with Police—Kilcoole—Conor O'Brien, Sir Thomas Myles, Seán Fitzgibbon**

WHEN THE Volunteers were started in 1913 we very rapidly got an enormous number of members, variously estimated to be between 100,000 and 150,000. It was this fact which probably impelled Mr. Redmond to seek control, but, while we had this vast membership, we had very little funds, and virtually no arms.

In order to try and end this deadlock, which was endangering the whole Volunteer position, Casement, on his own initiative, went to London in the early part of 1914 and got together a few friends who between them advanced £1,500.

Mrs. Alice Stopford Green was responsible for about half this amount; Erskine Childers, his wife, the Honourable Mary Spring Rice, Captain Berkeley, and Casement himself subscribed the rest of the money. With the exception of Casement, none of the subscribers had had any previous connection with the Volunteers. The idea was that the money should be used to purchase arms, to bring them to Ireland, to sell the arms to the Irish Volunteers and to reimburse the subscribers.

The subscribers took a very uncommercial risk, and I think they must have been very astonished when they did subsequently get their money back.

This London Committee selected Darrell Figgis to go to Antwerp to purchase rifles, and Erskine Childers and Conor O'Brien volunteered to bring the guns to Ireland in their yachts. Darrell Figgis had no previous connection with the Volunteers.

Figgis purchased 1,500 rifles and 45,000 rounds of ammunition. I think he got excellent value for the £1,500. He was also to hire a tug at Antwerp and bring the guns to meet the two yachts at an appointed time and place in the North Sea. The guns were Mauser rifles, old-fashioned and heavy, but were in perfect order. They were, I believe, the rifles with which the German Army were re-armed after the Franco-Prussian War.

The first I heard of this project must have been in June, 1914, when Casement asked me if I could make arrangements for the landing of the two cargoes. He had already seen MacNeill and O'Rahilly, but so far no working scheme had been framed. I agreed with the suggestion, on condition I was not to be hampered by any committee, and I agreed to meet him and Childers in Dublin within a week and have some practicable plan ready.

On thinking the matter over I decided that 1,500 rifles would not go very far in solving our problem, but that if we could bring them in in a sufficiently spectacular manner we should probably solve our financial problem and the problem of arming the Volunteers as well.

With this in mind I decided to land the guns during daylight, in the most open manner and as near to Dublin as possible. I personally examined every harbour between Greystones and Balbriggan, cycling the whole way, and only turned down the North Wall in Dublin because I thought that we might not get time to unload before the authorities would appear.

I decided that Howth was the most suitable harbour, and that the best method was to march a large number of Volunteers to meet the yacht, to arm them on the spot and march them back. I felt that this could be done, provided the movement was executed with sufficient rapidity to enable us to get back past the narrow neck of land at Sutton before the Castle could intervene. I felt that the task of seizing so many guns from so many individual Volunteers, who would be scattered over a wide area, would be beyond the powers of either police or soldiers.

Pádraig Ó Riain was the one man with whom I discussed all these arrangements in complete confidence.

I met Casement and Childers at Buswell's Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin, one Sunday about the end of June, and proposed my plan, with which they both agreed. Childers and I went out to Howth next day and looked at the harbour, and settled just where he was to come in. At that meeting it was fixed that Childers should sail into Howth harbour at twelve noon on 26th July and that I would have the Volunteers there to meet him.

Childers then went off to keep his appointment with Figgis in the North Sea, and I did not see him again until he brought his cargo of guns into Howth harbour on 26th July.

I next went to MacNeill and asked him to propose at the next meeting of the Provisional Committee that all the Volunteer Companies in Dublin should have a joint route march every Sunday morning. The first march, I think, was to Lucan, another to Dun Laoghaire, and another to Clondalkin. The police were enormously interested in the first and followed in strength. At the second they were not so active, and the third week they were indifferent. When we finally marched to Howth on the 26th July they assumed that it was just another route march and were not present at all. They did not suspect anything unusual was on hand and neither did the general body of Volunteers who marched to Howth.

In preparation for the gun-running, I got the carpenter members of the I.R.B. to make about two hundred oak batons which were to be used in case we were attacked by the police. The Volunteers, although they were being given rifles, were far too raw and undisciplined to be entrusted with ammunition on that occasion.

One apparently insuperable difficulty arose as the day approached when Childers was due to arrive at Howth. There had been a lot of talk following the Carsonite gun-running at Larne as to the probability of similar gun-running exploits being carried out in other parts of the country. The British authorities as a precaution sent *H.M.S. Panther*, which anchored in Dublin Bay. In the last week before Childers was due to arrive, I went out and looked anxiously at the *Panther* every morning, but she showed no signs of going away. Eventually on the Wednesday of that week I went to see John Gore, who was an elderly solicitor, and was one of the Treasurers on the Volunteer Committee. John Gore was a charming old man, but he was not noted for reticence. I told him in strict confidence that we were bringing a cargo of guns into Waterford on the following Sunday. I expected that he would be unable to refrain from giving this news in strict confidence to every client who came to see him. Whether this calculation was correct or not, it is a fact that two days later *H.M.S. Panther* steamed South. When the *Panther* got to Wicklow, apparently doubts began to occur, and the anchor was dropped. On Sunday, when we were engaged in bringing in the guns at Howth, the *Panther* was immobilised at Wicklow because they had given shore leave to the crew.

About twenty members of the I.R.B. under the command of Cathal Brugha were sent to Howth early on the morning of Sunday, 26th July, with instructions to disport themselves about the harbour, hire boats and generally look as much like tourists as possible. Their business was to receive the yacht, help to moor her, and in the event of any police interference they were sufficiently numerous to deal with it.

It was my intention to bring the ammunition away from Howth in taxis and distribute it at several points in the city. For this purpose several members of the I.R.B. were each instructed to invite a lady friend out for the day. They were to go by taxi to Howth and order lunch at the hotel, keeping a close watch on the harbour. When they saw the yacht coming in they were to abandon both the ladies and the lunch and bring their taxis up the harbour ready to carry their appointed loads to their appointed destination.

The Volunteers met on Sunday morning at Father Matthew Park in Fairview, probably about eight hundred in all.

It was the practice on the route marches that the command was taken by one of our ex-Army paid instructors, and on this occasion a retired sergeant named Bodkin was in charge. Just before we marched off, MacNeill instructed Bodkin to carry out any instructions which I gave him throughout the day. When we got near Howth I told Bodkin what was about to happen.

It was difficult to get started in good time, with the result that we had to march at a fast pace, and without a stop, to Howth, a distance of between seven and eight miles. Protests came from various parts of the column that the pace was too fast, but we had no time to lose and paid no attention to the complaints.

Fortunately we reached Howth just as the yacht sailed into the harbour. When we got to the harbour we put a strong guard at the entrance.

In order to expedite the unloading, I had asked Childers to take the guns out of their packing while at sea and lay them in layers on the floor of the cabin, so that the moment the hatches were off the guns were passed from hand to hand down the column, and the whole unloading of nine hundred guns took, approximately, half an hour. When the last gun came ashore, the ammunition was already on its way—before the column left—the bulk by taxis, and some 2,000 rounds remained with the Fianna, who were the only body on whose discipline I could count.

As I was afraid of the authorities cutting us off before we got past Sutton, no rest was given to the men and no halt was permitted until we got to Raheny. As we were approaching that village, a special tram filled with police passed us on their way from the city. We had a number of cycle scouts scouring the country in every direction and we had not long left Howth when I was aware that the authorities were sending out, or had sent out, soldiers and police to intercept us.

I asked Laurence Kettle, who had a car, to take me down to look at them. I went to Clontarf in his car and looked at the police, and re-joined the Volunteers before they got to Raheny. They were halted there.

The question then presented itself as to how we should get past this barrier. The men had already marched from Fairview to Howth and back to Raheny without time for rest, and many of them showed signs of exhaustion. I decided

that it was quite impracticable to ask them to approach Dublin by longer and indirect routes, and that the only thing was to go right on and deal with the police and soldiers when we got that far.

Just before we left Howth I had instructed the officers of each company to make a careful note of the names and addresses of the men who had rifles, and to tell them that they would have the option of either delivering them at their company meeting the following week or of retaining them and paying for them by small weekly instalments.

When we approached Clontarf we saw the soldiers drawn across the road, and, in order to avoid them and to give them an opportunity of avoiding us, we turned sharply to the right on to the Malahide Road. The police and soldiers came at the double round to the Malahide Road and confronted us again.

While I expected that the authorities in Dublin Castle would attempt to prevent the landing of rifles, I knew that the Liberal Government in England, having already remained inactive on the occasion of the Carsonite gun-running at Larne, would find it very embarrassing to take active measures against us. I rather suspected, what was afterwards established as a fact, that the local police or soldiers were acting without orders from their superiors.

When we approached the opposing forces, the soldiers were drawn two-deep across the road, armed with rifle and bayonet. About eighty policemen, standing two-deep, occupied the footpath at right angles to the soldiers.

When we came up to the police, Assistant Commissioner Harrell, who was in charge, stepped forward, and as he did so I halted the column. I was marching at the head of the column with the instructor, Bodkin. Immediately, Harrell said that we were an illegal body, illegally importing arms which he was about to seize, and before I had time to reply he turned to the police and ordered them to seize the arms. A considerable number of the police did not move and disobeyed the order, while the remainder made a rush for the front company of the Volunteers and a free fight ensued, in which clubbed rifles and batons were freely used. This fight lasted probably less than a minute, when the police withdrew to the footpath of their own accord and without orders. Meanwhile I had been standing with Mr. Harrell and was a spectator of the melee.

At this point I told Mr. Harrell that these men, although they had rifles, had no ammunition, that they were peacefully going to their homes, but that there was ammunition in the column and that if he attacked again I could not prevent the distribution, that a great many of his men and my men would be killed, packed in that narrow road, and that sole responsibility would be his. I had already suspected that he might have gone out without orders, and I rapidly saw that his nerve was visibly ebbing and that he realised the impossibility of taking rifles from nine hundred men with eighty reluctant policemen.

At this stage Tomás MacDonagh and Darrell Figgis came up and entered into an argument with Mr. Harrell. Either of them could have talked him blind, their combined effort was overwhelming. I decided that this colloquy would last for a considerable time, so I ran to the back of the column and ordered the men to disperse across the fields and through the grounds of the Christian Brothers in Marino, to make their way home as quickly as possible and avoid any conflicts or anything which would cause them to lose their rifles. I saw company after company disappear through the hedges and did not return until all but the last company was left when I found Mr. Harrell, looking rather dazed, still listening to Figgis and MacDonagh. Just as I approached, the sergeant spoke to Harrell and drew his attention to the fact that the Volunteers had nearly all gone. Mr. Harrell then told the soldiers that he did not require them any further and they marched off towards Dublin, where they got into conflict with a crowd of civilians at Bachelor's Walk. This episode had no direct connection whatever with the Volunteers or with the gun-running.

Captain Michael Judge, who got wounded at Howth Road, left his company without orders and went and abused some of the soldiers. One of them gave him a poke with his bayonet, which grazed his arm. Much publicity was given to this supposedly dangerous wound of Mr. Judge, but none was given to several men who, in the melee with the police, received considerable injuries.

Mr. Harrell then hastened along Fairview Strand to Phillipsburgh Avenue in the hope of intercepting some of the Volunteers who had gone across the fields. Several of us, seeing his object, went ahead and meeting a few of the Volunteers warned them not to go down to Fairview.

We took our stand on the roadway outside Father Matthew Park, and Mr. Harrell and his policemen halted on the footpath opposite.

The cycle scouts, of course, followed me throughout the day, and I told them, one after another, to ride at top speed out of sight and to come back in a minute or two and pretend to whisper a message. They went off in all directions and a scene of great activity ensued, which was further enlivened by the arrival of a gentleman, locally known as "the Pope Flanagan", on horseback. Mr. Flanagan, at my request, galloped his horse off at a furious pace and added to the noise. Mr. Harrell stood for a considerable time before it happened to dawn on him that the object of this activity was to keep him standing there while the Volunteers got safely home with the guns.

It subsequently transpired in evidence at the Royal Commission on the Howth gun-running that Mr. Harrell had gone out without orders.

The police captured nineteen of our rifles, all of which were broken in the struggle, but the authorities were in such consternation at the turn events had taken that Colonel Moore went up to the Castle the following day and succeeded in securing the remnants of the nineteen rifles.

While we were facing the soldiers at Howth Road, several of our men who had small arms fired at the soldiers and would have precipitated a catastrophe for us had the officer in charge of the soldiers not thought that the shots came from a hostile crowd assembled in a side street. I suppressed the firing as quickly as possible. Éamonn Ceannnt was one of those who fired.

A number of the Volunteers made repeated attempts to rush the Fianna trek carts to get some of the ammunition with which to fire at the police and soldiers, but the Fianna, under the command of Pádraig Ó Riain, carried out their orders and no ammunition was distributed or used.

A fortnight previously Figgis had handed over the guns to the two yachts in the North Sea. He then came across to Dublin, apparently with the intention of taking charge of operations at our end. None of us had ever met him before, and I had to tell him firmly that the arrangements were made, and were not going to be disclosed to anybody, unless such disclosure was essential to enable him to play his part in the plan. As a concession I allowed him to accompany Cathal Brugha down to Howth early on the Sunday morning, and he was with the men who were there to receive the yacht when it came in. Further than that he had no part in planning or carrying out this operation.

Of the 900 guns and 26,000 rounds of ammunition landed at Howth, none were lost except the nineteen captured by the police and some which were abandoned by some of the Volunteers on their way across the fields and which fell into the hands of members of the Citizen Army, whose premises at Croydon Park were close by.

The Citizen Army did not take part in the Howth gun-running and knew nothing about it. The only two organisations which took part in the Howth gun-running were the Irish Volunteers and the Fianna.

With the Howth gun-running, we not only succeeded in landing a considerable number of arms but I also succeeded in my second objective of getting something done in a sufficiently spectacular manner to make people subscribe to our funds. We got £1,000 from America the day after, and thereafter we received help from different organisations in America at the rate of about £1,000 a month.

Money also came in from various parts of Ireland, and after the gun-running we never had any serious financial worries.

Of the 1,500 guns purchased by Figgis in Antwerp, Childers brought 900 to Howth. The other 600 guns and portion of the ammunition were placed on Conor O'Brien's yacht. Both yachts were loaded from a tug which Figgis hired in Antwerp, and which met them in the North Sea.

Childers and O'Brien were both first-rate seamen, but in other respects they differed. Childers was secretive and efficient. O'Brien was talkative to a degree that made him a dangerous colleague for anybody engaged on an enterprise

of this sort. For this reason Childers flatly refused to have O'Brien come in to Howth with him as he felt that O'Brien's lack of reasonable precautions would endanger the whole enterprise.

Childers told me that O'Brien wanted to bring his guns into his native County Limerick, so we agreed that we could tell him to go and make his own arrangements and to bring them in where he could. In the event O'Brien made no arrangements, and when it became time for him to leave Dublin to keep his appointment in the North Sea he went to Lloyd, a solicitor, and Cruise O'Brien, a journalist, neither of whom had any connection with the Volunteers, and both of whom were active members of Mr. Redmond's organisation. They were not the sort of people likely to be mixed up in gun-running. Fortunately they went and told James Creed Meredith, later a judge of the Supreme Court, what had happened. Meredith was one of Redmond's nominees on our Committee and one of the very few who co-operated with us and did not behave like a mere partisan on the Committee.

Meredith realised that this must be some project of the Irish Volunteers that had got into strange hands, so he came at once to MacNeill, who sent for me and said: "Here is the cargo you refused at Howth come back again." I was much too busy with the arrangements for Howth, and with other work, to take on this additional responsibility, and besides there was the possibility that both yachts might come in at the same time. In fact, the Howth yacht came in on the 26th July and the yacht at Kilcoole on Saturday, 1st August. It was agreed, therefore, that Seán Fitzgibbon should take charge of that landing.

Before he left Ireland, Conor O'Brien's reckless talk had roused the suspicion of the authorities and they started searching fishing and other boats all round the Irish coast, and it was felt that it was not safe to permit him to bring the cargo to Ireland. It was arranged, therefore, that he should lie off Bardsey Island, off the Welsh coast, and transfer his cargo to the yacht of Sir Thomas Myles, a prominent Dublin surgeon.

Before I retired from the scene, I went to Meredith's house at his invitation and met Sir Thomas Myles to discuss where the guns were to be brought in. I suggested Kilcoole, County Wicklow, and as the water was too shallow there to enable the yacht to come close in, that the unloading should be done by a couple of motor boats.

Childers's crew, as far as I can remember, consisted of himself, his wife, the Honourable Mary Spring Rice, a General Shepherd, who was afterwards killed in France, and two fishermen from Tory Island off Donegal.

Sir Thomas Myles's crew consisted of Sir Thomas, James Creed Meredith, Dermot Coffey, and Captain Harvey de Montmorency of the British Army, a Kilkenny man.

At Fitzgibbons's request, I went to Kilcoole on the night of the landing of the guns. As he was not a member of the I.R.B. he thought that perhaps his

orders might not be readily accepted by some of them. There was, however, no danger of this.

We arrived at Kilcoole about midnight, and the unloading was completed by 4 or 5 a.m.

The only policemen we met were two individuals who were patrolling the railway line. We put them under arrest and when we left they had several miles to walk to barracks before they could give the alarm. There was no other interference of any kind from the authorities.

I came back to Dublin on a large motor charabanc, which was so overloaded with men, guns and ammunition that it broke a back axle in the middle of the town of Bray, about 5 a.m. on Sunday, 2nd August. We sent a motor cyclist to Dublin, and in a surprisingly short time we had a number of taxis and a couple of lorries, and the guns and ammunition were safely taken to Dublin.

On Childers's way from the North Sea, he sailed right through the great Naval Review at Spithead, where the King of England was reviewing his Navy.

After the outbreak of war, I heard that Childers had been asked by the British Naval authorities to join because he had a more intimate knowledge than anybody they had of the islands and channels off the German coast, which figured in his novel *The Riddle of the Sands*.

Conor O'Brien in one of his books complains of the ridiculous secrecy with which the Volunteers shrouded their operations, and we had cause to complain of his reckless talking. He stated that when he tried to get any information he was always referred to a mysterious John Dolan, but that he never could find out who Dolan was. In fact, John Dolan had no existence except as a name to which letters could be addressed to an office in College Street to enable Childers communicate with me.

Although I make this criticism of Conor O'Brien he was a wonderful seaman, a charming person, and he rendered us very great service.



## 5. John Redmond and the Volunteers—Negotiations with MacNeill—New Committee Suggested—Redmond’s Ultimatum, 9 June, 1914— Committee Accepts Under Duress—My Estrangement from Clarke and MacDermott— Colonels Cotter and Moore—The Split Between Redmond and the Volunteers, 24 September, 1914

I WENT to the U.S.A. in January, 1914, and returned to Ireland in April of that year. Either before my departure or immediately after my return I became aware that Eoin MacNeill was in touch with the Irish Parliamentary Party through its leader, John Redmond, or other important representatives, with a view to getting their co-operation in the development of the Irish Volunteers.

John Redmond was then the political leader of the majority of the Irish people, and with the country behind him he was apparently on the verge of securing the passage of a Home Rule Bill for Ireland. The Irish Volunteers was a new national organisation and MacNeill and others thought it important that it should have the benediction of the country’s leader, or at least that it should not have his opposition.

Eoin MacNeill was an adherent of John Redmond and it was probably only natural that he should seek to bring about this co-operation.

MacNeill, however, did not at any time either discuss this matter with the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers or seek the Committee’s authority. Anything he did was entirely on his own initiative and on his own responsibility.

I was aware that some contact between MacNeill and Redmond was taking place, but I was not informed as to its exact nature, nor was I consulted as to any of the correspondence or conversations, but as long as there was no attempt to place these contacts on an official basis, I was satisfied to wait and see if MacNeill's discussions would produce results beneficial to the Volunteers and to the country as a whole.

Others who appear to have known what was happening, but in more detail, were Casement and Colonel Moore. From the manner in which matters developed—and the correspondence quoted in Denis Gwynn's *Life of John Redmond* presumably authentic—it is possible that MacNeill did not make it clear to Redmond that he was acting in a purely personal capacity, and that he had no authority whatever from the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, either for his approach to John Redmond, for his own proposals as to the control of that body, or for his acceptance of proposals put forward by, or on behalf of, John Redmond. Seán Fitzgibbon was a close friend of MacNeill's and his memoirs could possibly throw light on the happenings of this period.

I wish to make it clear that I do not suggest for a moment that MacNeill was in any sense working behind anybody's back. In his conversations with myself and with Fitzgibbon MacNeill made no secret of what he was doing, but he never brought any phase of it before the Committee until forced to do so by Redmond's Press ultimatum of 9th June, 1914.

MacNeill was a straightforward honourable man, incapable of deliberately deceiving anybody, whether his own Committee or John Redmond. But it is possible that John Redmond believed that Eoin MacNeill, who was Chairman of the Provisional Committee, was acting with the full approval of that Committee, and that MacNeill failed to make the true position clear.

On the 9th May, 1914, the Provisional Committee decided to call a National Convention of the Volunteers at an early date, and instructed companies to affiliate for that purpose with the Provisional Committee on or before 10th June, 1914. This decision was made with a view to creating a National Executive which would forestall any attempt by Redmond to get control. It was made at the suggestion of MacNeill, but it certainly did not arise out of any report by him on his discussions with Redmond, for he did not make any such report, and the majority of the members remained in ignorance of what was happening until Redmond's ultimatum appeared in the newspapers on 9th June.

On pages 311-312 of Denis Gwynn's *Life of John Redmond* there is quoted a letter from MacNeill "on behalf of the Volunteer Committee" to Devlin suggesting an executive of six as follows:

Four members of the existing Committee, viz.: MacNeill, Gore, Kettle, and O'Rahilly, with the addition of William Redmond, M.P., brother of John Redmond, and possibly Casement.

This letter was certainly not written on behalf of, or with any authority whatever from, the Provisional Committee, nor was I aware at the time that any such proposals were made or contemplated by MacNeill. The very composition of the Committee suggested would have condemned it with me and with the Provisional Committee. Not a single member of it was a member of the I.R.B. MacNeill, Gore, Kettle, and, of course, W. Redmond, were followers of John Redmond, and neither O'Rahilly nor Casement was a member of the I.R.B. Such an executive would have been subservient to John Redmond and completely under his control.

MacNeill at this stage was apparently going much further than was likely to meet with the approval of the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers, but his realisation of this did not seem to come until later.

As to why MacNeill suggested William Redmond, I can only conjecture. William Redmond was a sincere congenial man who was not rigidly bound to his brother's policy and would probably have worked in harmony with the Provisional Committee. MacNeill probably put forward his name in order to please John Redmond.

In all these things MacNeill was never authorised by the Committee to negotiate on their behalf, he did not report to them, and our attitude, knowing that he was conducting these negotiations, was that we were not bound by anything unless it was formally reported to and accepted by us, and that if, in the meantime, MacNeill could maintain contacts or look for a particular understanding at least no harm was being done.

Redmond's ultimatum in the newspapers of 9th June was the first official intimation which the Committee had that discussions had taken place. It came on us as a bombshell.

At this stage there were a few members who knew in a general way that some discussions had taken place, viz.:

Seán Fitzgibbon,  
The O'Rahilly,  
Myself

Roger Casement,  
Colonel Maurice Moore,

and, of course, MacNeill himself, but I neither knew, nor wanted to know, the details of anything which would commit me to any proposal which was not authorised by the Provisional Committee.

I believe that Redmond's press ultimatum came as a shock also to MacNeill himself, who apparently did not expect Redmond to take the action he did.

In a letter from Casement to Redmond, quoted on page 320 of Denis Gwynn's book, Casement referred to proposals put to MacNeill by someone called "Nunan". As far as I can recollect, Nunan had been a judge, or had occupied some legal position, in the British Colonial Service. I believe that he was then in Limerick and that he may have acted as a go-between between MacNeill and Redmond. He was not associated in any way with the Irish Volunteers, and was in no way important nationally. What part he played in the MacNeill-Redmond negotiations I do not know. I believe that MacNeill had not a high opinion of Nunan.

The General Kelly-Kenny suggested by Casement in the same letter as Commander-in-Chief of the Volunteers had been a British general in the Boer War. In this correspondence, Casement, like MacNeill, acted entirely on his own, without any authority from the Committee.

On the 9th June Redmond's ultimatum appeared in the Press demanding acceptance of his proposal that 25 persons, to be nominated by him, should be added to the existing Committee.

Although I was in no way a party to MacNeill's negotiations and had no desire to see Redmond in a position to control the Volunteers, I clearly saw that it was necessary to accept this ultimatum if the Volunteers were not to be split into two opposing camps.

I was as much opposed to this action on the part of Redmond as those who disapproved of my attitude. I recognised even then that Redmond's aim was the destroying or curbing of a growing national organisation which he had hitherto bitterly opposed; but I realised equally that if his request, which was in fact an ultimatum, were not acceded to, it would lead to a disastrous and, indeed, a fatal split in the Volunteers and in the country as a whole.

For that reason I felt that the lesser evil was to accept his nominees for the moment, knowing that effective control was, and would remain, in the hands of the officers who were already appointed, the majority of whom were members of the I.R.B.

An immediate decision had to be made, and on the morning of the 15th June I went to see Casement who was staying in Buswell's Hotel. He was very unwell and in bed. After a lengthy discussion I persuaded him that the acceptance of Redmond's ultimatum was the only alternative to splitting the Volunteers, and was a lesser evil. I then went to see MacNeill and he returned with me to Buswell's Hotel. After further discussion he also agreed with my conclusion. During our discussion Colonel Moore came in, and he was very definitely of opinion that Redmond's demands should be resisted, and that we should fight them if necessary. Eventually we persuaded Moore that the fight

would only result in bringing the career of the Irish Volunteers as an effective national force to an untimely end. We then proceeded to draft a document to be submitted by MacNeill to the Provisional Committee. I remember that I insisted that we should explicitly state that we only accepted Redmond's terms as being the lesser evil.

Prior to my convincing them of the necessity of accepting Redmond's terms, both MacNeill and Casement had decided to retire from politics.

MacNeill presided at the Provisional Committee which met the same evening and proposed the adoption of a document which we had drafted a few hours before.

When we had anything important to discuss, MacNeill, as chairman, was in the habit of asking each member in turn to express an opinion, and at that meeting I deliberately occupied the position where I should be the last to speak in the discussion. I said that, while I completely sympathised with the point of view of the people who had spoken against the acceptance of Redmond's terms, I thought that our first duty was to preserve the Volunteers and to maintain as great a measure of control as we could, in order to guide the movement to fulfil the purpose for which we had started it. I said that in the event of a split, Redmond would carry an enormous majority of the Volunteers in the country and we would carry a tiny minority, too small to take an effective part. I appealed to the members and even to those who had spoken against it to suppress their natural indignation at the course Redmond had taken and to stand together to save the Volunteer movement from disruption or from being destroyed by a Redmondite majority.

The long conference in Buswell's Hotel with Casement, MacNeill and Moore prior to the meeting, had taken the entire day and left me no time in which I could have discussions with any other members of the Volunteer Committee or with the I.R.B.

The meeting of the Volunteer Committee took place in the Volunteer Office in Brunswick Street, now Pearse Street.

At this meeting Eoin MacNeill proposed the acceptance of Redmond's nominees, pointing out that it was under duress. After a discussion a vote was taken. Eighteen voted for and nine against the motion. The majority included, with one exception, the political supporters of Redmond who joined the Provisional Committee when the movement was started.

The dissentient minority, who included two non-I.R.B. men, Fitzgibbon and Judge, not unnaturally, felt very strongly about the decision to which the majority had come, and they held a meeting in Wynn's Hotel to consider their position. They were, Éamonn Ceannt, M. J. Judge, Con Colbert, Séan Fitzgibbon, Éamon Martin, P. H. Pearse, Séan MacDermott, and Piaras Béaslaí. I entirely shared their feelings of repugnance to the course which had been

adopted, and differed from them only in considering that the apparent sacrifice of independence we had to make was imperatively necessary in order to save the Volunteer movement from disruption. They issued a short statement to the Press, after their meeting on 17th June, in which they recorded their disagreement with the majority decision but accepted it under protest as the only means to prevent the disruption of the Volunteer movement.

My decision to accept Redmond's nominees, however reluctantly, also created a crisis about my position in the I.R.B. Seán MacDermott, and particularly Tom Clarke, refused to accept my explanation of events. Tom Clarke went so far as to demand bitterly, "How much did the Castle pay you?" At first I was prepared to fight out the question at a meeting of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., of which all three of us were members, and I was convinced that I would have carried a majority of the Council in my favour. My combined offices of Leinster Centre, chairman of the Dublin Centres Board, and editor of *Irish Freedom*, placed me in an exceptionally powerful position in the Brotherhood. On reflection I decided that such a dispute at the highest level would split the Supreme Council and the I.R.B. at a crucial stage of Irish history. Instead I resigned my position as Leinster Centre of the Supreme Council, despite the protests of all the County Centres who had elected me. I also resigned the editorship of *Irish Freedom*, but remained as chairman of the Dublin Centres Board.

Mr. Redmond's nominees included a number of people who had shown hostility to the Volunteers and who yet did not scruple to accept nomination to the governing body. With two or three exceptions the Redmondite nominees acted as a solid block and turned the meetings of the Provisional Committee into a faction fight. The exceptions particularly were James Creed Meredith and William Redmond.

As I had anticipated, the Redmondite control proved completely illusory. The work was carried on by the officers and people who had started the movement. Except that the wrangling in the Provisional Committee was a waste of time and a nuisance, it had hardly any effect on the development of the movement.

As an illustration of the ineffectiveness of the control by the Redmond nominees, I personally appointed members of the office staff without their ever being aware that such things had been done.

The Redmondite members were particularly anxious to get control of funds, but before admitting them we took the precaution of deciding at a meeting of the Provisional Committee that all funds, other than subscriptions received from Volunteer Branches, should go direct to MacNeill and O'Rahilly, and be used at their discretion solely for the purchase of arms, and not to be accounted for until some future unspecified date.

O'Rahilly was treasurer and was assisted in keeping the books by Éamonn Ceannt, who was an accountant in the Dublin Corporation. The books were in

perfect order, and when audited by one of the best firms of auditors in Dublin—Stokes Brothers & Pim—were approved by them. When the Redmondites got particularly outrageous in the quest for funds, O'Rahilly would lay the books on the table and tell them to see for themselves, but they were never able to understand them.

Another cause of contention was the rifles landed at Howth. The Redmondites attempted to use their majority on the Committee to have rifles sent to the Hibernians in Ulster, and, while they fought bitterly for weeks about this, they never asked for a cartridge, and we passed the word round among the non-Redmondite members that the word "ammunition" must never be mentioned.

The admission of Redmond's nominees on the Committee, and more particularly the outbreak of the European War, had the effect of bringing into the Volunteers all sorts of people who had never touched the national movement before.

Lord Powerscourt announced his adhesion to the movement and turned up at a parade of the Bray Company and tried to present them with a Union Jack. As the Volunteers declined to accept the gift his connection with the movement was brief.

Colonel Maurice Moore was head of our military staff and had the active assistance, for a brief period, of a large number of titled people, like the Earl of Meath, the Marquis of Conyngham and many others. For a short period the Volunteers had the more or less enthusiastic support of a very large number of titled people, and many untitled, whose respectability and steady adherence to Dublin Castle made them strange colleagues for people like us.

Quite different, however, from these people, who all left us as soon as we parted from Redmond, was Colonel Edmond Cotter, retired from the Royal Engineer Corps. Cotter was an Irishman whose people had been in the British Army for several generations. He had a great-uncle, I think, who had been executed in '98, and the Carsonite movement, which he regarded as a threat to the rest of Ireland, aroused his indignation.

Early in 1914 he borrowed a sum of money, came over to Ireland at his own expense and stayed in a Dublin hotel. He told us he had just enough money to last for about three months. He proposed to work for us in any capacity we liked until his money was done and he then intended to go home.

He was a delightful old man, a man of first-rate ability, and he settled in under the nominal direction of Colonel Moore to bring some order into our military organisation. The two Colonels did not get on very well. I undertook the delicate job of keeping the peace and at least succeeded in remaining friends with both of them. They were both elderly.

After about three months, Cotter announced that he must go back home, as he had no more money. We would have been very glad, indeed, to have paid his

expenses, and on behalf of the Committee I offered to do so, but he refused to take money and insisted that he had come to Ireland unasked, at his own cost, and would not be a charge on the movement in any way. He contributed greatly to our getting some coherent organisation into the enormous mass of recruits which we had in every part of Ireland.

Even before the outbreak of the European War, there had been considerable talk about the Volunteers receiving arms from the British Government or becoming in some way attached to the British Command in Ireland.

Colonel Moore, acting entirely on his own initiative, had, I believe, a number of interviews with General Paget, who was then British Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. I knew that such negotiations were going on, but was far too busy to bother much about them. My feeling was that if Moore was able to get any arms without our being committed to anything it was all to the good, and he was far too honourable a person to attempt to commit us to anything without our knowledge and consent.

Of course, we had not the slightest intention, at any time, of permitting the control of the Irish Volunteers to pass to the British military authorities.

In any case, nothing came of these discussions. England declared war on Germany and Austria in August 1914. Redmond, without consulting anybody, announced publicly at Woodenbridge on 20th September, 1914, that the Volunteers should be prepared to fight as members of the British forces. At this point we decided that the time for the break had come.

I had taken the initiative, in the previous May, in admitting Redmond's nominees, because I knew that a split at that time would end the Volunteers in Ireland. MacNeill and I now took the initiative when Redmond, without consulting the Volunteers, announced a new policy for them.

On the 25th September a majority of the original members of the Provisional Committee issued a statement to the press, bringing their connection with Redmond and his nominees to an end. MacNeill wrote the statement, which was signed by twenty members of the Committee.

Although I knew that the number of men that would adhere to us would be relatively small, I knew that we should hold the men throughout the country who were in earnest about maintaining an Irish Volunteer Force, and I was confident that we were strong enough to survive and to grow.

Following this expulsion the Volunteer Companies throughout the country decided to which party they would adhere. The vast majority followed Redmond, who formed an organisation which he called, by contrast, The National Volunteers, and only between two thousand and three thousand remained in the Irish Volunteers. Starting with that number, the growth of the Irish Volunteers was rapid and continuous, and in the early months of 1916 we were enrolling about six new Companies per week in various parts of the country, as well as in Dublin.

## **Part II**



# 1. The North Began

by Eoin MacNeill

From *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 1st November, 1913, p. 6.

A WONDERFUL state of things has come to pass in Ulster. Three distinct parties, each too weak to be of much force in politics, have ranged themselves against Home Rule. These are the Orange industrial workers, mainly Church of Ireland Protestants; the Presbyterian rural community; and the remnant of the Feudal aristocracy. The first two elements have been drawn together by what is called the "No-Popery" sentiment. This fact has been turned to account by the third element, and, when dual ownership, land purchase, and the abolition of Grand Jury government, had apparently consigned Feudalism to the incurable ward, a combination of landlords, land-agents, land-lawyers, and their adherents, in return for conferring the stamp of "respectability" on the "No-Popery" sentiment has managed to secure the control of an alliance of wage-earners and rent-payers. That this is literally true may be verified by anyone who consults the newspaper files for (1) the names of those who took the initiative in the organisation of the Ulster "Unionist Clubs," and (2) the names of the numerous personnel of the Ulster "Provisional Government." To attain such an ascendancy seems almost a miracle of political adroitness, but there is another side to the picture.

The Parliament Act deprived Irish Feudalism of what hitherto had been its chief resource, the effective support of British Feudalism in the legislature. Then the masters of the Ulster triple alliance decided on an extraordinary step, the enrolment of a Volunteer force manned by their "allies," the "Unionist" wage-earners and rent-payers. Of the three "allied" forces, one only, the managing element, is really "Unionist." Intermarriage, social intercourse, and self-interest, unite the decaying Feudal aristocracy of Ireland to the still opulent Feudal aristocracy of Great Britain; but history shows and observation confirms that the Orange democracy and the Presbyterian rural party are home rulers in principle and in essence. The loyalty of Orangemen to the "Crown," the "Constitution," the "Empire," and the "Union," arise out of the notion that these entities secure them in possession of Home Rule and a little more. But whenever any abatement of that little more seems likely to come from Constitutional developments,

loyalty and affection instantaneously put on a different face. The Presbyterian country party, as its history shows, though slower to move and understand, is not less radically attached to Home Rule than the Orange party.

The skill of the Feudal element in obtaining the lead is more than counterbalanced by their fatuity in starting among the essential Home Rulers of their present following the most decisive move towards Irish autonomy that has been made since O'Connell invented constitutional agitation. The Ulster Volunteer movement is essentially and obviously a Home Rule movement. It claims, no doubt, to hold Ireland "for the Empire"; but really it is no matter whether Ireland is to be held for the Empire or for the empyrean, against the Pope, against John Redmond, or against the Man in the Moon. What matters is, by whom Ireland is to be held. Lord Lansdowne, speaking recently against Home Rule, spoke fine old medieval words, "We have Ireland and we mean to keep her." The Ulster Volunteers reply, "We are going to hold Ireland—of course for your Lordships."

The true meaning of this extraordinary development is dawning painfully on English Unionists. They are beginning to understand that Sir Edward Carson has knocked the bottom out of Unionism. To add to their comfort, a Mr. Arnold White has been proving in elaborate detail that the present available resources of the British army are not sufficient to put down the Volunteer movement in four of the thirty-two Irish counties. In any case, it appears that the British Army cannot now be used to prevent the enrolment, drilling, and reviewing of Volunteers in Ireland. There is nothing to prevent the other twenty-eight counties from calling into existence citizen forces to hold Ireland "for the Empire." It was precisely with this object that the Volunteers of 1782 were enrolled, and they became the instrument of establishing self-government and Irish prosperity. Their disbanding led to the destruction alike of self-government and of prosperity, and the opportunity of rectifying a capital error of this sort does not always come back again to nations.

The more responsible section of English Unionist opinion has taken alarm and is tentatively drawing away from the two-edged sword of "Ulster." But even the rashest English Unionists are clearly in great uneasiness; and while they threaten with Ulster, they are openly beseeching the other side to find them a way out of their mess. Dick Steele's creditors once sent him a deputation, as they said, "to discuss his difficulties with him." "Pardon me, gentlemen," was his remark, "your difficulties, not mine." Sir Edward Carson proclaimed that, in launching his new Ulster policy, he had not counted the cost. It looks like it.

The moral of the story is that, in public movements, every element of sham and insincerity is a mortgage given to destiny. I do not say that Sir Edward Carson is insincere. Probably he, too, like the Orangemen and Presbyterians, is at heart a Home Ruler, and thinks that the sort of Home Rule that he wants is

best guaranteed by the semblance of government from outside. His English allies, however, hoped that his master-move would do effective electioneering work for them, and the fact that, since he “drew the sword” in Ulster, he has devoted most of his energies to a political tour in Great Britain shows that he has lent himself to the game. That does not pay. In Ulster, too, the local managers, the Feudal Remnant, who have good reason not to be in earnest when they make a military array of wage-earners and rent-payers, thus mounting and loading a machine gun whose mechanism they cannot hope to control, have shown their hand and been found evidently bluffing. Their “Provisional Government,” with its pompous detail of phantom departments, put on paper in secret session at a Belfast club, is the most ridiculous piece of political histrionics ever staged. A parcel of schoolboys would be ashamed to own it. In order to pretend strength they arranged to hold reviews in such overwhelming Nationalist districts as Omagh, Raphoe, Armagh, Newry and Kilkeel, but perhaps the crowning sham was the announcement of an insurance fund of £1,000,000. The real insurance fund for real war is fighting material, men, arms, ammunition, transport, ships, fortifications; and those who are in earnest about war will not devote a penny to any other sort of insurance. All this shows that Feudalism in Ireland is doating as well as decaying, and that the cheap cuteness that can play successfully upon religious fanaticism is no proof of any higher form of intelligence.

English Unionists realise, explicitly or instinctively, that the Ulster Volunteers have scuttled the ship; some of them, sooner than admit their discomfiture, are hankering after the separation from Ireland of what they are pleased to call “homogeneous Ulster,” namely, the four eastern counties. Not a single responsible man and no assembly of men in Ireland has authorised this proposal. All Nationalist opinion and any Unionist opinion that has been expressed is strongly hostile to it. And for very good reason.

### *There is no “Homogeneous Ulster.”*

It is impossible to separate from Ireland the city that Saint Patrick founded, the city that Saint Columba founded, or the tombs of Patrick, Brigid and Columba. They would defy and nullify the attempt. It is impossible to separate from Ireland the “frontier town” of Newry, the men of South Down, Norman and Gael, the Gaelic stock of the Fews that hold “the Gap of the North,” the glensmen of South Derry, or North Antrim. If there were any possibility of civil war, if civil war were assured, not to speak of its being insured, these districts alone would hold immovable all the resources of General—I believe—Richardson. There are besides the 100,000 Nationalist Home Rulers of Belfast, and others, Protestants, Catholic, Orange and Presbyterian, in every corner of the four counties, who under any change of government are certain to “revert to

type." With what facility they have fallen in with the idea of holding Ireland—for the Empire!

It is evident that the only solution now possible is for the Empire either to make terms with Ireland or to let Ireland go her own way. In any case, it is manifest that all Irish people, Unionist as well as Nationalist, are determined to have their own way in Ireland. On that point, and it is the main point, Ireland is united. It is not to follow, and it will not follow, that any part of Ireland, majority or minority, is to interfere with the liberty of any other part. Sir Edward Carson may yet, at the head of his Volunteers, "march to Cork." If so, their progress will probably be accompanied by the greetings of ten times their number of National Volunteers, and Cork will give them a hospitable and memorable reception. Some years ago, speaking at the Toome Feis, in the heart of "homogenous Ulster," I said that the day would come when men of every creed and party would join in celebrating the Defence of Derry and the Battle of Benburb. That day is nearer than I then expected.

EOIN MACNEILL.

## 2. The Coming Revolution

*Pádraig Pearse*

From *An Claidheamh Soluis* 8th November, 1913, p. 6.

I HAVE come to the conclusion that the Gaelic League, as the Gaelic League, is a spent force; and I am glad of it. I do not mean that no work remains for the Gaelic League, or that the Gaelic League is no longer equal to work; I mean that the vital work to be done in the new Ireland will be done not so much by the Gaelic League itself as by men and movements that have sprung from the Gaelic League or have received from the Gaelic League a new baptism and a new life of grace. The Gaelic League was no reed shaken by the wind, no mere *vox clamantis*; it was a prophet and more than a prophet. But it was not the Messiah. I do not know if the Messiah has yet come, and I am not sure that there will be any visible and personal Messiah in this redemption: the people itself will perhaps be its own Messiah, the people labouring, scourged, crowned with thorns, agonising and dying, to rise again immortal and impassible. For peoples are divine and are the only things that can properly be spoken of under figures drawn from the divine epos.

If we do not believe in the divinity of our people we have had no business, or very little, all these years in the Gaelic League. In fact, if we had not believed in the divinity of our people we should in all probability not have gone into the Gaelic League at all. We should have made our peace with the devil, and perhaps might have found him a very decent sort; for he liberally rewards with attorney-generalships, bank balances, villa residences, and so forth, the great and the little who serve him well. Now we did not turn our backs upon all these desirable things for the sake of *is* and *tá*. We did it for the sake of Ireland. In other words, we had one and all of us (at least, I had, and I hope that all you had) an ulterior motive in joining the Gaelic League. We never meant to be Gaelic Leaguers and nothing more than Gaelic Leaguers. We meant to do something for Ireland, each in his own way. Our Gaelic League time was to be our tutelage; we had first to learn to know Ireland, to read the lineaments of her face, to understand the accents of her voice; to re-possess ourselves, disinherited as we were, of her spirit and mind, re-enter into our mystical birthright. For this we went to school to the Gaelic League. It was a good school, and we

love its name and will champion its fame throughout all the days of our later fighting and striving. But we do not propose to remain schoolboys forever. I have often said (quoting, I think, Herbert Spencer) that education should be a preparation for complete living; and I say now that our Gaelic League education ought to have been a preparation for our complete living as Irish Nationalists. In proportion as we have been faithful and diligent Gaelic Leaguers, our work as Irish Nationalists (by which term I mean people who accept the ideal of and work for the realisation of an Irish Nation, by whatever means) will be earnest and thorough, a valiant and worthy fighting, not the mere carrying out of a ritual. As to what your work as an Irish Nationalist is to be, I cannot conjecture; I know what mine is to be, and would have you know yours and buckle yourself to it. And it may be (nay, it is) that yours and mine will lead us to a common meeting-place, and that on a certain day we shall stand together, with many more beside us, ready for a greater adventure than any of us has yet had, a trial and a triumph to be endured and achieved in common.

This is what I meant when I said that our work henceforward must be done less and less through the Gaelic League and more and more through the groups and the individuals that have arisen, or are arising, out of the Gaelic League. There will be in the Ireland of the next few years a multitudinous activity of Freedom Clubs, Young Republican Parties, Labour Organisations, Socialist Groups, and what not; bewildering enterprises undertaken by sane persons and insane persons, by good men and bad men, many of them seemingly contradictory, some mutually destructive, yet all tending towards a common objective, and that objective: the Irish Revolution.

For if there is one thing that has become plainer than another it is that when the seven men met in O'Connell Street to found the Gaelic League, they were commencing, had there been a Liancourt there to make the epigram, not a revolt, but a revolution. The work of the Gaelic League, its appointed work, was that: and the work is done. To every generation its deed. The deed of the generation that has now reached middle life was the Gaelic League: the beginning of the Irish Revolution. Let our generation not shirk its deed, which is to accomplish the revolution.

I believe that the national movement of which the Gaelic League has been the soul has reached the point which O'Connell's movement had reached at the close of the series of monster meetings. Indeed, I believe that our movement reached that point a few years ago—say, at the conclusion of the fight for Essential Irish; and I said so at the time. The moment was ripe then for a new Young Ireland Party, with a forward policy; and we have lost much by our hesitation. I propose in all seriousness that we hesitate no longer—that we push on. I propose that we leave Conciliation Hall behind us and go into the Irish Confederation.

Whenever Dr. Hyde, at a meeting at which I have had a chance of speaking after him, has produced his dove of peace, I have always been careful to produce my sword; and to tantalise him by saying that the Gaelic League has brought into Ireland "Not Peace, but a Sword." But this does not show any fundamental difference of outlook between my leader and me; for while he is thinking of peace between brother-Irishmen, I am thinking of the sword-point between banded Irishmen and the foreign force that occupies Ireland: and his peace is necessary to my war. It is evident that there can be no peace between the body politic and a foreign substance that has intruded itself into its system: between them war only until the foreign substance is expelled or assimilated.

Whether Home Rule means a loosening or a tightening of England's grip upon Ireland remains yet to be seen. But the coming of Home Rule, if come it does, will make no material difference in the nature of the work that lies before us: it will affect only the means we are to employ, our plan of campaign. There remains, under Home Rule as in its absence, the substantial task of achieving the Irish Nation. I do not think it is going to be achieved without stress and trial, without suffering and bloodshed; at any rate, it is not going to be achieved without work. Our business here and now is to get ourselves into harness for such work as has to be done.

I hold that before we can do any work, any men's work, we must first realise ourselves as men. Whatever comes to Ireland she needs men. And we of this generation are not in any real sense men, for we suffer things that men do not suffer and we seek to redress grievances by means which men do not employ. We have, for instance, allowed ourselves to be disarmed; and, now that we have the chance of re-arming, we are not seizing it. Professor Eoin Mac Neill pointed out last week that we have at this moment an opportunity of rectifying the capital error we made when we allowed ourselves to be disarmed and such opportunities, he reminds us, do not always come back to nations.

A thing that stands demonstrable is that nationhood is not achieved otherwise than in arms: in one or two instances there may have been no actual bloodshed, but the arms were there and the ability to use them. Ireland unarmed will attain just as much freedom as it is convenient for England to give her; Ireland armed will attain ultimately just as much freedom as she wants. These are matters which may not concern the Gaelic League as a body; but they concern every member of the Gaelic League, and every man and woman of Ireland. I urged much of this five or six years ago in addresses to the Ard-Chraobh: but the League was too busy with resolutions to think of revolution, and the only resolution that a member of the League could not come to was the resolution to be a man. My fellow-Leaguers had not (and have not) apprehended that the thing which cannot defend itself, even though it may wear trousers, is no man.

I am glad then that the North has “begun.” I am glad that the Orangemen have armed, for it is a goodly thing to see arms in Irish hands. I should like to see the A.O.H. armed. I should like to see the Transport Workers and I should like to see any and every body of Irish citizens armed. We must accustom ourselves to the thought of arms, to the sight of arms, to the use of arms. We may make mistakes in the beginning and shoot the wrong people; but bloodshed is a cleansing and a sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood. There are many things more horrible than bloodshed; and slavery is one of them.

P. H. PEARSE.

# **Part III**



# 1. How the Volunteers Began

*By Eoin MacNeill*

From unpublished *Memoirs of Eoin MacNeill*, pp. 65-73, dictated on 3rd and 7th October, 1932.

WHILE THE National University was taking shape a great change was also shaping in the political situation. The agent in bringing about this change was Sir Edward Carson. I call him an agent, because, while he was commonly regarded as a leader and originator, he was in fact the instrument of the dominant anti-Irish party in British politics. Much has been written about Irish political affairs at this time and in the succeeding period, but due credit has never, in my opinion been given to Carson for his share in bringing about the changes that have come about in Ireland.

During the later Sinn Fein agitation two pamphlets written by me were published as propaganda. The first of these was entitled *Ireland's Place Among the Nations*. The second was entitled *The Ulster Difficulty*. It traced the history of anti-national politics in Ulster and showed that all this situation was a calculated outcome of British statesmanship operating through agents in Ireland, its chief resource being the stimulation of sectarian quarrels on the old principle "Divide and Dominate." The Liberal Party had long been pledged to the policy of self-government for Ireland, and on this understanding had received for years the support of the Irish Parliamentary Party in carrying through various measures of the Liberal policy for Great Britain. The fulfilment of their pledges towards Ireland could no longer be long delayed. Mr. Asquith's government was in power and it was understood that a measure instituting a parliament for all Ireland was to be introduced. I do not believe that Asquith was at any time in favour of this measure, or that he had the slightest sympathy for Ireland. When his Home Rule Bill was afterwards brought forward, Carson, who was apparently well-informed, described it as "a hypocritical sham." Encouraged by this view of the Asquith attitude, Carson set about organising resistance in Ulster and it should be clearly understood that this resistance was to Irish self-government, to the creation of an Irish parliament without any limitation. Later on, under the tyranny of the "Ulster Covenant", the Protestants of Ulster were called upon

to come to their places of worship and sign a declaration pledging themselves to resist Home Rule for Ireland.

The Carson plan of organising first took the form of organising what were called "Ulster Clubs." These, however, became inactive and virtually extinct. I cannot give the date but remember the fact that when the Home Rule Bill was imminent, a meeting of Irish landlords was convened in Dublin in opposition to the measure. It will be noted that this was not a meeting of the Ulster democracy and that it was held in Dublin not in Belfast. The meeting was addressed, either by speech or letter, by Walter Long, an ex-Minister of the Unionist government and formerly Tory chief secretary for Ireland. In this address Long denounced the project which was already mooted of a separate parliament for Ulster. He said, quite truly, that under any form of government in Ireland, the Ulster minority ought to be able to take care of themselves. The people who would suffer under the proposed partition would be the Protestant minority in other parts of Ireland. At the same meeting the landlords decided to work for the revival of the Ulster Clubs. These facts serve to show the true position of the partitionist policy. As time went on, the Carsonite policy of a show of armed resistance to Irish self-government was shaped in detail. I held the view that this policy had the sympathy and connivance of more than one member of the Liberal Home Rule government. I felt that a crisis had arrived in Irish affairs that was likely to determine in the event, the whole future interest of Ireland, and with all the importance that I attached to the Gaelic League movement and its underlying principles, I felt that it was hardly possible for any Irishman to stand aside in the coming political struggle. While I still hold this view, I accuse myself of one serious mistake. Though Irishmen as Irishmen might be obliged to do their part in the political struggle, that did not imply that every organisation or association to which they belong should also be brought into political activity.

The fact that the Gaelic League had stood apart from politics and required no proofs of political adherence from its members, had often been a matter of reproach among leading members, the rank and file and the press organs of the Irish Parliamentary Party. I now think that the Gaelic League should have rigidly adhered to its own programme and should have kept entirely clear of politics, and that its failure to do so, for which I am in part responsible, has been bad for the objects of the League and has had other bad results in the time that followed.

In this time of crisis The O'Rahilly was one of the most active workers in the Gaelic League headquarters. He undertook for a time the management of *An Claidheamh Soluis*, and under his direction it was decided that this periodical should be made in various ways more attractive; it was to make a fresh start in a new form. When this change was to be made, I happened to be laid up with a

severe cold. The O'Rahilly came to my house, told me about his plans and asked me to write a leading article in English for the first number of the new issue. He proposed that this article should not deal with the special objects of the Gaelic League, but should have a wide appeal to the general public on matters of general public interest. I agreed, and the next issue of the paper contained an article by me advocating the formation of an Irish Volunteer Force. A few days after its publication, The O'Rahilly came again to my house, accompanied by Bulmer Hobson. They referred to this article of mine and asked me did I mean it in earnest. I said of course I did; I should not think of publishing it otherwise, and then at once we began to discuss plans for the institution of a Volunteer Force. I had no doubt in my mind that both these men came to me from the old physical force party whose organisation was the I.R.B., and I also had little doubt of the part I was expected to play.

By this time, through the Gaelic League activities, I had come to be known to people in nearly every part of Ireland and I was regarded as a man of moderate views. The appeal of the physical force party had always been limited, and a person like me who stood well with many who did not belong to that party, including many of the clergy, and persons concerned in educational work, might well be able to recommend a programme of action, which would be regarded askance if it came forward from those who were called extremist. I have no doubt that first and last this was the view of my particular utility that was taken by some of the physical force tradition. Personally, I was no doctrinaire, whether on behalf of physical force or against it.

Before we parted, we decided on the formation of a committee with the express purpose of organising a National Volunteer Force—the committee to be made representative of the various degrees of national politics and soon afterwards such a committee came together, and the Irish Volunteer organisation began.

I do not propose to write anything like a record of the proceedings, but only to put on record certain facts and certain aspects of the facts within my personal knowledge. Being an observer of politics, I had little doubt that the formation of an Irish Volunteer Force would arouse the secret hostility of English politicians, pledged to Home Rule for Ireland. These anticipations were fully realised.

Detectives were set upon the hotel where the committee began its meetings and with the later growth of the organisation detectives attended us to all parts of the country. The Anti-Home Rule Volunteer organisation has been going on for about two years. The formation of our organisation was followed immediately by government proclamation against the importation of arms. When it was seen that the Volunteer movement was popular and likely to go ahead, Mr. Asquith, who had faced the Carson developments with equanimity, said in the House of Commons that our movement was a “serious complication”, and the remark,

which has a humorous side, was repeated in the same words by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords.

I will refer here to my own position. One small incident may help to illustrate it. At the very outset, and before any action was taken, I called on my old friend, Dr. Sigerson, knowing well that he was intimate with all the developments of Irish politics during about half a century. I wanted to know how this new departure would appear to him. He neither approved nor disapproved. The only thing that I remember of what he said was the question: "Do you think you will be able to control it?" I told him that I did not look forward to controlling it. In fact, at no time, then or since, did I propose to myself to become a leader in politics or of any section in politics. Politics were and have remained for me a secondary matter and a subservient matter as regards Irish nationality. I felt that a new force like this when it came into being would have to shape its own course. I did what I could to gain the adherence and if possible, the active participation of politicians of the Irish Parliamentary Party and at the same time, I did not count on any degree of support from the leader of the Party, Mr. Redmond.

The opposition encountered at our first meeting in Cork gave Mr. Redmond the occasion for attempting to suppress the movement. It was denounced in a letter to the Press over the name of Mr. Hazelton, a junior member of the Party. I had no doubt at the time, and it was afterwards avowed by Mr. Hazelton himself, that this letter was written at the instance of Mr. Redmond. All this shows the setting in which the Irish Volunteer movement began. Thorough hostility from Dublin Castle, less open hostility from the Asquith Ministry, and disapproval from the Irish Parliamentary Party. There were others who might be expected to be sympathetic, who shook their heads doubtfully. I think they were too much influenced by considerations of past history and did not recognise that the Carson Campaign had brought around a new state of things not to be changed by reference only to the experience of the past.

A variety of books written from different standpoints have dealt with these affairs. I do not remember that any of them has recognised adequately how Carson, nominally the leader of Ulster Orangeism, actually the agent of London politicians, transformed the whole situation in Ireland and opened the way for the overthrow of the English regime.

A few years ago a prominent English journalist asked me how the revolution in Ireland had been brought about. "Mainly by Carson," I said. He thought this was a paradox. I said it was the simple truth, as I was prepared to show in detail.

There were three checks on Irish resistance to government from England. One was the Law of Treason with its peculiar adaptation for Ireland in the "Treason Felony Act." Carson had derided this law and advised his followers to ignore it. The Asquith Government connived and in this way the English

law of treason in Ireland was virtually repealed. Another check was a law with regard to arms; this was also repealed by Carson in the same way with the connivance of Dublin Castle and in the Asquith regime. The third check was far more powerful than either of these. It consisted in the R.I.C., nominally a police force, actually a military force operating also as a political intelligence department in every parish of Ireland; the R.I.C. was the chief means by which the Irish people were kept in check. The bulk of the force consisted of the sons of Irish country people and the great majority were Catholics. So long as they were required to act in accordance with the law, even when the law required them to evict their own kind and destroy their homesteads, the R.I.C. could always be counted on. The Carson campaign changed all this. Besides defying the law, it appealed openly to anti-Catholic fanaticism, and in these two ways it broke down the loyalty of the R.I.C. I exemplify this by facts within my own knowledge.

When we landed a consignment of arms at Howth, we had done our best to interrupt communications with Dublin.

Nevertheless the event became known at Dublin Castle in time to enable a large force of police from the Depot in the Phoenix Park and various other stations to be got together quickly and sent out to intercept us. It has not appeared in various accounts of this event, that they actually did not intercept us. As the Volunteers, marching from Howth, with their rifles on their shoulders, came to the point where the Electric Tramway meets the Howth Road, a large force of police loaded on tramcars arrived just in time. The policemen at once, and for the first time realised for what purpose they had been sent out, and they raised from their ranks a loud cheer for the Irish Volunteers. Needless to say they were not asked to take any further action. When our column, about an hour later, arrived on the outskirts of the city, at Clontarf, they found the road blocked by a second force of police stiffened by a force of the King's Own Scottish Borderers. When the police received the order to advance against the Volunteers, notwithstanding the presence of the soldiers, they openly mutinied. Dublin Castle was alarmed and dealt with this mutiny by the rather limited measure of dismissing three only of the mutineers. Then a thing happened which was probably unexampled in British administrative history. Within a fortnight the three dismissed men, had to be reinstated to avoid a general mutiny among the police. All this was due to Carson.

EOIN MACNEILL.



## 2. The Irish Prepare to Arm

*by The O'Rahilly*

From *The Secret History of the Irish Volunteers*, Dublin 1915, pp. 3-5.

THE IRISH Volunteers, as distinct, of course, from the Ulster Volunteer Force, were started in Dublin in November, 1913, by a dozen men who came together at Wynn's Hotel to discuss with Eoin MacNeill the formation of an Irish Volunteer Army. Previous to this, indeed, a journalist in West Meath, who is said to have conceived the possibility of a "Midland Volunteer Force", had published a report of the inception of such a body in Athlone. Whether the Midland Volunteers had any real existence except in the news columns is much debated, and seems open to doubt, but there is no doubt at all that the organisers of the Irish Volunteers absolutely failed to discover any Volunteers either in Athlone or the Midlands until long after the Wynn's Hotel meeting.

As the invitations to that meeting were written and issued by myself, I am in a position to know something of the personnel of the original Committee; and I say now that the men invited were deliberately selected not on Party, Political or Sectarian lines, but solely because they were amongst the sincerest Nationalists of my acquaintance in Dublin.

Besides Eoin MacNeill, they included Bulmer Hobson, P. H. Pearse, Seán MacDermott, W. J. Ryan, Éamonn Ceannt, Seán Fitzgibbon, J. A. Deakin, Pierce Beasley, Joseph Campbell, and the writer, and in view of the repeated assertions of certain eminently truthful orators and journalists associated with Parliamentarianism, it is worthy of note that of the twelve invited only three were then members of the Sinn Fein party. Lest it might savour too much of Sinn Fein, Arthur Griffith's name was deliberately not included, while Mr. D. P. Moran, the Editor of the *Leader*, and a consistent supporter of the Parliamentary Party, was asked to attend.

As a tribute to the efficiency with which the autocrats of Dublin Castle scrutinise our movements and correspondence even in peace time, it should be recorded that within an hour of our first meeting, two police detectives called at the hotel for our names and the details of our business. Ingeniously asserting that we were sporting men who had met to pull off an illegal sweep,

they interviewed the hotel people, obtained all the information that they could give them, and retired, after cautioning the management against allowing us to use the rooms again.

As we were all in agreement that the movement must be broadly National and not confined to, or controlled by, any particular party, our first effort was to secure the cooperation of men prominent in existing organisations such as the Parliamentary Party, the United Irish League, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Foresters, etc., and each of us was told off for special duty in this connection. But we found that the task was one of considerable difficulty, and refusals were the order of the day. I, for instance, was deputed to secure Lord Mayor Sherlock, who I found was unwilling, and Professor Kettle, who I was informed was unwell. It will be remembered that Mr. Sherlock, who refused our invitation to join the Committee when it was a week old, became later one of Mr. Redmond's nominees on that body, and that Professor Kettle has since recovered from his indisposition to take quite an active part in the Movement.

Such refusals, however, did not alter our determination to maintain the non-party character of the Volunteers. In every case that arose of the appointment of committees, of officials, of organisers, or of public speakers, we insisted that all political views should be fairly represented, and we repeatedly refused to sanction arrangements when this condition was not observed.

While we secured by this policy the assistance of some of our best and hardest workers, we also got hold of a few others who have since caused us rather to regret our success.

The new Committee at once decided to place their policy before the public meeting at the Rotunda; and they modestly began by hiring the Small Concert Room. As the public interest grew they decided that it was wise to secure an option on the Large Concert Room; and as the day of the meeting approached they found that they would need still more space, and took the Rink in addition. As it turned out the crowd not only filled the Rink and the Room but overflowed into the grounds, where a meeting of several thousand people was also held.

The Committee appealed to the manhood of Ireland to enrol and arm themselves in order to secure and maintain the rights and, liberties of the Irish people. The manhood of Ireland responded to the call, and enrolling in thousands, proceeded to arm themselves.

THE O'RAHILLY.

### 3. The Founding of the Irish Volunteers

*By Éamonn Ceannt*

From *The Irish Volunteer*, 20th June, 1914, p. 9.

THE EXTRAORDINARY development of the Irish Volunteers makes it a matter of some interest to set down now some of the facts of its origin. There is a little urgency too, inasmuch as already misleading statements are being widely circulated.

The first meeting held in Dublin to consider the proposition to found a Volunteer force open to all Irishmen was called by Ua Rathghaile by a circular letter addressed to a small group of nationalists. The circular was an invitation "to meet Mr. Eoin MacNeill" to discuss the matter.

The meeting was duly held, Eoin presiding, and the opening statement by him as well as much of the subsequent discussion was in Irish.

It was unanimously decided, come what may, to establish the Volunteers.

The next and several subsequent meetings of the Provisional Committee were strengthened by the addition of others known to sympathise with the project. A certain city Rifle Club supplied quite a number of members. Messrs. Eoin MacNeill (founder of the Gaelic League) and Laurence J. Kettle, son of the redoubtable "A.J." agreed to act as secretaries.

The meeting was publicly launched on Tuesday, 25th November, in the Rotunda Rink, Dublin, amidst great enthusiasm. The speakers included P. H. Pearse, Eoin MacNeill, Alderman Kelly and Luke O'Toole (G.A.A.).

ÉAMONN CEANNT.



# 4. The National Army is Founded

*By Piaras Béasláí*

From *Irish Independent*, 5th January, 1953, p. 3.

ON 1ST November, 1913, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the official organ of the Gaelic League, contained an article in English by Professor Eoin MacNeill, Vice-President of the League, entitled "The North Began", which did not attract as much attention as it deserved.

Referring to the formation of the Ulster Volunteers, pledged to armed insurrection if the Liberal Government attempted to enforce a measure of self-government ("Home Rule") for Ireland, he said

It appears that the British Army cannot now be used to prevent the enrolment, drilling, and reviewing of Volunteers in Ireland. There is nothing to prevent the other twenty-eight counties calling into existence citizen forces to hold Ireland "for the Empire". It was precisely with this object that the Volunteers of 1780 were enrolled, and they became the instruments of starting self-government and Irish prosperity.

The article did not reach the general public but it was the herald of important happenings.

On that day, 1st November, 1913, Seán Mac Diarmada and I were at Kilmallock for the unveiling of a Celtic cross over the grave of a Fenian who had taken part in the attack on the Kilmallock R.I.C. barracks in 1867. After the meeting at Kilmallock, Seán Mac Diarmada and I proceeded to Limerick, from whence I returned to Dublin on the Monday, leaving Seán behind me. I was at that time on the staff of the *Freeman's Journal*.

## *Early Decisions*

A week later, on Monday, 10th November, I was in the office of the *Evening Telegraph* in Middle Abbey Street when I was visited by Bulmer Hobson who was at the time "Centre" of my circle of the I.R.B. and also by Éamonn Ceannt, a recent recruit to the same circle.

Hobson told me that Mac Neill had agreed to attend a meeting to discuss the possibility of starting a body of Irish Volunteers, and that the meeting would be held in Wynn's Hotel on the following night. He asked me to attend and I promised to do so. My diary records that I had a long discussion on the matter with Ceannt and Hobson.

Later I called round to the office of *Irish Freedom*, the I.R.B. monthly, in Findlater's Place (on the site of Cathal Brugha Street) and found that Seán Mac Diarmada had returned from Limerick. I arranged to meet him on the following evening and go with him to the meeting in Wynn's Hotel.

On Tuesday, 11th November, about a dozen of us met in a small private room in Wynn's Hotel. The meeting had been summoned ostensibly in Mac Neill's name and on his initiative; but more than half of those present were members of the I.R.B., and all were connected with some branch of the new Irish resurgence.

Eoin MacNeill opened the proceedings with a speech of some length in Irish. Now it happened that nearly three-quarters of those present knew some Irish, and the discussion continued in Irish for some time, until Seán Mac Diarmada pointed out that there were some present who knew no Irish.

We then discussed in English what we could do. When we looked around the room on one another and imagined launching a national movement of the kind, with only our names as sponsors, we could see what many people would say "Who are they? Sinn Féiners! Gaelic Leaguers! Cranks! Factionists! Not one supporter of the Party! Not one follower of the Chief!"

It was clear that we must make an effort to get some supporters of Mr. Redmond's Party on our committee, and the next three days were occupied on interviews with this object. Some of those approached received the proposal with hostility, but others were favourable, and when we met again on Friday, 14th November, we were a more broadly representative body. The most important addition was Mr. Laurence J. Kettle, who consented to be honorary secretary jointly with Professor MacNeill, and another prominent Redmondite, Mr. John Gore, solicitor, became treasurer jointly with O'Rahilly.

### *Na Fianna and I.R.B.*

There was already in existence in Dublin for several years a body with experience of military drill and organisation—"Na Fianna", or, as it was sometimes called "the National Boy Scouts". The younger members of the I.R.B. had also some experience of drill, for young men who had been trained in the Fianna and afterwards, on reaching adult years, had joined the I.R.B., had for some time past been drilling its members in the Foresters' Hall, 41 Parnell Square. In fact, at the very time when I was attending the preliminary meetings of the

Provisional Committee, which were usually held in the afternoon, I sometimes went from these meetings to a secret I.R.B. drill.

A number of these young men of Fianna experience were placed on the Provisional Committee, and one of them, Liam Mellows, became assistant honorary secretary.

In all only five meetings were held in Wynn's before the Irish Volunteers were called into being. I am probably the only living person who has records of these meetings, as I kept a diary at the time. I wish I had made a more detailed record, but I could not foresee the historic importance which such a record would acquire.

Looking back on my records, I note with astonishment, that without any assistance from publicity or any assistance from the influential, it took us less than three weeks to call an Irish Volunteer force into being.

On Tuesday, 11th November, a dozen of us came together with nothing definite planned or decided. A fortnight later, on Tuesday, 25th November, the great hall of the Rotunda Rink was crowded to the doors, and three overflow meetings were held outside. In all some 3,500 young men signed enrolment forms. Six days later, on Monday, 1st December, the first assemblies of Irish Volunteers took place. Halls had been secured and a number of men who had served in the British Army had volunteered to act as drill instructors.

The city had been divided into four "Battalion Areas" and this system of organisation for Dublin continued in force up to the Truce of 1921 and after. On Monday, 1st December, I attended the first parade of the First Battalion at the Hall of the Columcille Branch of the Gaelic League in Blackhall Street, and on the same night the Southern Battalion met in the Workmen's Club, 41 York Street. The Dublin Brigade had come into existence.

### *Óglaigh na hÉireann*

From the very start the Gaelic title "Óglaigh na hÉireann" was used as an equivalent of "The Irish Volunteers". It was I who suggested the name, and Professor MacNeill and Pearse expressed their approval of it.

The cap badge of the Volunteers had the letters "FF", standing for "Fianna Fáil", the name of the mythical warriors of Fionn Mac Cumhail. This is still the cap badge used in the army.

It was some weeks before the Provisional Committee had reached to full strength. Ultimately we had a membership of thirty—and later twenty-nine when Lonergan (one of the I.R.B. drill instructors) left for the United States.

Of these, no fewer than sixteen were members of the I.R.B., a fact, of course, unknown to the others, and probably unsuspected by most of them. One of these, when the "split" came later, left the I.R.B. and adhered to the Redmondite

section. Nine, or it may be ten, are still alive, and, of the remainder, eleven met violent deaths by execution or in action. Twelve of the earliest members were Irish speakers, and at least nine could be classified as authors.

PIARAS BÉASLAÍ.

# 5. The Founding of the Irish Volunteers

*By Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh*

From *The Capuchin Annual*, 1963, pp. 125-130.

BEFORE COMING to the foundation of the Irish Volunteer organisation, some knowledge of the period preceding 1913 is necessary. For the younger generation, this is essential. Only thus can they understand why the Volunteer organisation was founded then and why the time was appropriate.

In 1913, and for the previous century, Ireland was ruled by the British government from London. We had no parliament in Ireland. All laws for Ireland were made in London. In the British parliament there were one hundred and four members elected by Irish constituencies. In 1913, eighty-four of these Irish members were supporters of Home Rule for Ireland.

The Irish Parliamentary Party was the Home Rule party in the British House of Commons. Its leader was John E. Redmond, a native of Wexford, who represented Waterford in parliament.

In 1886 the first Home Rule bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Gladstone, then Prime Minister of England and leader of the Liberal Party. This bill was defeated, which caused the resignation of Gladstone's government. The Liberal Party was elected to office again in 1905. Ireland's hopes for Home Rule were raised when in that year, the British Liberal Party, under the leadership of Campbell Bannerman, was returned to power with a sweeping majority. But the Liberal government gave pride of place to legislation affecting British domestic affairs during its earlier years in office and Home Rule for Ireland had to take a back seat.

In 1910 opposition to the British Liberal government's legislative measures led to the holding of two general elections in that year. In the second election the Liberal Party lost many seats. This meant that the Irish Parliamentary Party, holding then eighty-five seats in the British parliament, held the balance of power. The effect of this was that Home Rule became the most important political issue of the day. Realising that with the power of veto of the House of Lords, Home Rule was little likely to become law, the Liberal leaders decided to press forward a bill intended to nullify the House of Lords'

veto on legislation. Mr. Asquith, the new Liberal Prime Minister, announced that modification of the veto and Home Rule for Ireland were the two foremost items of his government's legislative programme. In 1911 the Act to amend the House of Lords' veto became law. Thus, in future, any bill which was passed three times, in three successive sessions, by the House of Commons, could become law in spite of the House of Lords. From this it would appear that the road was now clear for the passing of a Home Rule bill into law. Mr. Redmond even announced that 1912 would be Home Rule year. In fact, it would take practically two years to pass a bill through these successive sessions of the House of Commons. And, depending on the date of the bill's introduction, it would probably not become law before early 1914.

Mr. Asquith introduced "The Government of Ireland Bill" in the Commons on 11 April, 1912. Disappointing as the bill was in many respects, Redmond welcomed it on behalf of his Party and on his strong recommendation the bill was accepted at a Party convention held in Dublin. To celebrate the great occasion, the Parliamentary Party organised a monster pro-Home Rule meeting in Dublin. Five or six platforms were erected in O'Connell Street and from each of these, prominent leaders of the Party spoke. Pádraig Pearse spoke in favour of the acceptance of this Home Rule bill at that meeting. I remember well listening to him speak that Sunday afternoon from the platform that was erected near the corner of Abbey Street. He spoke in Irish and in English. In the course of his speech he put in a claim for Ireland's right to complete independence. This meeting was attended by many thousands. Large numbers came by special trains from all parts of Ireland. Much enthusiasm was evident everywhere. The feeling among the people was that Home Rule would be in operation inside two years. What could arise to stop it now? The British government was all in favour; the Irish Party held the balance of power in the Commons; the veto of the House of Lords had been abolished. Even the voice of Sinn Féin, feeble as it had become in the last couple of years—especially since the collapse of their daily paper—was stilled. Griffith had announced that Sinn Féin would do nothing to hamper Mr. Redmond and his Party in the present circumstances. The popular opinion certainly was that Ireland would have a government of its own, freely elected by the people in a matter of two years or so. Ireland looked forward to the coming of the great day of liberation with undisguised delight.

Needless to say, the opposition was not idle all this time. The Conservative and Unionist parties in Great Britain and Ireland had fought vigorously every step taken by the Liberal government to smash the veto of the House of Lords. This issue was used by the Conservatives to work up anti-Irish feeling in Britain. The fact that the Irish Party held the balance of power helped, not inconsiderably, to get certain classes in Britain to swallow the Conservatives' propaganda that they, the British people, were being ruled by the "Dollar Dictator", as they

styled Mr. John Redmond, because of subscriptions to the Irish Party that came from Irish people in the United States. But strong as the opposition of the Conservatives and their allies in Ireland was during the struggle over the Lord's veto, it was as nothing compared to their ferocity once the Home Rule bill had been introduced. From that hour forward, the foremost Conservatives and Unionists in Britain joined the leading Unionists in the North of Ireland. Every day, certainly every week, leading members of the Conservative Party, ex-Cabinet ministers, members of the British Privy Council, came to northern Ireland, and spoke off the same platforms as Lord Carson, leader of the Ulster Unionists, Lord Craigavon, leader of the Orange Order in Ulster, and others who opposed Home Rule for Ireland. These Conservative leaders preached rebellion openly. They challenged the British government publicly and dared them to take action against them. During this period the Ulster Volunteer Force was formed. These Volunteers paraded and drilled publicly at meetings held to protest against the introduction of the Home Rule bill. Eventually the whole organisation in Ulster was militarised. British generals were brought over to instruct and direct the Ulster army, so called, and the British Conservatives announced that a fund of not less than a million pounds had been raised to protect and defend the interest of any Ulster volunteer who might suffer injury in his person or property because of his support of the Ulster cause. Funds were raised to arm the Volunteers and at one stage a large shipload of arms and ammunition was landed at Larne. All this was done openly and publicly. No officer of the police or army or customs officer raised a voice, or a hand, to oppose this deliberate defiance of the law. In a speech at Newry on 7 September, 1913, Carson announced at a big military parade that a provisional government would take over control of Ulster on the day Home Rule became law. In the course of his speech he said:—"I am told it will be illegal. Of course it will. Drilling is illegal. The Volunteers are illegal and the government know they are illegal and the government dare not interfere with them. Don't be afraid of illegalities." Speeches of the same kind were made at every public meeting held by the Unionists in the north. Similar sentiments were voiced by the most important and authoritative British Conservatives at these anti-Home Rule meetings. Each and every man of them preached rebellion and defiance of lawful authority. The strangest fact of all is that not one of these law breakers was called to account for his acts, or his words by the Government. Not one preacher of rebellion, or one importer of arms was prosecuted.

The next move of the Unionists was to have drawn up for signature by all who opposed Home Rule a solemn covenant. This solemn declaration was circulated to all Orange lodges as well as to all companies of Ulster Volunteers. Every member of those bodies was expected to sign. The covenant bound the person signing, under solemn duty, to obey all orders of his superiors and to use

all means necessary to defeat Home Rule. Some of the Orange leaders signed the covenant publicly in their own blood.

All these activities against Home Rule were widely publicised. The British Conservative newspapers devoted much of their space to reporting the bitterly provocative speeches made in northern Ireland by leading Conservative statesmen. Nationalists in the south naturally took the keenest interest in all these political developments in Belfast. Right from the beginning of the Orangemen's movement against Home Rule, progressive nationalists in the south often thought that the time had come for them to organise a volunteer force to defend Home Rule. It is certain that from 1912 onwards, the question of organising openly and publicly a volunteer force was often discussed among members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in and around Dublin. Many times branches of the I.R.B. sent recommendations to their superiors urging such action. Frequently I had talks myself with Tom Clarke and with Seán MacDermott about the wisdom of taking action in that direction. I well remember often seeing Tom Clarke rubbing his hands with glee when speaking about the reports of Ulster Volunteer activity. "Let them fire away, the more they organise the better", he would say. "Aren't they setting us a splendid example? Soon, very soon, we will be following in their footsteps. But let us take our time. Don't let us act hastily. We must see to it that the first step is taken by the right people. We—that is the I.R.B.—should not show our hand too early. Others will take action. That is sure to come soon. Then we can step in behind and guide and direct them, and our men can get active, organising and recruiting. Oh, lads, the day is coming and is coming quickly", this with a bright gleam in his eye, "when boys all over Ireland will be drilling and marching and, maybe, learning the use of arms too. Won't that be a great day for Ireland, boys?" he would say to one or two of us to whom he knew he could talk freely, as he stood behind his counter in Parnell Street. "A great day for Ireland is coming and won't we be the happy people then?" was the kind of talk heard among I.R.B. people as the Ulster Volunteers marched and paraded with their rifles on their shoulders.

All through 1912 and 1913 efforts were made to enlist every man in the anti-Home Rule army of the north. The opponents of Home Rule carried on all their illegalities with complete impunity. They even suborned the officers of the army and made rebels of them and not one man of them suffered for his breaches of discipline and of law. Rumours were set afloat that the army was going north to protect certain arms depots that it was said the Ulster Volunteers intended to raid. The Commander-in-chief of the army in Ireland, Sir Arthur Paget, was ordered by the Government to protect these depots. He replied saying officers were resigning and refusing to carry out such orders. General Gough, who commanded a brigade at the Curragh, refused to serve against the Ulster Unionists. Many officers followed his example, especially as they learned that it

was the opinion of Sir Henry Wilson that use of the army against the Ulsterites would be unthinkable. The Secretary of State for War went so far as to give General Gough a written assurance that the army would not be used against the Ulster Volunteers. He, the Secretary, was the only person who suffered for these treacherous acts as he lost his Cabinet post. The Curragh Mutiny was a complete success. Indeed, so successful was it that Prime Minister Asquith lost heart and courage, betrayed Redmond and announced that temporary partition of four Ulster counties was now his solution of the problem. Secretly there was much rejoicing in Ulster at this announcement, but publicly they said they were entirely dissatisfied. To the great surprise of nationalists, Redmond agreed to Asquith's "temporary exclusion" proposal. In the nationalist circles there was dismay when Redmond's weakness was realised.

At last the day arrived when a move was to be made by the pro-Home Rule people of the south. I came to know of the move in this way. I attended a meeting of the Coisde Gnótha of Connradh na Gaedhilge held at 25 Parnell Square, Dublin, one night early in November, 1913. When the business of the Coisde had concluded and members were departing, I was called aside by Eoin MacNeill. Eoin then told me of his intention to call into existence a committee whose purpose would be to found and organise Irish Volunteers to support and defend the Home Rule effort and sustain the Home Rule parliament when it was brought into existence. He asked me if I would join his proposed committee. I said I would be glad to do so. Then he gave me the names of the other people he had asked, or proposed to ask to join the committee. All were persons well known to me. Some of them were well-known supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Others, like Bulmer Hobson, were known as political opponents of the Party. Eoin asked me what I thought of the people he mentioned and I told him I approved of each one of them, which seemed to please him. I was delighted when I heard from Eoin MacNeill that he had taken this initiative. He seemed to me to be just the ideal person to take the lead in such a vital cause and especially at this particular time. Eoin MacNeill had not taken any public part in politics. He devoted his spare time to the Gaelic League and the language movement in general. So far as anyone knew his political views, he was regarded as a supporter of Mr. John Redmond and his Party. Therefore, I reasoned to myself, the Party followers would be unlikely to regard the founding of the Irish Volunteers as an act hostile to them. As the Redmond Party dominated nationalist Ireland at the time, this was a most important fact. In high glee, the next day I called in to Tom Clarke in his shop in Parnell Street to tell him the good news. I found that Tom was already aware of Eoin MacNeill's proposals and knew the names of the persons MacNeill proposed to put on his committee. I told Tom I had been asked by MacNeill to join the committee and that I had promised to do so. Tom Clarke expressed his

pleasure that at last things were beginning to move in the right direction. He was also happy that the person who was to head the Irish Volunteer committee was Eoin MacNeill. "He suits us perfectly", Tom Clarke said, "everything is moving as we would wish." Then Tom took me aside and told me that he had been discussing the personnel of the new committee with Seán MacDermott and they had concluded that it would be better if I did not join. I was surprised. Tom then explained that he and Seán were of opinion that it would give the Redmond Party an excuse for opposing the Volunteers right from the start if notorious Sinn Féiners, such as myself, were too much in evidence on the committee. Tom said, "you are free to accept if you so desire but our strong advice to you is, in the interests of the Irish Volunteers, not to be a member of the committee." Acting on this, I went to MacNeill and told him I thought it might be better if I did not join the committee. He did not fully accept my point of view, as he said he wanted all parties represented on the committee. "However", he said, "do as you please!" I told him I would join the Volunteers as soon as the organisation was called into being and that I would be an ardent backer and recruiter and MacNeill seemed satisfied. At any rate, later, when the public meeting was called to found the Volunteers, I was invited by Eoin MacNeill to be on the platform and be one of the speakers of the evening.

The Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers worked on quietly and unobtrusively. We, who were deeply interested, used to hear privately now and then of their activities and we knew that all was going well. Eventually the day came to bring the Volunteers into existence. The announcement that a meeting was to be held in the Rink, Rotunda Gardens, to found an Irish Volunteer organisation aroused the greatest enthusiasm. The fact that it was Eoin MacNeill who invited the men of Dublin to come in their thousands and join the Volunteers seemed to give universal satisfaction. This call came at a time when, almost daily, Dublin was full of excitement. Thousands of Dublin workers, dockers, tramway-men and others had been on strike for months. Workers and police were in almost daily conflict. Captain White, son of a British general famed for his defence of Ladysmith, South Africa, in the Boer War, who sided with the workers, had recently proposed the formation of a Citizen Army to defend the workers in their giant struggle for justice. All this added to the excitement of the night of 25 November, when the men of Dublin came in their thousands to join and help Eoin MacNeill and his provisional committee in setting up the Irish Volunteers to defend Home Rule. I am not sure how many that building, the Rotunda Rink, could hold—maybe three thousand. I don't think it could hold more. But many more came to attend the meeting. At one period, while the meeting was in progress, a huge crowd of the Dublin men who were on strike burst their way into the already overcrowded hall. They came, their spokesman said, to demonstrate full sympathy with the purpose of

the meeting. I think it was at this stage of the meeting that Eoin MacNeill, who presided, beckoned me to his side and ordered me to go into the Rotunda large Concert Hall. He said he would announce that an overflow meeting would be held there under my chairmanship; it would help to quieten the crowds who were demonstrating outside and he would send me in a number of speakers off his platform to help to keep our meeting going. I got the overflow meeting started and among the other speakers sent by MacNeill were M. J. Judge and Councillor Ted Sheehan. We had a successful and enthusiastic meeting and enrolled many volunteers. Large numbers signed the Volunteer enrolment form at the close of the main meeting also.



# Part IV



# 1. The Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers

*By FX. Martin, O.S.A.*

DURING THE first week of November 1913, after consultations between Eoin MacNeill, The O'Rahilly and Bulmer Hobson, it was decided to summon a preliminary meeting, at Wynn's Hotel, Dublin, on the evening of Tuesday, 11th November, to discuss the possibility of forming an Irish Volunteer Force. In order to gather together a representative cross-section of Irish nationalists a dozen names were selected by Hobson and O'Rahilly, with the approval of MacNeill. These were:

Eoin MacNeill  
Bulmer Hobson  
The O'Rahilly  
P. H. Pearse  
Seán MacDermott  
W. J. Ryan  
Éamonn Ceannt  
Seán Fitzgibbon  
J. A. Deakin  
Piaras Béaslaí  
Joseph Campbell  
D. P. Moran

(See O'Rahilly, *Secret History of the Irish Volunteers*, 1st edition, Dublin 1915, p. 3.)

A general invitation was drafted by Hobson, and was sent out by the O'Rahilly under his own name. Those invited were asked "to meet Mr. Eoin MacNeill", in order to discuss the question of a Volunteer Force.

Of the twelve invited, ten attended. Hobson, well-known as a republican, did not wish to advertise his part in the meeting, and took care to be away from Dublin on business that day. However, he was accepted as a member of the committee, and attended all subsequent meetings. D. P. Moran, while expressing sympathy with the general object of the meeting, declined the invitation on

the score of his preoccupation with the *Leader*. Arthur Griffith, because of his prominence as head of Sinn Fein, was not invited. Of the twelve invited five were then members of the I.R.B.—Hobson, MacDermott, Ceannt, Deakin, and Béasláí—but as Hobson did not attend the preliminary meeting it meant that four of the ten belonged to the Brotherhood.

One result of the meeting on the 11th was that Ryan, Deakin, and Campbell withdrew from the movement; Ryan and Deakin for business reasons, Campbell through lack of interest. The positive result of the discussion at this preliminary meeting was that during the subsequent three days various people of nationalist sympathies were approached and invited to a further meeting. This was held at Wynn's Hotel, on Friday, 14th November, and it was then that the Provisional Committee was founded.

At this meeting, among additional members present, were Laurence J. Kettle, Robert Page, Séamus O'Connor, Éamon Martin, Colm Ó Lochlann, Michael J. Judge, and Colonel Maurice Moore. They became members of the Provisional Committee. Also there representing the students of University College, Dublin, were L. Gogán and P. J. Nolan, now professor of geophysics in University College, Dublin. After the meeting a statement was issued to the newspapers, announcing that a Provisional Committee had been formed, and that Eoin MacNeill and Laurence J. Kettle would act as its honorary secretaries.

Several more private meetings were held before the membership of the Provisional Committee was completed. It numbered thirty, and was intended to represent all shades of nationalist political opinion. The I.R.B. members formed the biggest single group, though their participation was unknown, even if suspected, at the time. Several members, notably Pearse, Plunkett and MacDonagh, later joined the Brotherhood. The members of the Committee, classified as I.R.B., and non-I.R.B. were as follows:

*I.R.B.*; Hobson (B.), Béasláí (P.), Ceannt (E.), Colbert (C.), Lonergan (M.), MacDermott (S.), Mackin (P.), Martin (E.). Mellows (L.), O'Connor (S.), O'Riain (P.), Page (R.)—(12),

*Non-I.R.B.*; MacNeill (E.), Casement (R.), Fitzgibbon (S.), Gogán (L.), Gore (J.), Judge (M. J.), Kettle (L. J.), Kettle (T.), Lenehan (J.), MacDonagh (T.), Moore (M.), (5 Ó Lochlann (C.), O'Rahilly (The), O'Reilly (P.), Pearse (P. H.), Plunkett (J.), Walsh (G.), White (P.)—(18).

## 2. First Subscription List of the Irish Volunteers, 1913

From *O'Rahilly Papers*, N.L.I., MS. 13019. In the handwriting of The O'Rahilly, treasurer of the Irish Volunteers

	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Hobson	1	0	0
Page		10	0
McNeill	1	0	0
F'Gibbon		2	6
Béaslaí		2	6
Séamus O'Connor	1	0	0
McDermot		2	6
Pearse		2	6
Kent		2	6
Ua R	1	0	0
J. Gore	1	0	0
Walsh	1	0	0
Liam Ó Gogán		2	0
Mr. Judge	1	0	0
Cissie Doyle		1	0
Anon.		2	0



### 3. **Manifesto of Irish Volunteers** **25th November, 1913**

#### *Ulster*

AT A time when legislative proposals universally confessed to be of vital concern for the future of Ireland have been put forward, and are awaiting decision, a plan has been deliberately adopted by one of the great English political parties, advocated by the leaders of that party and by its numerous organs in the Press, and brought systematically to bear on English public opinion, to make the display of military force and the menace of armed violence the determining factor in the future relations between this country and Great Britain.

#### *The Tories*

The party which has thus substituted open force for the semblance of civil government is seeking by this means not merely to decide an immediate political issue of grave concern to this Nation, but also to obtain for itself the future control of all our national affairs. It is plain to every man that the people of Ireland, if they acquiesce in this new policy by their inaction, will consent to the surrender, not only of their rights as a nation, but of their civic rights as men.

#### *Act of Union*

The Act of Union deprived the Irish nation of the power to direct its own course and to develop and use its own resources for its own benefit. It gave us, instead, the meagre and seldom effective right of throwing our votes into the vast and complicated movement of British politics. Since the Act of Union a long series of repressive statutes has endeavoured to deal with the incessant discontent of the Irish people by depriving them of various rights common to all who live under the British Constitution. The new policy goes further than the Act of Union, and further than all subsequent Coercion Acts taken together. It proposes to leave us the political franchise in name, and to annihilate it in fact. If we fail to take such measures as will effectually defeat this policy, we

become politically the most degraded population in Europe, and no longer worthy of the name of Nation.

### *Our rights*

Are we to rest inactive, in the hope that the course of politics in Great Britain may save us from the degradation openly threatened against us? British politics are controlled by British interests, and are complicated by problems of great importance to the people of Great Britain. In a crisis of this kind, the duty of safeguarding our own rights is our duty first and foremost. They have rights who dare maintain them. If we remain quiescent, by what title can we expect the people of Great Britain to turn aside from their own pressing concerns to defend us? Will not such an attitude of itself mark us out as a people unworthy of defence.

### *Our opportunity*

Such is the occasion, not altogether unfortunate, which has brought about the inception of the Irish Volunteer movement. But the Volunteers, once they have been enrolled, will form a prominent element in the national life under a National Government. The Nation will maintain its Volunteer organisation as a guarantee of the liberties which the Irish people shall have secured.

If ever in history a people could say that an opportunity was given them by God's will to make an honest and manly stand for their rights, that opportunity is given us to-day. The stress of industrial effort, the relative peace and prosperity of recent years, may have dulled the sense of the full demands of civic duty. We may forget that the powers of the platform, the Press, and the polling booth are derived from the conscious resolve of the people to maintain their rights and liberties. From time immemorial, it has been held by every race of mankind to be the right and duty of a freeman to defend his freedom with all his resources and with his life itself. The exercise of that right distinguishes the freeman from the serf, the discharge of that duty distinguishes him from the coward.

### *Citizen Army*

To drill, to learn the use of arms, to acquire the habit of concerted and disciplined action, to form a citizen army from a population now at the mercy of almost any organised aggression—this, beyond all doubt, is a program that appeals to all Ireland, but especially to young Ireland. We begin at once in Dublin, and we are confident that the movement will be taken up without delay all over the

country. Public opinion has already and quite spontaneously formed itself into an eager desire for the establishment of the Irish Volunteers.

### *Our object*

The object proposed for the Irish Volunteers is to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland. Their duties will be defensive and protective, and they will not contemplate either aggression or domination. Their ranks are open to all able-bodied Irishmen without distinction of creed, politics or social grade. Means will be found whereby Irishmen unable to serve as ordinary Volunteers will be enabled to aid the Volunteer forces in various capacities. There will also be work for women to do, and there are signs that the women of Ireland, true to their record, are especially enthusiastic for the success of the Irish Volunteers.

### *Widest basis*

We propose for the Volunteers' organisation the widest possible basis. Without any other association or classification, the Volunteers will be enrolled according to the district in which they live. As soon as it is found feasible, the district sections will be called upon to join in making provision for the general administration and discipline, and for united cooperation. The provisional Committee which has acted up to the present will continue to offer its services until an elective body is formed to replace it.

### *Freemen*

A proportion of time spared, not from work, but from pleasure and recreation, a voluntary adoption of discipline, a purpose firmly and steadily carried through, will renew the vitality of the Nation. Even that degree of self-discipline will bring back to every town, village, and countryside a consciousness that has long been forbidden them—the sense of freemen who have fitted themselves to defend the cause of freedom.

### *Unity: Liberty*

In the name of National Unity, of National Dignity, of National and Individual Liberty, of Manly Citizenship, we appeal to our countrymen to recognise and accept without hesitation the opportunity that has been granted them to join the ranks of the Irish Volunteers, and to make the movement now begun not unworthy of the historic title which it has adopted.

*Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers, issued at first turn-out in Dublin November, 1913, re-issued June, 1914. Written by Eoin MacNeill, adopted by the First Provisional Committee.*

# **Part V**



# 1. The Meeting in the Rotunda Rink 25th November, 1913 Irish Volunteers Inaugural Meeting, 25th November, 1913

From *Freeman's Journal*, 26th November, 1913.

THE ROTUNDA Rink, which holds between 5,000 and 6,000 people, was crowded last night at a meeting organised by a Provisional Committee for the purpose of inaugurating the Irish Volunteers. A big brigade of stewards headed by Mr. Page of the G.A.A., and wearing green and orange badges, had charge. At the outset, the St. James' Brass and Reed Band, which occupied the balcony at the entrance end of the hall, discoursed a selection of National airs, the refrains of which were joined in by many in the assemblage. By far the greater number of those in attendance were young men. The meeting was enthusiastic, but there was one period of sustained disorder when Mr. L. J. Kettle rose to read the manifesto of the Volunteers. "Cheers for Larkin" were raised by a small section of the crowd, and Mr. Kettle's voice was completely drowned. Alderman Macken who followed was quietly heard, and there was no further disturbance.

Amongst those present were—Rev. Father Eugene Sheehy, Rev. T. O'Kelly, Captain White, D.S.O.; Alderman Thomas Kelly, Mr. Eoin MacNeill, B.A.; Mr. L. J. Kettle, Councillor J. T. Kelly, Mr. P. H. Pearse, B.L.; Mr. W. T. Cosgrave, T.C.; Mr. John Gore, Mr. John Scollan, National Director, A.O.H., Irish-American Alliance; Mr. Patk. O'Daly, General Secretary, Gaelic League; Mr. William Bergin, Seán Forde (Editor *Claidheamh Soluis*); Mr. P. O'Reilly (National Executive, A.O.H. Board of Erin); Mr. M. H. Judge, Messrs. Patrick M'Kenna, Co. Council, Westmeath; M. J. O'Farrell, Maurice Dixon, and Jas. O'Farrell.

## Irish Volunteer Movement Scenes at Inaugural Meeting Not Directed Against Ulster

From *Irish Independent*, 26th November, 1913.

The new "Irish Volunteer" movement was inaugurated last night at a meeting of about 7,000 persons in the Rotunda Rink, and at overflow meetings in the Rotunda Gardens.

The proceedings, which were enthusiastic were disturbed during the evening by some disorderly Larkinite scenes, one of the speakers being boohed, and detonators and blank cartridges being exploded.

The speakers representing different sections of Nationalist opinion, declared that the movement was not an aggressive one, but was intended to unite Irishmen, and preserve their right and liberties. Subsequently large numbers signed the declaration of membership.

The spacious rink was crowded to an uncomfortable extent, the predominating element being young men, particularly students, long before 8 o'clock, when the proceedings were timed to commence. A large body of students marched to the hall in processional order from the National University. A noticeable feature was the presence of a number of young ladies on a gallery specially set apart for them. Prior to the opening of the meeting Irish airs were discoursed by the St. James's Brass and Reed Band.

## **The Chairman's Speech**

From *Freeman's Journal*, 26th November, 1913.

Mr. Eoin MacNeill, who presided, first addressed the meeting in Irish. He recalled a meeting held in Dublin 20 years ago at which there was only one person present for every thousand that night, and yet great things had sprung from that gathering.

The Chairman, then speaking in English, said—"We will begin now, in the name of God" (applause). The business that had brought them together, he said was not to deliberate but, to take action (applause). Three things, above all others, were required—courage, vigilance and discipline. They did not want to read about these things, or to entertain sentiments about them; they wanted to see them embodied in the Irish Volunteers (applause). How was that to be done? The answer was "Volunteer" (applause). There was represented that night every section of Irish National opinion, but the speakers would not speak from any sectional point of view.

## ***The Enrolment***

As soon as the addresses were over, continued the chairman the enrolment forms would be presented to them, and they wished it to be understood that those who signed engaged themselves to maintain the discipline and efficiency of the Irish Volunteers (applause). A small weekly contribution would be expected from every person enrolling and there would also be an opportunity

at that meeting of subscribing to the initial expenses. A public subscription list would also be opened, and the treasurers would be Mr. John Gore and The O'Rahilly (applause). There would be work to do for large numbers who could not be in the marching line. There would be work for the women (applause). There would be work for a clerical staff, for telegraphists, for cyclists, for motor cyclists, for motorists and so on but just now they were going to do what they were able to do. Large numbers of letters and telegrams had been received and all but one or two were heartily in favour of the objects of the meeting.

### *Scene of Disorder*

The Chairman then called upon Mr. L. J. Kettle. Mr. Kettle's name was received with booing, which was responded to by loud cheering.

The Chairman said "We are commencing a united Ireland (applause). We are going to let an additional number into the hall, and in the meantime I ask the band to play. After that I will call upon Mr. L. J. Kettle to read the manifesto which has been drawn up by the Provisional Committee."

The band began to play and a body of young men carrying hurling sticks entered the hall and proceeded in the direction of the disturbers.

A scene of tumult followed when Mr. Kettle came forward. The Chairman interposed, and announced that an overflow meeting was being held outside.

Mr. Kettle proceeded to read the Manifesto but the noise was so great that he was not heard even at the reporters' table beneath. Some people were turned out. Mr. Kettle in a lull said—"This work we are engaged in to-night is a national work. This is not the place for the introduction of small quarrels."

"God save Larkin" was then sung by a compact body near the door in front of but some distance away from the platform, and was taken up in other parts of the hall. The bulk of the audience responded with "God Save Ireland" which soon drowned the other singing.

The Chairman rose, and said—"Those who are here this evening in favour of a united nation—those who are here in favour of the objects of this meeting—" He was interrupted with cheers for Larkin.

### *Larkinite Invasion*

Mr. Kettle proceeded to read, but the tumult increased, and there were one or two reports of detonators which some people mistook for revolver shots. Many of the audience stood on the seats, and at one of the doors there was scuffling and waving of sticks. There was apparently an invading body, one of whom held up a picture of Larkin, whilst another displayed a copy of the *Irish Worker*. Captain White arrived at this point, and ascended the platform amid cheers.

The crowd near the door sang another Larkinite song. Mr. Kettle went through the form of reading all the time, and his closing sentences were uttered as quiet was being restored.

The Chairman said—"We will recognise no sections (A Voice : "What about the labourers?"). We will recognise no division in the work we have put our hands to."

A young man near the platform called for "Cheers for Larkin", and was ejected.

### *Overflow Meeting*

Two overflow meetings were held, one in the Large Concert Room and in the Gardens. At the former, Councillor Seághan T. O'Ceallaigh presided, and the meeting was addressed by Messrs. James MacMahon, M. J. Judge, Seán Mac Diarmada and Councillor Richard Carroll. The meeting in the grounds, was addressed by Messrs. B. O'Connor and Bulmer Hobson.

### **Street Scenes**

#### *Arrival of Contingents*

There were some animated scenes in O'Connell street and in Cavendish Row before the meeting began in connection with the arrival of the contingents and bands. From half past seven o'clock thousands of people, principally young men, were in the vicinity of the Rink seeking admission. It soon became evident that the building would be unable to accommodate the huge crowds desirous of being present, and even the provision of an overflow meeting in the Large Concert Room of the Rotunda left hundreds on the streets, who were anxious to take part in the proceedings. Bands playing National airs began to arrive outside the place of meeting until after eight o'clock, by which time Cavendish row had become a congested district through which tramcars and other vehicles had considerable difficulty in passing. There were large numbers of Transport Workers in the crowd, but no attempt was made to interfere with the trams. Though there was only a small force of police present at the time, the latter were entirely occupied in regulating the traffic, and there was no disturbance of any kind calling for intervention.

#### *University College Students*

A large body of University College students marched to the meeting in processional order and attracted a good deal of attention. The members of the Gaelic Athletic Association were amongst the early arrivals and contributed largely to the dimensions of the principal meeting.

Some two or three hundred members of the Irish Transport Workers' Union, who arrived shortly after the doors were opened were conspicuous amongst the audience, but another large section were unable to gain admission owing to the fact that the building was overcrowded when they put in an appearance outside the Rink. Shortly after eight o'clock a couple of score of them, many carrying hurleys on their shoulders, and headed by their piper's band, appeared in O'Connell street, and finding it impossible to become part of the audience, marched in the direction of Liberty Hall, accompanied by a large force of police. No disturbance, however, took place, and the police tailed off before Beresford place was reached. Later on another band of Transport Workers, who were also unable to get into the Rink, marched to Liberty Hall at a lively pace, singing "God Save Larkin", and displaying the *Daily Herald* placards. They also were accompanied by several policemen, who appeared to have some difficulty in keeping up with the Transport men without being forced into an undignified trot. There was a scene of considerable animation when the meeting concluded and the various contingents got into the street, where large bodies of police were stationed, but there was no disturbance.



## 2. Speeches by Eoin MacNeill, Pádraig Pearse and Michael Davitt

*Eoin MacNeill's Speech*

In Hobson, *Hist. Irish Volunteers*, pp. 29-33.

WE ARE meeting in public in order to proceed at once to the enrolment and organisation of a National Force of Volunteers. We believe that the National instinct of the people and their reasoned opinion has been steadily forming itself for some time past in favour of this undertaking, and that all that is now needed is to create a suitable opportunity, to make a beginning, and from a public meeting of the most unrestricted and representative kind, in the capital of the country, to invite all the able-bodied men of Ireland to form themselves into a united and disciplined body of freemen, prepared to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland.

A forecast of this proceeding appeared in the Dublin Press some days ago, and what was stated in it was the truth. On the following morning the statement appeared in a different form in an English newspaper, with the addition that what was proposed was to form a Volunteer Force of Catholics in hostility to Protestants. This was a falsehood deliberately invented by its writer. We do not complain of a lie that gives us the opportunity of saying that Protestants as well as Catholics have been engaged in these preparations, and that there will be no distinction of religions in the membership of the Irish Volunteers or in their purpose.

We do not contemplate any hostility to the Volunteer movement that has already been initiated in parts of Ulster. The strength of that movement consists in men whose kinsfolk were amongst the foremost and the most resolute in winning freedom for the United States of America, in descendants of the Irish Volunteers of 1782, of the United Irishmen, of the Antrim and Down insurgents of 1798, of the Ulster Protestants who protested in thousands against the destruction of the Irish Parliament in 1800. The more genuine and successful the local Volunteer movement in Ulster becomes, the more completely does it establish the principle that Irishmen have the right to decide and govern their own national affairs. We have nothing to fear from the existing Volunteers in

Ulster nor they from us. We gladly acknowledge the evident truth that they have opened the way for a National Volunteer movement, and we trust that the day is near when their own services to the cause of an Irish Nation will become as memorable as the services of their forefathers. Meanwhile a use has been made, and is daily made, of the Ulster Volunteer movement that leaves the whole body of Irishmen no choice but to take a firm stand in defence of their liberties. The leaders of the Unionist Party in Great Britain and the journalists, public speakers, and election managers of that party are employing the threat of armed force to control the course of political elections and to compel, if they can, a change of Government in England with the declared object of deciding what all parties admit to be vital political issues concerning Ireland. They claim that this line of action has been successful in recent parliamentary elections, and that they calculate by it to obtain further successes, and in the most moderate estimate to force upon this country some diminished and mutilated form of National Self-Government. This is not merely to deny our rights as a nation. If we are to have our concerns regulated by a majority of British representatives owing their position and powers to a display of armed force, no matter from what quarter that force is derived, it is plain to every man that even the modicum of civil rights left to us by the Union is taken from us, our franchise becomes a mockery, and we ourselves become the most degraded nation in Europe.

This insolent menace does not satisfy the hereditary enemies of our National Freedom. Within the past few days a political manifesto has been issued, signed most fittingly by a Castlereagh and a Beresford, calling for British Volunteers, and for money to arm and equip them to be sent into Ireland to triumph over the Irish people, and to complete their disfranchisement and enslavement.

All this is done with the approval of a party which claims to represent the majority of the English electorate and hopes to obtain supreme control of Ireland in the near future.

How far any religious issue is believed to be at stake may be judged from the fact that the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Edmund Talbot are cordially at one with the rest of their party in this Irish policy.

There may be many who are confident that this policy will be resented by the English electorate and defeated by the opposing party in British politics. On that point it is enough to say that British politics are complicated and full of chances. In any case the duty of resenting and defeating the annihilation of their political rights belongs first and foremost to the people of Ireland. In the face of such a policy a passive attitude amounts to a complete and cowardly surrender. They have rights who dare maintain them.

It is your duty to take the lead, and you need not doubt that all that is manly, liberty loving, and patriotic in Ireland will joyfully and eagerly rally to your lead.

We have now to proceed with the work of enrolment. For this purpose forms are supplied for every able-bodied man present to fill up, stating his wish to be enrolled in the Irish Volunteers, and giving his name and the district of the City or Suburbs in which he lives. The men of each district will form together a separate body of Volunteers, and enrolment officers here present will take down and keep the roll for each district, and will instruct those enrolled with regard to future proceedings. The stewards of the meeting will give any further information that may be required by men coming forward for enrolment. You are all requested to co-operate in carrying out the work of enrolment with the greatest possible order and expedition.

After enrolment each division of the Volunteers according to its district will make arrangements for a special meeting place. Those who have acted so far as a Provisional Committee will co-operate with the district divisions and assist them in the work of fully organising the divisions.

### Speech by P. H. Pearse

In *Freeman's Journal* and *Irish Times*, 26th November, 1913.

Mr. P. H. Pearse, B.L., said that citizenship involved the enjoyment of certain rights and the acceptance of certain duties. The bearing of arms was not only the proudest right of citizenship, but it was a most essential duty, because the ability to enjoy the other rights and to discharge the other duties of citizenship could be all guarded by the ability to defend citizenship. The history of the last hundred years in Ireland might be described as the hopeless attempt of a mob to realise itself as a nation. To-day they had an opportunity of rectifying the mistakes of the past. They went back, therefore, to the policy of the Volunteers—to the policy of the co-operation of Irishmen of every class and creed, and every shade of political belief, in that task of defending the rights common to Irishmen and Irishwomen.

### No Opposition to Ulster Volunteers

The movement they were inaugurating was not, Mr. Pearse said, one in antagonism to the Volunteer Companies which had been raised by the Unionists in the North-East of Ulster. He could conceive circumstances in which it would be desirable and feasible for them to fraternise and to co-operate with them (applause). They might differ as to the degree of autonomy which was desirable for Ireland, but they were all agreed on one thing, and that was, that it was for Ireland herself to determine that degree, and not for any external power (applause). There were people in the hall who shared with him the belief that for

Ireland there would be no true freedom within the British Empire (applause). There were, doubtless, many more who believed that Ireland could achieve and enjoy very substantial freedom within the Empire (applause). Ireland armed would, at any rate, make a better bargain with the Empire than Ireland unarmed (applause). He was not thinking of the effect of the Volunteers on the Empire. He was thinking of the effect upon Ireland, and that effect would be mainly the moral effect (hear, hear). The Irish Volunteers would help them to realise themselves as citizens and as men. It was not so much in a display of physical force as in moral discipline and physical hardening of all those who would join that he looked for the fruits of the movement they were inaugurating that night. From that point of view they could all safely say the work they had set their hands to was a good and patriotic work, and that they could all fervently beg God's blessing upon it (cheers).

## The Irish Volunteers Speech

By *Michael Davitt*<sup>1</sup>

In *Freeman's Journal*, 26th November, 1913.

Mr. Michael Davitt, who was most enthusiastically cheered, said that when he saw that the aim of the Volunteers was to maintain the rights that were inherent in the people of Ireland, and when he found that the Volunteers were to include in their ranks people of every denomination, class and creed and shade of politics he certainly thought that if the Volunteers did nothing else but to unify the aspirations of the Irish people and teach them how noble it was to foster national ideals, they would deserve a niche in history second to none of their great historic national forces. No one could deny that the motives underlying the movement were pure; but pure motives were liable—often amongst their own—to deliberate misconstruction and misrepresentation. Such misrepresentation they were prepared to meet, but unless they were careful they might be landed in a state of things which everyone who loved his country could not but deplore. They should ask everybody in attendance to fully understand that the Irish Volunteers were not a belligerent organisation. He did not think that anyone who had thought sincerely for themselves would allow the idea to creep into their minds that the Volunteers would be used as a threat of force. At

1 Denis Gwynn, *Life of John Redmond*, London 1932, pp. 245-6, states that John Dillon, M.P., agreed with John Redmond that the Volunteer movement should not be encouraged. Dillon "made it his business to impress Michael Davitt's son with the seriousness of the situation when Davitt's name was announced as a speaker at the Rotunda meeting. His exhortations took effect. Davitt, after receiving a tremendous ovation, made a hesitating speech which was as little welcome as a douche of cold water. His appeal for confidence in the official Nationalist leader only provoked an excited audience."

the present moment they could not afford to take the slightest risk. Small things had baulked them before now, and big things might baulk them this time. If they could show that the movement would mean the unification of the Irish people in aim and principle and through all creeds and classes, then they would have done something they would not be sorry for (applause).

### *The University Students*

Mr. Davitt, proceeding, disclaimed any intention of speaking for the students of University College, of whom there was a large number present. He thought it would be a great mistake at a meeting like that to formally commit any body or section to the Volunteers. Everyone should be allowed his individual choice, and therefore he hoped that no great body of men would be asked to commit themselves *in toto* to the movement. When great issues were impending it would be waste of logic and waste of strategy to do anything that might terminate in disaster. Many might think that the movement was an attempt to increase the bitterness that was supposed to live in Ireland. He hoped that no such opinion would be sent broadcast, but that it would be recognised that it would give Ireland a national opinion of herself and form a great body that would be the basis upon which to ground the demand that they knew they were deserving of making (applause).



# **Part VI**



# 1. We Have the Men!

## December 1913

From Official copy in *Bulmer Hobson Papers*, N.L.I., Ms. 13174 (1).

### Fellow Countrymen

THE IRISH Volunteers are no longer a mere proposal, they are a living and robust reality. Their call to arms has been answered in every quarter of Ireland. Young Irishmen have everywhere laid aside their differences and come together on the common meeting ground for all Irishmen—the National Army. It can be said without any trace of exaggeration that no other recent event has done so much to guarantee the future peace and security of Ireland.

So far no substantial portion of the expenditure involved has been borne by the public at large. Drilling, organising and secretarial expenses have been paid and will continue to be paid, by the Volunteers themselves. But the material equipment of the force will involve an expenditure far too heavy to be met with in that way.

The Volunteers are the nucleus of a permanent defence force, of a National Army. They will be an arm and a possession of the whole nation, the focus of its defence and the necessary guardian of its liberties both now and hereafter.

If ever there was a work which, from its magnitude and its incomparable National Importance, warranted a nation in making *serious* financial sacrifices, and in providing large and *generous* contributions, the equipment of the Irish Volunteers is that work.

Thousands of working men are making every week sacrifices, not only of time but of money that are a bright example for those of their countrymen who are in easier circumstances.

We appeal then to every Irishman who believes in a self-respecting, self-reliant Ireland to do his part in equipping the First National Army of Defence established in Ireland since the great days of Grattan.

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Committee.

JOHN GORE, 6 Cavendish Row, Dublin, UA RATHGHAILLE, 40 Herbert Park, Dublin, Hon. Treasurers.

EOIN MACNEILL, 19 Herbert Park, Dublin, LAURENCE J. KETTLE, 6 St. Mary's Road South, Dublin,  
Hon. Secretaries.



## 2. Arms and the Man

From *The National Student*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (December 1913), Editorial.

SINCE THE gigantic meetings, organised by students some years ago, on behalf of Irish as an essential subject in the matriculation of the National University, no event of a kindred significance has called forth the public response of students of University College as did the opening public meeting of the Irish Volunteers.

At the Home Rule demonstration held on Sunday, the 31st March, last year, the College, as represented in members of the Governing Body, the Professoriate, and students, past and present, came forward to make its first public national affirmation. At that memorable meeting the new University College took its place with dignity in the national life. When it spoke from a platform, known as the "University platform" in the accounts of the meeting, its voice was recognised as authentic; and it was received with enthusiasm all over Ireland, when it was proved to every manner of witness that the New University College was really a part of the national life, that Ireland's affairs were its affairs and that nothing that concerned the well-being of Ireland was alien to its sympathy.

Now the meeting at the Rotunda on the 25th November—a few weeks ago—at which a new movement, "The Irish Volunteers" was launched, differed from the Home Rule demonstration; for the one was concerned with a type of national politics, the other and the more recent devoted itself to the question of national politics as a complete thing, without regard to party, but with acute regard to the nation. University College also attended this meeting—not collectively and with the same circumstance as it did the Home Rule demonstration. But practically every male student of University College, whose movements were not restricted by a special discipline, attended at the inception of "The Irish Volunteers." To the meeting at the Rotunda about three hundred and fifty students went—a large proportion of them marching in a body. And this number may be taken as fairly close to the total aggregate of male students of University College, who, not being in the position of a great many others, such as scholastics (who obviously might not be absent from their Colleges at the hour of the meeting), were absolutely free to attend or abstain.

True, there was one man identified with the Irish Volunteer movement, also in many ways closely connected with University College. But, although the

chairman of the meeting enjoys the distinction of having a threefold relation to the students of University College—Prof. MacNeill is at once a Senator of the University, a Governor and a Professor of the College—the attendance of the students can only remotely, if at all, be connected with this fact. The student attendance was spontaneous and entirely self-promoted. Which was as it should be, or rather as it must be.

The meeting that attracted such a great number of our students and brought them together in such a corporate way must have, we should judge on this evidence alone, greatly possessed intrinsic claims of its own.

The first claim is one, we take it, that would account for the peculiar student interest we speak of: The Irish Volunteers claimed to be a National movement, broad as the nation, open to Irishmen “without distinction of party, creed or social grade”. It addressed itself to the manhood of Ireland.

With this before us, why should we wonder at a great audience of U.C.D. men; should we not be surprised—and grieved—if they were absent? If they had absented themselves, how could we assert that the men of U.C.D. had not lost that instinct that moved them to the fine response to those former calls we have mentioned, or how could we explain except by saying that that National tradition had no longer vitality amongst them?

Taking no account of the temporal occasion of the movement, there are two fundamental appeals in its programme: The rights of the people of Ireland as a nation, and the civic rights of Irishmen as men. Besides those two great, fundamental and satisfying appeals, the links to which they are bound to young Ireland are especially strong. And these are the knowledge and the discipline of arms: the resources of every national people, and of every freeman when its and his rights and liberties are threatened.

In a great manner, then, the dominant import of the Irish Volunteer movement is that it makes for a definitive political philosophy. And its significance in contemporary Ireland can only be paralleled in the Irish Language movement. The Gaelic League brought a new moral tone into Irish life, colouring men's outlook and inlook, and infusing the vitality of a new inspiration into departments of life remote, to all appearances, from those touching its own propaganda. The Irish Volunteer movement aims at uniting in a continuity of national sympathy and civic interest all our countrymen. It seeks to develop, and extend the influence of, all the moral forces attaching to our national culture, and to deepen our ideas of nationality.

With such a sweep of conception, the movement strikes the imagination with a figure of something that stands out in contemporary Ireland, as that beautiful statue of Grattan—illustrious leader of the Irish Volunteers already crowned in History!—with its commanding gesture stands above the traffic of the streets.

The imagination roused, sees the nation as the enlarged personality of every man in it; and the well-being of the nation as the final end, politically speaking, of all its citizens. It sees the foundations of a great political education, of a kind neglected in our history, that shall be removed from the clash of policies and the "froth of flags". And, as the outcome of the idea of citizenship so derived, it sees a great development and liberation of the moral and physical forces in the country. And it looks to the day when the heart of the nation shall be made "as the strength of the springs of the sea".



# **Part VII**



ÓGLAIGH NA hÉIREANN—THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS  
Headquarters—206 GREAT BRUNSWICK STREET, DUBLIN

# 1. General Instructions for Forming Companies, 1914

From Official copy in *Bulmer Hobson Papers*, N.L.I., MS. 13174 (1).

1. Study the Constitution, and see that nothing is done that infringes it.
2. Secure the services of a competent Instructor. Utilise all ex-military men possible.
3. Invite all organisations of a national tendency to take part, and see that no one is excluded from becoming a Volunteer on the broad basis laid down in the Constitution.
4. Secure a Committee that is as far as possible representative of all sections of Irishmen, and combat any idea that the Volunteers are to enable any one section of Irishmen to secure a political advantage over any other section.
5. Let everyone clearly understand that the aim of the Volunteers is to secure and maintain the rights common to the whole people of Ireland.
6. After the foregoing points have been made clear to everybody, then enrol the men who are willing to serve.
7. Follow the system of military organisation laid down by the Central Committee (Form 6).
8. The members must pay a small weekly contribution sufficient to defray such expenses as rent, payment of instructors where necessary, etc.
9. Each member must purchase his uniform and his rifle, and may be aided in this either by public subscription or by any surplus of the Company funds after other expenses have been met.
10. Each military Company should affiliate direct with the Central Committee until such time as local authorities can be organised; and the Central Committee will give the Companies all the assistance in their power. Affiliation fee, 1d. per month per man, payable by the Company organisation.
11. No Volunteer Company can be allowed to take any action that is not in accordance with the Constitution.

12. Keep in frequent and regular communication with the General Secretaries, who will be ready to advise and assist in every way possible.
13. Send in Monthly Report on official Form I. *Note*.—Sample Enrolment Forms and Membership Cards can be obtained from Headquarters.

ÓGLAIGH NA hÉIREANN—THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS  
Headquarters—206 GREAT BRUNSWICK STREET, DUBLIN

## 2. **Military Instructions for Units, 1914**

Official copy in *Bulmer Hobson Papers*, N.L.I., MS. 13174 (1).

THE VOLUNTEERS shall be divided for military purposes into squads, sections, half companies, battalions and regiments. The various units enumerated above to be composed as follows:

A Squad—To be composed of eight men.

A Section—To be composed of two such Squads, under the control of a Sergeant and two Corporals.

A Company—To be composed of four such sections, divided permanently into two half-companies of two Sections each, to be called Right and Left Half Companies, respectively, each under the command of a Lieutenant, the whole to be commanded by a Captain. Attached to the Company, two buglers or drummers, one pioneer, one colour sergeant, four signallers. Companies to be lettered—A to H.

Details of a Company—Captain, 1; Lieutenants, 2; Sergeants, 4; Corporals, 8; Volunteers, 64. Supernumeraries as above will be added afterwards.

A Battalion—To be composed of eight such companies, under the command of a Colonel, assisted by such Staff Officers as may be considered necessary. Battalions to be numbered.

Officers—Permanent Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers not to be appointed until after an examination held by authority of Headquarters.

Drill Manual—Follow exactly the drill set out in the *British Infantry Manual, 1911*. [Ponsonby, Grafton Street, Dublin. Price 1s.]

*Note*—Sample Section and Company Books can be obtained from Headquarters.



### 3. The Volunteer Colours Flags for the Regiments

by *The O'Rahilly*

In *The Irish Volunteer*, 23rd May, 1915, p. 15.

THE PROVISIONAL committee for the Colours of the Irish Volunteers have authorised a design for the flags. While each flag flown by the Volunteers will be different and distinct from the others, they will be all recognisable as parts of the same unit, thus emphasising the fact that there shall be but one great unit, that is, the Army of Ireland.

Each battalion of Volunteers will carry two colours to be known as the “national” colour and the “Volunteer” colour. The battalion will, in country districts, include the Volunteers resident in the same Barony, and in cities the Volunteers resident in the same ward or battalion district.

For the purpose of illustration we take at random the 3rd Battalion of the Dublin City Regiment, and show exactly the Colour that will be borne by this particular battalion.

In this case the “National” Colour shows on a green ground the Golden Harp of Ireland with its nine silver strings, which is, as a matter of fact, the National Flag of Ireland. Its antiquity is well established. It is supposed to represent the mystic harp of Dagda, which, when he played, caused the four seasons to pass over the earth—a symbol of life that joyously renews itself.

Notwithstanding that the English government uses blue ground instead of green under the harp, the fact that Dagda’s harp was called “the oak of the two greens,” and that Dagda himself was referred to as “the green harper,” as well as the universal consensus of Irish opinion, establish beyond doubt that the colours should be green.

On the advice of Dr. Sigerson, the doyen of our antiquarians, the carved harp, or cláirseach, bearing the figure of Erin, has been adopted in preference to the plain harp, or emit, which the Doctor believes should be only used for the Arms of Leinster.

Practically all the devices of the Volunteers of 1782, as well as those of the Irish Parliament, display the carved harp or cláirseach and not the emit.

Of the “national” colours, five-sixths is occupied by the harp and its green ground, the remaining sixth, one half of the height and one third of the width of the flag, being occupied by the insignia of the Regiment to which the banner belongs.

In our illustration the sixth contains the device of the Dublin City Regiment, the City of Dublin Arms, three white or silver flaming castles on a blue ground. In this case to heighten the contrast between the blue and green, a narrow line of silver or white is introduced between them, this line being of the same width and harmonising with the harp strings.

Underneath the regimental device appears in Roman figures of gold the number of the battalion which bears the flag, and the same space will doubtless be one day utilised for the names of the engagements in which the regiment has given a creditable account of itself.

The second illustration shows the "Volunteer" Colour, which displays a golden sunrise of nine rays on a field of blue. It is an exceedingly beautiful and effective device, and the Volunteers are to be congratulated on its adoption. Its history is inspiriting. It is supposed to represent the coming of Lugh, the sun-god out of the Kingdom of Mananan to rescue Ireland from the grip of Formor. Known as the Deilgréine, it was the standard of Fionn mac Cumhaill, and it floated over his battalion two thousand years ago when Ireland possessed just such a native army as we are now engaged in organising.

The Volunteer Colour also bears the regimental device, but in order to preserve the effect of the radiant lines, the regimental insignia do not in this case occupy the extreme corner, but appear on a panel, a medallion, or a shield near the first corner.

In the centre of the golden sunrise is shown in crimson Roman numerals the number of the battalion as before.

While every battalion of the Irish Volunteers will follow these leading principles the various corps will enjoy the fullest freedom with regard to the adoption of their particular regimental devices. In order to avoid confusion and to prevent two or more regiments adopting the same insignia it will be necessary to communicate with headquarters as to what regimental device it is proposed to adopt in any district. [He then suggests regimental devices for a number of the counties and cities of Ireland].

The Colours should, in all cases, be 3 feet high by 3 feet 9 inches wide, and made of Irish material, preferably poplin, which is to be had in superb colours, and is well worth the extra cost.

Arrangements are being made to have Irish-made Colours made in quantity available at a standard price, and an early announcement with regard to this may be expected.

## 4. The Irish Flag

BY P. H. PEARSE in *The Irish Volunteer*, 20th March, 1915, p. 4.

Headquarters,  
41 Kildare Street,  
Dublin,  
10th March, 1915.

EVERY COMPANY of Irish Volunteers is to provide itself with an Irish Flag, which is to be carried on recruiting marches, at church parades, etc.

The authorised flag is a plain gold harp on a green ground, and no other flag, except authorised regimental colours, is to be carried by bodies of Irish Volunteers. Companies should be exercised in saluting the flag.

P. H. PEARSE,  
Director of Organisation.



# 5. The Volunteer Uniform Report

*by Uniform Sub-Committee, 12th August, 1914*

From Official copy in *Bulmer Hobson Papers*, N.L.I., MS. 13174 (1).

*Report:—Summary of Work done*

*Uniform Cloth:* Having made exhaustive inquiries the Sub-Committee found that it was necessary to start *ab initio*. They found that no suitable uniform cloth was made in Ireland. They therefore obtained samples of high class uniform serge from a well known English mill. From these they selected a Grey Green cloth of a very suitable colour for field work in Ireland. They then inquired from several Irish mills whether they could and would match this sample. The business was not keenly sought after as the mills were full of orders and the extent of the Volunteers' requirements was somewhat uncertain. Finally Messrs. Murrogh Bros, of Douglas Mills, Cork, got special looms working and matched the sample. The sample they sent was submitted to experts and pronounced excellent. It was therefore decided to give the first order to Murrogh Bros.

*Design of Uniform:* After having had several samples submitted the Sub-Committee decided upon the cut of the Uniform. This was fixed as standard for all Irish Volunteers. The only variation to be permitted to the different regiments was in the matter of facings which were left to the discretion of the regimental Committees or County Boards. The uniform consists of tunic, two buttoned knickers, and puttees.

*Headdress:* The headdress was decided upon for the Dublin Regiment but was left undecided for the other regiments. A considerable body of opinion favoured soft hats but it was found impossible to get a suitable hat of Irish manufacture. The cap decided upon is a smart one somewhat after the Cossack style.

*Puttees:* The puttee presented a difficulty as the well known spiral puttee is protected by patents. A semi-spiral was decided upon and a special light Irish serge made to match the uniform. The caps are made of puttee cloth.

*Buttons and Badges:* A design of button and cap badge was decided upon, and dies struck, and buttons made. The button design as submitted by your

Sub-Committee was altered by you and consequent on this change your Sub-Committee find 11 will be impossible to protect the design. A report on this subject will be laid before you. The badge will be protected.

*Manufacture of Uniforms:* In order to get a small number of uniforms made for those men who desired them at once an order for 300 was placed with the Limerick Clothing Factory of Lower Bridge Street, Dublin. This firm had given the Committee invaluable assistance and submitted a very reasonable quotation. The firm would not proceed to manufacture without a guarantee and several individual members of the Provisional Committee signed a guarantee for £450. Instructions were issued to the various Dublin Companies, but the Committee have to complain that they fear they were not well supported by the various delegates in carrying out the directions of the Provisional Committee. At any rate the orders did not come through the Committee as they should have done, and Volunteers generally do not seem to have had matters made clear to them. Only some 150 uniform orders came through the Committee, although numbers of Volunteers obtained uniforms elsewhere than from the official supplies and in many cases these uniforms were not of standard material or standard design. It had been decided that as the Volunteers were a democratic force all uniforms should for the time be exactly similar. No distinction was made between officers and others as all officers were purely temporary. Notwithstanding this several Volunteers seem to have got uniforms designed as officers uniforms.

Owing to delays of various kinds Murrogh Bros., who had stocked cloth disposed of some of it to various traders who started making and advertising all kinds of uniforms. The Sub-Committee by announcement in the Volunteer endeavoured to cope with the situation thus created but did not succeed as they would have wished. It being essential that the initial order should be filled before other arrangements could be made, all Volunteers should be definitely instructed to send uniform orders through the Sub-Committee.

*Future Arrangements:* The arrangement of your Sub-Committee was that when the trial order had been executed sealed samples should be submitted, a specification issued, and public tenders invited in Ireland for further supplies both of cloth and uniforms. Arrangements were then to be made regarding both factory and tailor made uniforms, and the whole business could be put on a broad business basis. It was further arranged that a small percentage from the supply of uniforms should be credited to the general fund. An almost negligible individual charge would in the aggregate bring in a large sum to the General equipment fund.

*Irish Manufacture:* In conclusion your Sub-Committee have subordinated other considerations to that of having every item of Irish manufacture. In this

they have succeeded and the Irish Volunteer officially uniformed will have every item Irish. Your Sub-Committee have carried through a large amount of somewhat unrecognised work and should get your strong support in putting the supply of uniforms on a sound basis. They desire to pay a special tribute to the valuable assistance given by Mr. James Lenehan.

This Sub-Committee still remain in office.

Your obedient servants,  
EOIN MACNEILL,  
LAURENCE J. KETTLE.



## 6. The Volunteer Cap Badge

THE SYMBOLISM of the design of the army cap badge has often been debated, but the question is now put beyond doubt by Colonel Niall MacNeill.

The badge was designed by his father, Eoin MacNeill. Some time before his father's death the colonel asked him about the symbolism of the elements of the design. The letters "FF" represent "Fianna Fáil", the legendary first standing army of Ireland. But "neither sunburst nor any other symbolic theme underlay his choice of an 8-pointed star with its flamiform accompaniment" declares Colonel MacNeill. Eoin MacNeill was quite definite when asked about the significance of the design. "None!" he replied. It was merely his idea of a formalised and non-symbolic design to suit an army cap badge purpose.



## 7. At Last—An Irish Army!

*By Pádraig Pearse*

(In *The Irish Volunteer*, 4th July, 1914, p. 12.)

IN THE unavoidable absence of Professor MacNeill, Mr. P. H. Pearse, Dublin, inspected the Tralee Volunteers, as well as the corps from the outlying districts. The Tralee corps turned out in force and gave Mr. Pearse and Mr. Sheehan, who accompanied him, a cordial reception. The Volunteers met in the drill hall at noon, and were supplemented by the Ardfert Corps. The different companies fell into line at the Drill Hall, and headed by the Strand Street Band, marched through the town to the Sports Field, where the inspection took place. The turn-out numbered 450, including a body of Boy Scouts, the latter in full uniform. All the Volunteers carried bandoliers and haversacks, and displayed a disciplined and soldierly bearing which created a very favourable impression.

*Address by Mr. Pearse*

Mr. Pearse made a critical inspection of the assembled forces, after which he delivered a spirited address, which was punctuated with enthusiastic cheering. He congratulated the Volunteers, Father Brennan, their commander, their company commanders and instructors, and he thought he could congratulate the whole town and district of Tralee on having such a splendid corps of Irish Volunteers (cheers). He noted their splendid physique, their soldierly bearing, the military precision and accuracy of their movements, and he would like to add that he was favourably impressed with their splendid turn-out. At the railway station last night these silent, soldierly ranks, every man as straight and as steady as a spear in the hands of a warrior, were a far more impressing demonstration than the most enthusiastic, cheering crowd. They in Ireland today were again learning the nobility and dignity of military discipline and military service. It seemed almost like a dream coming true—they had at long last an Irish army. It had been given to the men of this present generation to realise the dream of the generations that went before them—the dream of Irish patriots for the last hundred years. They were creating on Irish soil again an Irish army. It was the most portentous thing in recent Irish history, and would be remembered in history to the credit of the men of this generation that they had the sight to see their opportunity and the courage to seize that opportunity.

### *A Tory Taunt Refuted*

He asked them to recall what had occurred in Ireland within the past year or two. A certain section of our countrymen, urged on by a political party in England, had taken up arms against Irish freedom. We are taunted with not wanting Irish freedom. It was stated that the passionate desire for freedom had died in Irish hearts and that there was no man in Ireland to arm for Irish freedom. The reply we made was the only reply that could be made. The reply that our manhood imitated that of North-East Ulster armed against Irish freedom. The Volunteers were the most important men in Ireland to-day, and counted more in the present political crisis and in the future history of Ireland than all the political parties, all the politicians, and all the newspapers combined (cheers), and it was no exaggeration to say that the issue of the present crisis depended upon the Irish Volunteers (renewed cheering). The future of Ireland was in the hands of the Volunteers to be molded as they wished. They were determined to arm the Volunteers, and that done it would be impossible for any politician to force upon them any solution of the Irish question which they did not wish to accept. When they had an Irish Parliament in College Green the work of the Irish Volunteers would be only then commencing. It would be a national defence force which was not going to be disbanded at the bidding of any politicians in Ireland or in England (cheers).

### *Growth of Movement*

He referred to the marvelous growth and success of the movement which had swept through the country spontaneously and grown to such enormous proportions in such a brief period of time, which showed that the movement appealed to everything that was straight and best and manliest in the Irish heart. It was only when the National Volunteers sprang into existence that the importation of arms was proclaimed. Well Ulster was able to get arms in spite of the Proclamation, and what Ulster did the men of Ireland could and would do (loud cheers).

# **Part VIII**

## **John Redmond: The Parting of the Ways**



# 1. The Provisional Committee Submits But Protests

16TH JUNE, 1914 In Hobson, *Hist. Irish Volunteers*, pp. 123-7.

THE PROVISIONAL committee of the Irish Volunteers at their meeting this evening had under consideration the second communication issued to the Press by Mr. John Redmond.

The Committee desires to point out that Mr. Redmond put forward his first proposal expressly as a "suggestion", and he asked for the adoption of that suggestion, or, to quote his own words, "some such arrangement". He did not demand the unreserved acceptance of his right to nomination.

The Committee in their original Manifesto published at the first public meeting on November 25th, 1913, had pledged themselves to the principle of elective government, and before the first proposal of Mr. Redmond became known the Committee had already under consideration a plan of county representation which they have adopted in view of Mr. Redmond's letter. Mr. Redmond's letter called for an "immediate" response. The Irish public are asked, therefore, to recognise that the Committee's action was in no sense hasty or ill-considered.

The General Order to elect county delegates was not a rejection of Mr. Redmond's proposals, but an honourable attempt on the part of the Committee to associate with themselves the county sections until such time as a fully elected body could be formed to replace it.

Mr. Redmond suggested that the Provisional Committee, not containing representatives from different parts of the country, should be augmented by the addition of twenty-five representative men from different parts of the country, nominated at the instance of the Irish Party.

The Provisional Committee responded to this invitation, and while they could not, with regard to their public pledges, accept the offer of immediate nomination, they felt they were entitled to hold that the scheme they put forward was one bound to commend itself to the Irish Volunteer organisation, to the Irish people, and not least to Mr. Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party. It was derived from the spirit of the Volunteer organisation, it was based upon the elective principle within the Volunteer ranks, and it increased the

Provisional Committee, not by twenty-five nominated members, but by thirty-two Volunteer delegates elected by a body of men ninety-five per cent, of whom are estimated by Mr. Redmond to be supporters of the Irish Party. The Provisional Committee had every right to believe that they were meeting Mr. Redmond's suggestions more than half way by calling upon such a body in their Volunteer capacity to elect delegates to co-operate in the temporary control of a movement that derives its sanction from the spontaneous support of the Irish people.

In his second letter Mr. Redmond has put forward as a rigid proposal the demand that the Committee should accept twenty-five nominated members, and reiterates a threat, if this demand is not conceded, to create a rival authority to that of the Provisional Committee, and thus to disrupt the organisation and place it under two competing systems of control. Such action on the part of Mr. Redmond would inevitably lead to the gravest dissension, and would render the Irish Volunteers not an effective National Defence Force, but an impotent and divided body, useless to its friends and the laughing-stock of its enemies.

The Provisional Committee deplore Mr. Redmond's decision to reject a solution at once democratic and in accord with the spirit of the Volunteer movement. They claim, and have claimed, no right of political dictation of any kind. The Volunteers as such are expressly debarred from seeking to influence political decision, just as they are prohibited from seeking to influence political or municipal elections, or to use the organisation for any sectional, sectarian, party, or personal ends.

The Committee recognises that for the time, in view of the new situation created by Mr. Redmond's attitude, it is no longer possible to preserve the unity of the Irish Volunteers and at the same time to maintain the non-party and non-sectarian principle of organisation which has hitherto been maintained, and which by securing the cordial support of National opinion has brought about the splendid spirit that pervades and invigorates the Volunteer movement.

This being the case, the Committee, under a deep and painful sense of responsibility, feel it their duty to accept the alternative which appears to them the lesser evil. In the interest of National unity, and in that interest only, the Provisional Committee now declares that pending the creation of an elective Governing Body by a duly constituted Irish Volunteer Convention, and in view of a situation clearly forced upon them, they accede to Mr. Redmond's demand to add to their number twenty-five persons nominated at the instance of the Irish Party.

To this declaration the Provisional Committee feels bound to add their testimony that in their experience of organising the Irish Volunteers in every part of Ireland they have found a universal National demand, in view of the fate of Grattan's Parliament, for the immediate organising and arming of the Volunteer

force, and for the maintenance of the Volunteers as the future safeguard and defence of the National liberties.

The Committee's declaration is necessarily governed by an absolutely strict understanding that no person can honourably accept a position of control over or within the Irish Volunteers who is not entirely in favour of the undelayed arming and the permanence of the Volunteer organisation.



## 2. The Minority Group Protests But Submits 17th June, 1914

In Hobson, *Hist. Irish Volunteers*, p. 128.

TO THE EDITOR . . .

Sir,

We, the undersigned members of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers who opposed the decision arrived at by a majority of the Committee on Tuesday night, on the grounds that it was a violation of the basic principles which up to the present have carried the Volunteer movement to success, at the same time feel it our duty to continue our work in the movement; and we appeal to those of the rank and file who are in agreement with us on this point to sink their personal feelings and persist in their efforts to make the Irish Volunteers an efficient armed force.

Yours, etc.,

Éamonn Ceannt,	Éamonn Martin,
M. J. Judge,	P. H. Pearse,
Con O'Colbaird,	Seán Mac Diarmada,
John Fitzgibbon,	Piaras Béaslaí.

Dublin, June 17th, 1914.



### 3. “Ireland Will Be Defended by Her Own Armed Sons”

**Mr. Redmond’s speech, House of Commons,  
3rd August, 1914.**

In Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, LXV (20th July-10th August, 1914.)

I HOPE the House will not consider it improper on my part, in the grave circumstances in which we are assembled, if I intervene for a very few moments. I was moved a great deal by that sentence in the speech of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in which he said that the one bright spot in the situation was the changed feeling in Ireland. In past times, when this Empire has been engaged in these terrible enterprises, it is true—it would be the utmost affectation and folly on my part to deny it—the sympathy of the Nationalists of Ireland, for reasons to be found deep down in centuries of history, has been estranged from this country.

Allow me to say, sir, that what has occurred in recent years has altered the situation completely. I must not touch, and I may be trusted not to touch, on any controversial topic; but this I may be allowed to say, that a wider knowledge of the facts of Irish history has, I think, altered the views of the democracy of this country toward the Irish question, and to-day I honestly believe that the democracy of Ireland will turn with the utmost anxiety and sympathy to this country in every trial and every danger that may overtake it.

There is a possibility, at any rate, of history repeating itself. The House will remember that in 1778, at the end of the disastrous American War, when it might, I think, truly be said that the military power of this country was almost at its lowest ebb, and when the shores of Ireland were threatened with foreign invasion, a body of 100,000 Irish Volunteers sprang into existence for the purpose of defending her shores. At first no Catholic—ah! how sad the reading of the history of those days is!—was allowed to be enrolled in that body of Volunteers, and yet, from the very first day, the Catholics of the South and West subscribed money and sent it toward the arming of their Protestant fellow-countrymen of a different creed in the North.

May history repeat itself to-day! There are in Ireland two large bodies of Volunteers. One of them sprang into existence in the South.

I say to the Government that they may to-morrow withdraw every one of their troops from Ireland. I say that the coast of Ireland will be defended from foreign invasion by her armed sons, and for this purpose armed Nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join arms with the armed Protestant Ulsternen in the North. Is it too much to hope that out of this situation there may spring a result which will be good, not merely for the Empire, but good for the future welfare and integrity of the Irish nation?

I ought to apologize for having intervened, but while Irishmen generally are in favour of peace, and would desire to save the democracy of this country from all the horrors of war, while we would make every possible sacrifice for that purpose, still, if the dire necessity is forced upon this country, we offer to the Government of the day that they may take their troops away, and that, if it is allowed to us, in comradeship with our brethren in the North, we will ourselves defend the coasts of our country.

## 4. Redmond's Double-Refusal to Lord Kitchener<sup>2</sup>

AUGUST, 1914

No oath of allegiance : No overseas service  
In *Irish Times*, 16th May, 1956.

WHEN LORD Kitchener started to raise his New Army he sent over Sir Bryan Mahon to Ireland to have a look at some of Redmond's Irish Volunteers and find out if they were going to enlist in the three Irish divisions which were to form part of the New Army. Redmond had consented to Kitchener's request that Mahon should be given the opportunity of inspecting some selected village units of the Irish Volunteers. I was ordered to accompany Mahon on these inspections as his staff officer.

For several days we toured the South and West of Ireland, and in every case, after Mahon had inspected a village unit, he made a short speech complimenting the unit on its smart appearance, and he always concluded with the question: "Are you going to join an Irish division in Lord Kitchener's New Army?" Invariably he received the answer: "We'll do whatever Mr. Redmond says."

On returning to Dublin Mahon said he must see Redmond, and I arranged this through the good offices of Brendan Fottrell (later killed in the war) and Henry Harrison, M.P. At this interview General Mahon congratulated Mr. Redmond on the soldierly bearing of his volunteers and told him of the answer he had received from every unit. "Now what about it, Mr. Redmond?" asked Sir Bryan.

Redmond said they would join subject to two fundamental conditions:—

- (a) They were not to be required to take the Oath of Allegiance;
- (b) They were to be employed in the defence of the shores of Ireland and were not to be drafted overseas.

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<sup>2</sup> Subsequent to the publication of the above letter, Colonel Comyn was in correspondence with Mr. Eoin Ó Caoimh of Dublin, and informed him that he was present at the interview between Redmond and Sir Bryan Mahon, early in August 1914. Colonel Comyn died in 1963.

The letter is important evidence of what Redmond meant by his speech in the House of Commons on 3rd August, 1914, and of the change which took place in Redmond's policy by the time of his Woodenbridge speech on 20th September, 1914.

Sir Bryan replied that as regards the first condition it would be a matter for Cabinet decision, but he personally thought there would be no difficulty in coming to an agreement on that point. As regards condition (b) Sir Bryan said he could tell Mr. Redmond straight away that there was no hope of such a condition being accepted. It would defeat the whole purpose of the enlistment. "At the present moment," said Sir Bryan, "the fate of England and Ireland is being fought out on the battlefields of Flanders. If we lose that battle no number of soldiers sitting on the shores of Ireland will save your country any more than England from the German vengeance."

Redmond, however, refused to budge an inch beyond his two conditions. General Mahon returned to England that night and reported to Kitchener that he had failed in his mission.

LEWIS COMYN (COLONEL).

Mallow, May 13th, 1956.

## 5. Redmond's Fateful Speech at Woodenbridge

20TH SEPTEMBER, 1914 in Hobson, *Hist. Irish Volunteers*, pp. 196-7.

WICKLOW VOLUNTEERS, in spite of the peaceful happiness and beauty of the scene in which we stand, remember this country at this moment is in a state of war, and your duty is twofold. The duty of the manhood of Ireland is twofold. Its duty is at all costs to defend the shores of Ireland from foreign invasion. It is a duty more than that of taking care that Irish valour proves itself on the field of war as it has always proved itself in the past. The interests of Ireland, of the whole of Ireland, are at stake in this war. This war is undertaken in defence of the highest interests of religion and morality and right, and it would be a disgrace for ever to our country, a reproach to her manhood, and a denial of the lessons of her history if young Ireland confined their efforts to remaining at home to defend the shores of Ireland from an unlikely invasion, and shrinking from the duty of proving on the field of battle that gallantry and courage which have distinguished their race all through its history. I say to you, therefore, your duty is twofold. I am glad to see such magnificent material for soldiers around me, and I say to you, go on drilling and make yourselves efficient for the work, and then account yourselves as men not only in Ireland itself, but wherever the firing line extends, in defence of right, of freedom and religion in this war.



## 6. Redmond's Change of Policy, August-September, 1914

*By Eoin P. Ó Caoimh*

THE "DISLIKE" of Redmond for the Volunteers can easily be understood. With a family tradition of Parliamentarianism he had entered the House of Commons in January, 1881 at the time of the New Departure. He had seen a British Government converted to Home Rule and introducing a bill to that effect. That bill had been defeated in the Commons, but seven years later he had seen it passed by the Commons though then rejected by the Lords. Now, having seen great progress by the Nationalist take-over of the local government in 1898, the Land Act of 1903, the establishment of the National University in 1908, and—crowning victory—the vanquishing of the power of the House of Lords by the Parliament Act of 1910, here was the Liberal Government engaged in actually putting through a Home Rule Bill which was so reasonably certain of enactment that an approximate date for the opening of a Parliament in Dublin could be fixed. Throughout all this time the mere prospect of challenging a decision of the Mother of Parliaments ruling the greatest Empire the world had ever seen was simply unthinkable.

During those years he had endured criticism from within and without the Irish Party, the rivalry of the All For Ireland League, the challenge of Sinn Fein, and the "daily nagging of the Irish Independent newspaper". He had survived all, and his careful patience now appeared to be vindicated as Home Rule marched steadily—well, fairly steadily—forward.

Into this situation had suddenly come an incredible challenge. Carson and his Orange men and women had loudly proclaimed that not only would they offer armed resistance to any attempt to apply the Home Rule Act to Ulster, but they would organise an Orange government independent of any British or Irish government, complete with Army, Civil Service, etc., etc.

And moreover supporting them they had the whole powerful Conservative Party of Great Britain, and the tentative backing of the German Kaiser whom Carson had visited and lunched with in August, 1913.

This new explosive situation required the most careful handling. Redmond was now the great constitutionalist; the Conservatives, the Orangemen, the Presbyterian Church, the (Protestant) Church of Ireland, the dukes and

duchesses, they were the rebels. Surely the British Constitution was supreme? This display of physical force—whether mock or serious—could be disregarded. Just allow the law to take its course.

But, probably even more unexpected than the Orange movement, suddenly arose another physical force movement. It had started very quietly, its avowed aim was broad and vague, several of his supporters were among its leaders, there was nothing very spectacular about its progress, and few persons of prominence were lending their names. But it was a physical force movement, it was making good progress; though its aims were vague and its leadership middle and lower class it was of course recruiting the separatists, the many people who distrusted England, all who felt that they could not stand by and risk their brethren in Ulster being massacred, and the many who always only wanted a chance of striking a blow for freedom. All this was clearly detracting from his leadership. Obviously even from a practical point of view he must do something about it.

Redmond was not a separatist. Whatever about his Parnellite days he was now convinced that Ireland's interests lay in being a self-governing state of the Empire or Commonwealth similar to Australia. His first wife was an Australian, his second wife an Englishwoman. Of necessity he lived a good deal in England, and while, of course, he observed the Party rule against entertainment by British political circles he had no doubt become affected by English life and he was somewhat out of touch with the Irish renaissance. His position as The Irish Leader was however unquestioned, and he felt no doubt that if the heads of the new movement did not accede to his demands he was in a position to effectively compel them.

Moreover he had to take into account the effect on England and on English political parties of this latest development. The avowed object of the Irish Volunteers "to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland" could mean anything. It could mean that despite Redmond's own declaration accepting the Home Rule Bill (for all Ireland) as a final settlement his Nationalist supporters were really aiming at Separation; and make him seem insincere. In 1913 the Liberal majority in Parliament over the Conservatives had vanished,—and this despite the tremendous social legislation of the Old Age Pensions and Health Insurance Acts. The enactment of Home Rule depended on the Liberal Government. With or without pressure from that Government he must show publicly that he was The Leader. Otherwise, on the plea that they had introduced it as a final settlement the Government could with justification drop it. And if this chance of Home Rule were lost when would another come? And in those days of the Empire's greatness what real alternative was there to Parliamentarianism?

Whatever about his inclinations, position, or prestige, Redmond's responsibilities were in fact, heavy. MacNeill, no doubt, saw the situation which was developing,

and endeavoured to anticipate it by bringing in Redmond on his (MacNeill's) terms. Redmond refused, and having failed to get privately the arrangement he wanted he issued his public statement which was, in effect, a challenge.

What is important, however, is to note that his policy about the Irish Volunteers during the first two months of World War I has been misunderstood and misrepresented.

His speech in the House of Commons on 3 August, 1914, did not in fact declare that Ireland should fight England's battles on foreign fields. He clearly invited England to withdraw her troops from Ireland, and leave the defence of the country to Irishmen. In this he had the support not merely of the Home Rulers but of the separatists. It is significant, though now forgotten, that the Irish Volunteers immediately endorsed this proposal. His attitude remained unchanged for some weeks. It is unquestioned that by September, 1914, Redmond was so swept away by English enthusiasm for the war that he allowed himself to stump the country as a national recruiting sergeant for the British Army.

But an illuminating article by Colonel Lewis Comyn in this volume reveals that Redmond, far from being an enthusiast in early August, 1914, for Irish participation in the war, informed Lord Kitchener through General Bryan Mahon that he would co-operate with the War Office on condition that (a) the Volunteers would be exempted from taking an oath of allegiance to the English king, (b) they would not be bound to serve overseas.

All this is now forgotten, and it is assumed that Redmond's later policy, as expressed in his extraordinary speech at Woodenbridge on 20 September, 1914, was his attitude from the beginning. This is to read history backwards.



# 7. The Provisional Committee Repudiates John Redmond

In Hobson, *Hist. Irish Volunteers*, pp. 198-202.

41 Kildare Street, Dublin,  
Thursday, 24th September, 1914.

## To the Irish Volunteers

TEN MONTHS ago a Provisional Committee commenced the Irish Volunteer Movement with the sole purpose of securing and defending the Rights and Liberties of the Irish people. The movement on these lines, though thwarted and opposed for a time, obtained the support of the Irish Nation. When the Volunteer Movement had become the main factor in the Irish position, Mr. Redmond decided to acknowledge it and to endeavour to bring it under his control. Three months ago he put forward the claim to send twenty-five nominees to the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers. He threatened, if the claim was not conceded, to proceed to the dismemberment of the Irish Volunteer Organisation.

It is clear that this proposal to throw the country into turmoil and to destroy the chances of a Home Rule measure in the near future must have been forced upon Mr. Redmond. Already, ignoring the Irish Volunteers as a factor in the National position, Mr. Redmond had consented to a dismemberment of Ireland which could be made permanent by the same agencies that forced him to accept it as temporary. He was now prepared to risk another disruption and the wreck of the cause entrusted to him.

The Provisional Committee, while recognising that the responsibility in that case would be altogether Mr. Redmond's, decided to risk the lesser evil and to admit his nominees to sit and act on the Committee. The Committee made no representations as to the persons to be nominated, and when the nominations were received the Committee raised no question as to how far Mr. Redmond had fulfilled his public undertaking to nominate "representative men from different parts of the country." Mr. Redmond's nominees were admitted purely and simply as his nominees, and without co-option.

Mr. Redmond, addressing a body of Irish Volunteers on last Sunday, has now announced for the Irish Volunteers a policy and programme fundamentally at variance with their own published and accepted aims and objects, but with which his nominees are, of course, identified. He has declared it to be the duty of the Irish Volunteers to take foreign service under a Government which is not Irish. He has made this announcement without consulting the Provisional Committee, the Volunteers themselves, or the people of Ireland, to whose service alone they are devoted.

Having thus disregarded the Irish Volunteers and their solemn engagements, Mr. Redmond is no longer entitled, through his nominees, to any place in the administration and guidance of the Irish Volunteer Organisation. Those who, by virtue of Mr. Redmond's nomination, have heretofore been admitted to act on the Provisional Committee accordingly cease henceforth to belong to that body, and from this date until the holding of an Irish Volunteer Convention the Provisional Committee consists of those only whom it comprised before the admission of Mr. Redmond's nominees.

At the next meeting of the Provisional Committee we shall propose:

1. To call a Convention of the Irish Volunteers for Wednesday, 25th November, 1914, the anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers in Dublin.
2. To re-affirm without qualification the manifesto proposed and adopted at the inaugural meeting.
3. To oppose any diminution of the measure of Irish self-government which now exists as a Statute on paper, and which would not now have reached that stage but for the Irish Volunteers.
4. To repudiate any undertaking, by whomsoever given, to consent to the legislative dismemberment of Ireland; and to protest against the attitude of the present Government, who, under the pretence that "Ulster cannot be coerced," avow themselves prepared to coerce the Nationalists of Ulster.
5. To declare that Ireland cannot, with honour or safety, take part in foreign quarrels otherwise than through the free action of a National Government of her own; and to repudiate the claim of any man to offer up the blood and lives of the sons of Irishmen and Irishwomen to the services of the British Empire while no National Government which could speak and act for the people of Ireland is allowed to exist.
6. To demand that the present system of governing Ireland through Dublin Castle and the British military power, a system responsible for the recent outrages in Dublin, be abolished without delay, and that a National Government be forthwith established in its place.

The signatories to this Statement are the great majority of the members of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, apart from the nominees of Mr. Redmond, who are no longer members of the Committee. We regret that the absence of Sir Roger Casement in America prevents him from being a signatory with us.

(Signed):

Eoin MacNeill, Chairman Provisional Committee;

Ua Rathghaille, Treasurer Provisional Committee; Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, Piaras Béaslaí, Michael J. Judge, Peter Paul Macken, ex-Ald.; Seán Mac Giobúin, P. H. Pearse, Padraig Ó Riain, Bulmer Hobson, Éamonn Martin, Conchubhair Ó Colbaird, Éamonn Ceannt, Seán Mac Diarmada, Séamus Ó Conchubhair, Liam Mellows, Colm Ó Lochlainn, Liam Ua Gogán, Peter White.



# **Part IX**



# 1. Proposed Constitution of the Irish Volunteers

(Passed at a special meeting of the Provisional Committee,  
10th October, 1914)

From an official copy in *Bulmer Hobson Papers*, N.L.I., MS. 13174(1).

## I Objects

1. To secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland.
2. To train, discipline and equip for this purpose an Irish Volunteer Force which will render service to an Irish National Government when such is established.
3. To unite in the service of Ireland Irishmen of every creed and of every party and class.

## II Enrolment Form to be Signed by All Irish Volunteers

I, the undersigned, desire to be enrolled for service in Ireland as a member of the Irish Volunteer Force. I subscribe to the constitution of the Irish Volunteers and pledge my willing obedience to every article of it. I declare that in joining the Irish Volunteer Force I set before myself the stated objects of the Irish Volunteers and no others.

(Objects to be set forth on the enrolment form.)

## III Scope and System of Organisation

1. The organisation of the Irish Volunteers will extend throughout all Ireland.
2. Every body of Irishmen, whether in Ireland or abroad who band themselves together to attain the stated objects, who sign the enrolment form, and who subscribe to the constitution of the Irish Volunteers will be eligible for recognition as a corps of Irish Volunteers, and may on payment of company

affiliation fees be recognised provisionally as a corps of Irish Volunteers.

3. A corps will, upon affiliation, be divided into companies according to its strength.
  4. No second corps will be affiliated or recognised in a parish in which there already exists a recognised corps of Irish Volunteers, without the sanction and approval of the officers of the existing corps.
  5. The annual affiliation fee per company, payable in advance to Headquarters, will be £3. This may be paid in one sum or in quarterly instalments.
- Note:*—This scale of fees will come into force from the 1st of January, 1915, till which date the scale hitherto in force, a payment of one penny per month per man, will continue.
6. No company will be recognised as permanent until it has been in existence for two months and has fulfilled the requirements of the Military Organisation of the Irish Volunteers.
  7. The recognised companies will be formed into battalions according to the scheme of Military Organisation of the Irish Volunteers.
  8. The companies in each county will until the completion of Military Organisation in each area, be under the jurisdiction of a County Board. This temporary County Board will be formed of delegates, one from each company in the county, together with two members of the Irish Volunteers in the county nominated by the General Council of the Irish Volunteers and three co-opted members.
  9. Apart from the regular payments of fees, in order to ensure the continuance of affiliation, each company must carry on constantly all the military exercises ordered by the properly constituted governing authorities of the Irish Volunteer Force.
  10. Each company will in all things submit to the examinations, inspections, inquiries and orders of the properly constituted governing authorities of the Irish Volunteer Force.

#### IV Government of the Irish Volunteers

1. All power of making, modifying and amending the constitution of the Irish Volunteers will reside in the General Convention, which will be held annually and which will be composed of delegates, one from each company of Irish Volunteers, together with all the members of the General Council of the Irish Volunteers.
2. The General Council of the Irish Volunteers will consist of fifty members (50) namely, one delegate direct from each of the thirty-two counties of Ireland (32), one delegate direct from each of the following nine cities:

Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Derry, Waterford, Galway, Sligo and Kilkenny (9) and nine members other than the delegates direct, resident within ten miles of the City of Dublin. This General Council will meet monthly.

3. The members of the General Council who are to act as delegates direct from the counties and cities will be chosen by the delegates to the General Convention, voting County by County and City by City.
4. The President and the other eight members resident in or within ten miles of the city of Dublin, will be chosen by all the delegates to the General Convention, voting by ballot.
5. These nine will form the Central Executive to meet weekly or more frequently and carry on the work of the Organisation.
6. The scope of duties of the Central Executive will be defined by the General Council.
7. All functions and powers, not herein otherwise expressly assigned, will be held by the General Council and any of them may be assigned by the General Council to the Central Executive.
8. An audited balance sheet of accounts will be submitted to the Annual General Convention by the General Council.



## 2. Irish Volunteers First Convention

### (25th October, 1914)

In *The Irish Volunteer*, 31st October, 1914, pp. 9-10.

THE FIRST convention of Irish Volunteers was held in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on Sunday, Mr. Eoin MacNeill, Chairman of the Provisional Committee, presiding. At 11 o'clock about 160 delegates had assembled, a large number of whom were in uniform.

#### *List of Delegates*

The following members of the Provisional Committee were present: Eoin MacNeill, Ua Rathgaille, P. H. Pearse, Seán MacDermott, M. J. Judge, T. MacDonagh, B. Hobson, P. Beasley, S. O'Connor, E. Martin, P. Ryan, C. Colbert, Joseph Plunkett, P. Macken, S. Fitzgibbon, E. Kent, C. O'Loughlin, P. White, L. Mellows.

Mr Eoin MacNeill, who was received with loud cheers, made the following statement:

About a year ago the first steps were taken to set afoot the Irish Volunteer Organisation, and a Provisional Committee was formed in Dublin for that purpose. This Committee was brought together by what I may call a process of mutual invitation. Every possible effort was made to secure as wide a representation of national opinion as possible. I myself came to the Committee a supporter of Mr. Redmond and the Irish Party in the execution of their electoral mandate to secure Home Rule for Ireland. It was not to be expected that Mr. Redmond would make himself responsible for so great an experiment in the direction of a forward move. We hoped at least for neutrality on his part and no discouragement, but we found it almost impossible to induce recognised public supporters of Mr. Redmond to join our number. This should be remembered in view of the charge that our committee consisted of ten men hostile to Mr. Redmond's Party and policy.

A few of the Original Committee have recently joined the new committee formed by Mr. Redmond. These men can testify that not a single act or word of hostility to the Irish Party or its policy found a place in the whole proceedings of the Original Committee. Even when Mr. Redmond's assent to the Ulster

exclusion proposal of the Government was forced from him in last March, neither the Committee, nor any member of it proposed to take action, although exclusion would raise a very acute difficulty for the Irish Volunteer Organisation.

On November 25th a mass meeting held in Dublin adopted with enthusiasm the project of a Volunteer Organisation, set forth in the Committee's Manifesto. The enrolment of the Dublin Volunteers began at that meeting, and immediately afterwards the enrolled men were divided into district corps and drilling was begun in various halls throughout the city. The initial expenses were borne by the members of the Committee. Each member was told off as a delegate to superintend the drilling and organisation of a city corps. The further expenses of the organisation headquarters were borne by the weekly collections of the Dublin Volunteers until the Organisation became widespread throughout the country and a scale of affiliation fees was fixed. The Committee also appointed its members to attend meeting[s] in various parts of the country in which the formation of Volunteer corps was proposed. Printed instructions were drawn up and circulated to ensure that local Volunteer Committees should be of a representative character and that the enrolment should proceed strictly on the basis of locality, avoiding all party and sectional divisions.

The Provisional Committee bound itself by resolution at one of its earliest meetings that all money received by public subscription or private donation should be expended on the purchase of arms and ammunition for the Volunteers, and in no other way. The Committee has faithfully adhered to his resolution until the present day.

In spite of every discouragement, private and public, the Volunteer movement made rapid headway in all parts of Ireland, and it soon became plain that those who discouraged volunteering and flouted the project only proved their own want of unity with the spirit and instinct of the Irish Nation, and their incapacity to understand or interpret the national mind.

I now turn to the question of the Government's attitude towards the Irish Volunteer, for I have not the least doubt that the secret hostility of the Government is at the root of certain later developments.

No sooner did it become known that a serious movement was on foot to establish a National Defence Force for Ireland than the Government launched its double proclamation against the importation of arms. The Government had placed no obstacle in the way of arming the Unionist Volunteers during the two previous years, though the Unionist movement was an open threat against Home Rule, to which the Government was pledged, and professed to be faithfully pledged.

I now ask did the Government consult their Irish allies, as everyone must expect upon this remarkable departure in their Irish policy? If they did, what was the response?

I made a vigorous public protest against the Proclamation. I pointed out that it was a return to arbitrary measures specially directed against Ireland, in other words, to Coercion, by a Government that pretended to disavow Coercion and to forward Irish autonomy. The Proclamation was partly successful. It did not prevent the importation of arms by the Unionists. The Government plainly connived at the landing of arms in the neighbourhood of Belfast. But the proclamation discouraged the subscription of money to buy arms for the Irish Volunteers. During six months the entire income of the Provisional Committee for all purposes was about £1,200.

The Government also employed its detective force and even its regular forces to watch and hamper the work of the Volunteer organisation. Our correspondence and postal parcels were opened, delayed and sometimes withheld by the Government. The Government refused to allow us to form rifle clubs for target practice. They confiscated all arms coming to us whenever they could seize them and they also confiscated and still hold up practice rifles and miniature ammunition, the property of the Irish Volunteers.

The course of events since the beginning of March quite explains the whole attitude of the Government towards the Volunteer movement. Having made sure of the Parliament Act, which was of prime importance to their own party, and having made full use of the Irish Party for that purpose, the Government practically allied itself with the Unionists to coerce Mr. Redmond and they succeeded. They compelled him to accept the exclusion proposal, and he accepted it on the public understanding that it would lead to an agreement between the two Parties on Home Rule. It led to no agreement. The Unionists became more defiant. The Government, then, instead of keeping to the understanding and withdrawing their amendment proposals, actually adopted those proposals into their Home Rule policy, and again compelled Mr. Redmond to assent. The Government used Mr. Redmond's alliance for its own purpose, the Parliament Act, and then most shamefully broke its compact with him and with the Irish Party and their supporters, and compelled Mr. Redmond to yield at stage after stage. I wish to emphasise the bearing of all this on the Irish Volunteer question.

Had Mr. Redmond understood and trusted the manhood of Ireland, he would never have yielded an inch, and he would have held the Government to its pledges. It was not until he was in full retreat before the pledge-breaking Government that he began to take a keen interest in the Irish Volunteers. Why? For two reasons, because he had shaken the confidence of his supporters in Ireland and feared the existence of a powerful national force asserting the full national demand and confident of their power to enforce it; and secondly, because the Government had taken up a new attitude towards him, an attitude of compulsion and control. We know all that the Government would like to do with the Volunteers. Mr. Asquith has told us. This could not be proposed last

April, but the next best thing from the Government's point of-view was that they should control Mr. Redmond and that Mr. Redmond should control the Volunteers. When Mr. Redmond demanded control his demand was backed up by the English journals that support the Government.

It has been stated that I, on my own initiative, opened communications with Mr. Redmond and invited him to take on himself the burden of the Volunteer movement. That statement is untrue, and can be disproved both by witnesses and by documents. I was as certain from the outset as I am to-day that Mr. Redmond was making the greatest political blunder of his career, a greater blunder than his first contempt for the Volunteers, a greater blunder even than his yielding to the exclusion proposals, when he adopted the course of controlling and dominating the Volunteers. To my mind, this was a clear proof of weakness, not of strength, on his part, of timidity not of confidence, and I am certain that the Government looked on his new attitude towards the Volunteers with great relief as making their own course of pledge-breaking and backsliding all the easier for them.

I will not enter upon the details of Mr. Redmond's action up to the time when we admitted his nominees to the Committee. He did not fulfil his public promise to send us "representative men from different parts of the country." He forced his arrangements on us under threat of disruption. It was we, not he, who were loyal to the Home Rule Bill, which in the judgment of many of us, would have been lost in the disruption openly and needlessly threatened by Mr. Redmond.

I pass over the three months of the Joint Committee except to say this, that my counsel and my adopted line of action was to give every possible chance to the nominee members to become genuinely attached to the Volunteer movement, its principles and its programme. All hope in that direction vanished with the landing of the arms at Howth. That enterprise was planned by the Original Committee and a few outside friends. Its success, its organisation, were perfect up to the point where it was interfered with by as villainous an enterprise as ever was planned in Dublin Castle. In a certain compact section of Mr. Redmond's nominees there was awakened only a spirit of bitter malignity, and from that day on the prospect of united feeling or united action faded away.

I wish further to prove that Mr. Redmond, when we agreed to his terms, did not act upon the agreement. He withheld from the Joint Committee all funds which he had received for the purposes of the Volunteers, amounting as has since been seen, to £6,000. This proves that his purpose was not to assist the Committee in any way until he could succeed in wiping out or reducing to impotence the original members of the Committee.

With the outbreak of the war came Mr. Redmond's declaration that if the British Army were withdrawn the Volunteers would undertake the defence of

Ireland. The Government, while apparently accepting this declaration, really went about to set it aside. An entirely different scheme, designed to bring the Volunteers under War Office control, was almost immediately substituted, and various efforts were used to press this scheme from different quarters on the Volunteers. Mr. Redmond's declaration led to a rush of ex-army officers and country gentlemen to take part in the Volunteer movement. To these gentlemen, almost without exception, the national purpose of the Volunteers was not the main purpose, that is to say, they did not come to us in good faith, but with ulterior motives.

Then Mr. Redmond advanced, or rather retreated a further stage and, declaring Home Rule and the new Irish constitution to be an accomplished fact he proclaimed it to be the duty of Irishmen to enter the British Army for foreign service. This new departure has been acclaimed as an act of free loyalty and gratitude towards the British democracy. Its real aspect is revealed by Mr. Patrick Egan, who has lately returned from America to find the whole Irish-American public united in the strongest repudiation of Mr. Redmond's new policy.

Mr. Egan is in Mr. Redmond's confidence, and writes to the Irish World in defence of the new policy. How does he defend it? He states that Mr. Redmond has been compelled "to negotiate and promise in order to save the (Home Rule) Bill from being wrecked." The head of the Government which exercises this compulsion comes to Dublin and speaks about "the free gift of a free people."

In his speech to the Volunteers at Woodenbridge Mr. Redmond announced it to be the duty of the Irish Volunteers to serve the British Empire in the present war. He thus cast away and defied the principles and the policy and the enrolment pledge of the Volunteers, and we replied by announcing that those who were admitted to our Committee as his nominees were thus *ipso facto* withdrawn and excluded from it.

The issue between Mr. Redmond and ourselves is clear and simple. It is this, whether the Irish Volunteers are pledged to the cause of Ireland, of all Ireland, and of Ireland only, or are likewise bound to serve the Imperial Government in defence of the British Empire.

Clear as that issue is, every effort has been used and is being used to confuse it. It is pretended that we are in revolt against Mr. Redmond's party and his leadership. Our position, however, is practically what it was before Mr. Redmond, with the British Government behind him, crossed our path.

Our critics claim that as Chairman of the Irish Party Mr. Redmond is virtual governor of Ireland and entitled, therefore, to rule the Irish Volunteers—that he holds the place of an Irish Louis Botha. If that be so, then he is entitled to rule Dublin Castle, the Irish police and the regular forces in Ireland.

We, the Irish Volunteers, are now in a much stronger position than we were at the close of last year. Then, as now, they were looked at askance, and

commanded no support from Mr. Redmond, or from the Press and Party organisations at his back. Already in the conflict that has been forced on them, whatever verbal declarations may be on the one side, the attempt to induce the Irish Volunteers to become Imperial mercenaries may have produced many votes of confidence, but has not produced many recruits. Not a single corps which has gone over to Mr. Redmond's new Committee has offered its services to the War Office. The new Committee themselves, in their first manifesto, have not ventured to adopt the "double duty" proclaimed by their President to the Volunteers at Woodenbridge.

We on our part adhere to the Volunteer programme and go forward with the work of organising, training and equipping a Volunteer Force for the service of Ireland in Ireland. Such a force may yet be the means of saving Home Rule from disaster and of compelling the Home Rule Government to keep faith with Ireland without the exactation of a price in blood. Whether it succeeds in this or not, the Irish Volunteer organisation will at all events preserve the trust of Ireland a Nation, in the secure confidence that sooner or later our country will win her rights and liberties by courage and tenacity, without compromise and without abasement. (Applause.)

### 3. The Volunteers Declare their Policy

**25th October, 1914**

In *The Irish Volunteer*, 31st October, 1914, p. 12.

AT THE first Convention of the Irish Volunteers, in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on Sunday, 25th October, 1914, Eoin MacNeill proposed the following declaration of policy for Irish Volunteers—

1. To maintain the right and duty of the Irish nation henceforward to provide for its own defence by means of a permanent armed and trained Volunteer force.
2. To unite the people of Ireland on the basis of Irish Nationality and a common national interest; to maintain the integrity of the nation and to resist with all our strength any measures tending to bring about or perpetuate disunion or the partition of our country.
3. To resist any attempt to force the men of Ireland into military service under any Government until a free National Government of Ireland is empowered by the Irish people themselves to deal with it.
4. To secure the abolition of the system of governing Ireland through Dublin Castle and the British military power, and the establishment of a National Government in its place.

The constitution was then gone into, and after much discussion was passed. It will be published by the Committee in due course.

Professor Eoin MacNeill was unanimously elected Chairman of the Volunteer movement amidst scenes of intense enthusiasm. The O'Rahilly was unanimously elected treasurer, and the twenty-one members of the old Provisional Committee, whose names were appended to the manifesto expelling Mr. Redmond's nominees, were unanimously elected and will be joined very shortly by the representatives to be elected by the thirty-two counties and nine principal towns who will form the new General Council of the Irish Volunteers.

At the close of the Convention the Chairman announced that he expected in a few days to receive the sum of £2,000 from the Irish Volunteer Committee in America.



# 4. Scheme of Military Organisation for the Volunteers

December 1914

In *The Irish Volunteers*, 26 December 1944, supplement.

## I General Scope of the Scheme

1. SUBJECT TO the provisions hereinafter made for the recognition, in certain cases, of groups smaller than the Company, the Irish Volunteers shall consist of tactical units called Companies.
2. The members of a Company shall be drawn from an area called the Company District.
3. Companies in neighbouring Company Districts shall be grouped into Battalions. The area from which the Companies constituting a Battalion are drawn shall be called the Battalion District.
4. Battalions in neighbouring Battalion Districts may be grouped into Brigades. The area from which the Battalions constituting a Brigade are drawn shall be called the Brigade District.
5. The Company, Battalion, and Brigade Districts shall be marked out by Headquarters in accordance with the natural and artificial lines of communication of the country rather than in accordance with its political divisions.
6. Closely-grouped Battalions in suitable areas may be recognised as constituting a Regiment with a territorial name, but the Regiment shall not be regarded as a military unit.

## II Arms of the Service

1. The Irish Volunteers shall comprise the following arms of the service: (1) Infantry; (2) Mounted Infantry, including Cyclists; (3) Artillery and Machine Guns; (4) Engineer Corps; (5) Transport, Supply, and Communications; (6) Army Medical Service.
2. The organisation shall be based upon the idea that each unit is to be as far as possible self-contained, and thus capable of acting with the greatest

advantage either independently or in conjunction with other units. Every arm of the service shall therefore be represented as far as possible in each Company, and hence in each Battalion and Brigade.

### III The Company (a) General Organisation

1. The Company shall consist when at full strength of three Company Officers and 100 men.
2. The Company Officers shall be the Company Commander (Captain), the Right Half-Company Commander (First Lieutenant), and the Left Half-Company Commander (Second Lieutenant).
3. The 100 men of the Company shall normally comprise the following:—
  - (a) Four Sections, numbered 1 to 4, each consisting of a Section Commander, 2 Squad Commanders, a Pioneer, a Signaller, and 12 men. Sections 1 and 2 to constitute the Right Half-Company under the command of the Right Half-Company Commander; and Sections 3 and 4 to constitute the Left Half-Company under the Left Half-Company Commander. Each Section to be divided into Right and Left Squads, each consisting of a Squad Commander and 7 men (including Pioneer or Signaller). The Squads of the Company to be numbered 1 to 8.
  - (b) A Section of Cycle Scouts, consisting of a Scout Commander and 16 men, including 2 Despatch Riders.
  - (c) A Transport and Supply Section of 4 men, one of whom shall be in command of the Section, with one waggon or two pack animals.
  - (d) An Ambulance Section of 8 men, one of whom shall be in command of the Section.
  - (e) A Company Adjutant (Colour-Sergeant).
  - (f) A Company Signaller.
  - (g) A Bugler, Piper, or Drummer.
4. The following shall therefore be the normal details of a Company:—

#### Company Officers:

Company Commander	1
Half-Company Commanders	2

#### Subordinate Officers and Men:

Company Adjutant	1
Section Commanders	4

Scout Commander	1
4 Sections of 16	64
Section of Cycle Scouts	16
Transport and Supply	4
Ambulance	8
Company Signaller	1
Bugler, Piper, or Drummer	1
	100

Total of all ranks—103.

5. And the following shall be the normal details of a Section:—

Section Commander	1
Squad Commanders	2
Pioneer	1
Signaller	1
Men	12

Total of all ranks—17.

### *(b) Special Regulations*

1. While the members of the Special Sections (i.e. Cycle Scouts, Transport and Supply, and Ambulance) are to be specially trained for their special services, all members of the Company shall be trained as riflemen and as scouts.
2. In addition to the Cycle Scouts, as many men as possible shall be mounted on cycles, and men so mounted shall be placed in sections together. It shall be within the discretion of a Company Commander to mount some of his men on horses.
3. A member of the Company shall be trained as Instructor in Musketry, and one as Armourer.
4. When a Company is below full strength, the Company Commander shall, subject to the approval of Headquarters, use his discretion in determining the strength of the Special Sections and, generally, in applying the foregoing regulations, but he shall always endeavour to have each of the prescribed arms of the service represented in the Company.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This clause empowers the Company Commander to reduce the strength of the Special Sections when such is found to be necessary, and also, when necessary, to combine double duties in one individual or to distribute the duties of one position between two or more individuals.

Local circumstances shall always be taken into account, the object being to secure the practical efficiency of the Company rather than its conformation to an ideal type.

*(c) Duties of Company and Subordinate Officers*

1. The Company Commander shall be responsible for the organisation, training, equipment, discipline, and general efficiency of his Company. He shall command the Company in peace and war, subject only to the authority of superior officers duly appointed by the proper authorities of the Irish Volunteers.
2. The Half-Company Commanders shall be responsible to the Company Commander for the efficiency of their respective Half-Companies.
3. The Section and Squad Commanders shall be responsible to their superior officers for the efficiency of the respective units under their command.
4. The Scout Commander shall be responsible to the Company Commander for the efficiency of the Section of Cycle Scouts and of the general scouting of the Company.
5. The Commanders of the Transport and Ambulance Sections shall be responsible to the Company Commander for the efficiency of their respective sections.
6. The Company Adjutant (Colour-Sergeant) shall act as adjutant to the Company Commander, and shall be specially responsible for drill instruction and the training of recruits.

*(d) Appointment of Company and Subordinate Officers.*

1. The Company and Half-Company Commanders shall be elected by the Company at a general meeting summoned for that purpose, such election not to take effect unless and until ratified by Headquarters. Every Company Officer, upon ratification of his election, shall be given a Commission by Headquarters, such Commission to be his authority to act as a Company Officer of the Irish Volunteers.
2. It shall be within the power of Headquarters to deprive a Company Officer of his Commission either of its own motion or on the requisition of the Company.
3. All Section and Squad Commanders and other subordinate officers of the Company shall be appointed by the Company Commander, who shall also have power to dismiss them.

*(e) The Company Committee*

1. The civil business of the Company shall be managed by a Company Committee consisting of the three Company Officers, together with a Secretary and a Treasurer elected by the Company. Such Committee shall have power to co-opt two other members of the Company to serve upon it.
2. The Company Committee shall not have any jurisdiction in matters appertaining to military discipline, efficiency, or command, for which the Company Commander shall be solely responsible.

**IV The Battalion***(a) General Organisation*

1. The Battalion shall normally comprise 4 or more (but not exceeding 8) Companies, together with a Battalion Engineer Corps, a Battalion Transport, Supply, and Communication Corps, and a Battalion Hospital Corps.
2. The Battalion Engineer Corps shall consist of 8 men, under a Captain and a Lieutenant of Engineers.
3. The Battalion Transport, Supply, and Communication Corps shall consist of 8 men, with two wagons or four pack animals, under a Quartermaster and an Assistant Quartermaster.
4. The Battalion Hospital Corps shall consist of 4 men, under a Surgeon Captain and a Surgeon Lieutenant.
5. The Battalion Officers shall be the Commandant, the Vice-Commandant, the Battalion Adjutant, the Quartermaster, the Assistant Quartermaster, the Battalion Engineer Commander with his second in command, and the Battalion Surgeon with his second in command.
6. The details of a Battalion shall therefore be:

*Battalion Officers:*

Commandant	1
Vice-Commandant	1
Battalion Adjutant	1
Quartermaster and Assistant	2
Bn. Engineer Commander and second in command	2
Bn. Surgeon and second in command	2
Total:	9

*Special Battalion Services:*

Engineer Corps	8
Transport, Supply, and Communication Corps	8
Hospital Corps	4
Total:	20

Together with—

4 to 8 Companies of 3 Company	
Officers	12 to 24
and 100 men	400 to 800
Total of all ranks	441 to 853

*(b) Special Regulations*

1. It shall be within the discretion of the Commandant to group together the Special Services (i.e., Cycle Scouts, Transport, Supply, and Communication, Ambulance, Pioneers, etc.) of the Companies of his Battalion, or portions of them, for Battalion purposes, or to leave them, or portions of them, attached to their respective Companies; and it shall be his duty to see that such Sections are trained to act both in the Company and in the Battalion.

*(c) Duties of Battalion Officers*

1. The Commandant shall be responsible for the organisation, training, equipment, discipline, and general efficiency of his Battalion. He shall command the Battalion in peace and war, subject only to the authority of superior officers duly appointed by the proper authorities of the Irish Volunteers.
2. The Vice-Commandant shall act as second in command to the Commandant, and shall exercise such separate command as may be delegated to him by the Commandant.
3. The Battalion Adjutant shall act as adjutant to the Commandant, and shall be specially responsible for the drill instruction of the Battalion and the training of the Battalion recruits.
4. The Quartermaster shall be responsible for the Transport, Supply, Quartering, and Communications of the Battalion, and, in case of grouping,

shall command the grouped Transport and Supply Sections. The Assistant Quartermaster shall be his second in command.

5. The Battalion Engineer Commander (ranking as Captain) shall be responsible for the Engineering work of the Battalion and, in case of grouping, shall command the grouped Pioneers of the Battalion. The Lieutenant of Engineers shall be his second in Command.
6. The Battalion Surgeon (ranking as Captain) shall be responsible for the Hospital work of the Battalion, and, in case of grouping, shall command the grouped Ambulance Sections. The Surgeon Lieutenant shall be his second in command.

#### *(d) Appointment of Battalion Officers*

1. All Battalion Officers shall be appointed by Headquarters. Prior to any such appointment, Headquarters shall invite recommendations from the Battalion Council, but it shall not be obligatory on Headquarters to adopt such recommendations.
2. It shall be within the power of Headquarters to deprive any Battalion Officer of his command either of its own motion or on the requisition of the Battalion Commandant or of the Battalion Council.

#### *(e) The Battalion Council*

1. The Company Commanders and Battalion Officers of a Battalion shall constitute the Battalion Council, under the presidency of the Battalion Commandant.
2. The duties of the Battalion Council shall be:
  - (1) To manage the civil business of the Battalion.
  - (2) To consider matters submitted to it for its recommendations by the Battalion Commandant or by Headquarters, and to advise with regard to such matters.
  - (3) To discharge the functions hereinafter assigned to it in connection with Courts-Martial and with appeals from the summary jurisdiction of Company and Battalion Commanders.
3. The Battalion Council shall not have any jurisdiction in matters appertaining to military discipline (except as above laid down), efficiency, or command, for which the Battalion Commandant shall be solely responsible.

## V The Brigade

### (a) General Organisation

1. The Brigade shall normally comprise 3 or more (but not exceeding 5) Battalions, together with a Brigade Engineer Corps, a Brigade Transport and Supply Corps, a Brigade Motor and Communication Service, and a Brigade Hospital Corps.
2. The strength of the various Brigade Services shall be determined by Headquarters in accordance with the circumstances of each case.
3. The Brigade Officers shall be the Brigadier-General, the Vice-Brigadier-General, the Brigade Adjutant, and Brigade Chiefs of Engineers, Transport and Supply, Communications, and Hospital Corps.

### (b) Duties of Brigade Officers

1. The Brigadier-General shall be responsible for the efficiency of the Brigade. The Vice-Brigadier-General shall be his second in command and shall exercise such separate command as may be delegated to him by the Brigadier-General. The Chiefs of the various Brigade Services shall be responsible to the Brigadier-General for the efficiency of their respective services.

### (c) Appointment of Brigade Officers

1. The Brigade Officers shall be appointed and dismissed by Headquarters.

### (d) The Brigade Council

1. The Battalion Commandants and Brigade Officers of a Brigade shall form the Brigade Council, under the presidency of the Brigadier-General.
2. The Brigade Council shall exercise such jurisdiction as shall be delegated to it by Headquarters.

## VI Units Smaller than the Company

### (a) Half-Companies

1. In a district in which a Company cannot be raised, Headquarters shall have power to recognise as a Half-Company a body of Volunteers of approximately half the strength of a Company.

2. The Commander of such a Half-Company shall rank as Lieutenant.
3. The internal organisation of such a Half-Company shall conform to the internal organisation of an ordinary Half-Company.
4. Such a Half-Company shall comprise the Special Services necessary for Companies, the strength of the Special Sections to be approximately half that laid down for the Special Sections of Companies.
5. The regulations made for the governance and training of Companies shall, as far as applicable, apply also to specially recognised Half-Companies.

*(b) Special Scouting Sections*

1. In districts in which neither Companies nor Half-Companies can be raised, Headquarters shall have power to recognise small groups of Volunteers as Special Scouting Sections.
2. The ordinary regulations as to the discipline and training of Volunteers shall, as far as applicable, apply to such Special Scouting Sections.

*(c) General*

1. Headquarters shall have power to group specially-recognised Half-Companies and Scouting Sections with Companies in neighbouring districts, or to assign them positions in the Battalion or Brigade.

## VII Discipline; Courts-Martial

*(a) Summary Jurisdiction of Commanding Officer*

1. In case of insubordination or other gross misconduct on the part of a Volunteer other than a Company or superior officer while a Company (or Battalion) is actually under military orders, the Commanding Officer shall have power summarily to suspend or dismiss the offending Volunteer. An appeal from such suspension or dismissal will lie to the Battalion Council.

*(b) The Company Court-Martial*

1. In case of a Volunteer other than a Company or superior officer being charged with insubordination, neglect of duty, or other misconduct, the

Company Commander shall have power to suspend the accused pending trial, and shall as soon as possible have him brought to trial by Company Court-Martial.

2. The Company Court-Martial shall consist of the three Company Officers. The Company Commander shall nominate a Volunteer to act as prosecutor, and the accused shall have the right to nominate a Volunteer to act as his advocate.
3. The Court-Martial, having given the accused a fair trial, shall have power to pass judgment, and, if the accused be found guilty, to sentence him to suspension or dismissal.
4. An appeal from the sentence of the Company Court-Martial shall lie to the Battalion Council.

*(c) The Battalion (or Brigade) Court-Martial*

1. In case of a Company or superior officer being charged with insubordination, neglect of duty, or other misconduct, his Commanding Officer for the time being shall have power to suspend him pending trial, and shall without delay bring the charge to the notice of the Battalion (or, in the case of an officer of Brigade rank, the Brigade) Commander, who shall as soon as possible have the accused brought to trial by Battalion (or Brigade) Court-Martial.
2. The Battalion Court-Martial shall consist of three officers, of at least equal rank with the accused, chosen by the Battalion Council; and the Brigade Court-Martial of three officers, of at least equal rank with the accused, chosen by the Brigade Council. The accused shall have power to object to not more than three names chosen by the Battalion (or Brigade) Council, which shall substitute others for those so objected to. The Battalion (or Brigade) Commander shall nominate an officer to act as prosecutor, and the accused shall have the right to nominate an officer to act as his advocate.
3. The Court-Martial, having given the accused a fair trial, shall have power to pass judgment, and, if the accused be found guilty, to sentence him to suspension or dismissal.
4. An appeal from the sentence of the Battalion (or Brigade) Court-Martial shall lie to Headquarters.

*(d) Headquarters Court-Martial*

1. Officers of General rank shall be tried by a Court-Martial appointed by Headquarters. The accused shall have the usual rights of objection and choice of advocate.

## VIII Headquarters

1. By "Headquarters" in this Scheme shall be understood the General Council of the Irish Volunteers, or the Central Executive of the Irish Volunteers exercising the powers assigned to it by the General Council, or the Headquarters General Staff exercising executively the powers assigned to it by the General Council or by the Central Executive.
2. The Headquarters General Staff shall be appointed by the General Council, and shall exercise executively the powers assigned to it by the General Council or by the Central Executive.
3. Headquarters shall have power to delegate locally or temporarily any portion of its duties to any Commanding Officer or Council recognised by this Scheme or by the Constitution of the Irish Volunteers.

## IX Rank and Seniority of Superior and Subordinate Officers

1. The following shall be the order of rank of Volunteer officers: (1) Members of the Headquarters General Staff;
- (2) Brigadier-Generals; (3) Vice-Brigadier-Generals; (4) Commandants; (5) Vice-Commandants; (6) Company Commanders (Captains); Right-Half Company Commanders (1st Lieutenants); Left-Half Company Commanders (2nd Lieutenants); Section Commanders; Squad Commanders. Brigade Adjutants shall rank as Commandants, Battalion Adjutants as Captains, and Company Adjutants as Section Commanders.
2. The seniority of officers of equal rank shall be decided by Headquarters in accordance with their qualifications as determined by the tests which Headquarters shall prescribe.
3. In case of the death, incapacitation, or absence of an officer, his place shall be provisionally taken by the officer next in rank, or, where several are of equal rank, by the senior of that rank.

The foregoing Scheme of Military Organisation has been duly adopted by Headquarters and comes into force as from this date.

P. H. PEARSE,  
Director of Organisation.  
Headquarters,  
41 Kildare Street,  
Dublin, 16th December, 1914.



# **Part X**



# 1. Ireland for the Irish Nation

Address by Eoin MacNeill at the general muster of the four battalions of the Dublin regiment, in the Ancient Concert Rooms, 12th February, 1915

In *The Irish Volunteer*, 20th February, 1915, supplement, p. ii.

THE PRESENT meeting of Volunteers of Dublin is brought together for the purpose of instruction, so that we may all have as clear an understanding as possible about our future work. It is my duty to deal in the first instance with a few general matters. We have not met to make orations or to listen to orations, and I think I can promise that what you will hear will be brief, business-like, instructive, and to the point.

## *General Policy*

First I wish to state again clearly and shortly the general policy of the Irish Volunteers. Our policy has undergone no change since it was first announced in November, 1913. It is to arm, train, instruct, and organise the men of Ireland for the defence of Ireland. Ireland is a well-defined country, every inch of which we claim for the Irish Nation. As Irish Volunteers we are not concerned with any country but our own. Our work is constructive, and must be carried out on steady organic lines. We desire to see, not this or that selected body, but the whole able-bodied manhood of Ireland fully prepared for the duty of national defence. This implies in the first place that they will be suitably armed, and though there is a great deal yet to be done before that purpose is fully achieved, more has been done in twelve months than any of us thought likely before the work began.

Secondly, there is training. Here, too, immense progress has been made. Training for the defence of Ireland is of a very special character and requires special study. The training we have in view will be such as to enable Irishmen to make the utmost of the resources of their country, which has very great advantages for national defence. Our training must differ very much from the training suitable for campaigns in other countries unlike Ireland.

Thirdly, there is instruction. By instruction as distinguished from training I mean enabling the soldier and the officer, of whatever degree, to acquire all the knowledge necessary and to have a quickened intelligence for every aspect

and detail of the work of national defence. We look forward to having this knowledge and this intelligence made a household possession throughout the nation. But in the first place, every Irish Volunteer is expected to have the mind of an intelligent student for all that concerns national defence, to be eager to learn and to understand. At this point, as a lifelong student, you will allow me to express a word of caution. There is no danger, in the pursuit of this branch of knowledge or of any other branch, so great as the danger of becoming vain of a little knowledge, especially theoretical knowledge.

We look for intelligence and knowledge in the ranks, and in the officers of every grade, and not merely in those holding the larger commands. In our force, it is especially necessary that all officers should be well instructed.

Then there is the question of organisation and what I may call collective equipment. It is necessary that we should have a general understanding on these matters, so that we may all know what to work up to, and what our comrades are expected to work up to, and be capable of the most effective co-operation at all points.

I wish to say a word to you about those whom we may call our separated brethren. It is altogether out of the question, it would be giving the lie to the first principles of our organisation, if we were to regard these men with any feelings of enmity or ill-will. For my part, I hope and trust that they will keep before them the same purpose as we keep before ourselves, and that they will never rest content until they, as well as we, are fully armed, trained, instructed, organised, and equipped for national defence. If you can do no more at present, my advice to you is to give them also every encouragement and every incitement to that end.

A further advice I will give you is to keep steadily recruiting your Companies.

The last point on which I wish specially to speak to you is, the general conditions of affairs in the country as regards the Irish Volunteers. I have to tell that from every quarter, I am daily in receipt of messages of encouragement. Our position and the position of the country is daily becoming clearer to the minds of the mass of the people. This day, for example, I have received two messages, one from a country district in the North-East, in County Derry, and another from an urban district not so far away from Dublin. In each case the news is the same. The young men want to join us. The other day, it was a large town where a few months ago the Volunteers, owing to the misunderstanding, then current, melted away altogether. Now I am told they want to begin again. I ask you to realise that, under great difficulties, with a great and extraordinary combination of forces and influences against us, we have come through the worst and we have come through it carrying our colours, and with our purpose justified, our honour unstained.

Much has been due to the fidelity and staunchness of the men of Dublin. Much will be expected of them. It is not only in matters of national principle

that they will be looked to for a lead. On them also in a large measure will depend the working out of the Volunteer programme in its many practical details.

February 12th, 1915.



## 2. Why We Want Recruits

by Pádraig Pearse

In *The Irish Volunteer*, 22nd May, 1915, p. 4.

WE WANT recruits because we have undertaken a service which we believe to be of vital importance to our country, and because that service needs whatever there is of manly stuff in Ireland in order to its effective rendering.

We want recruits because we have a standard to rally them to. It is not a new standard raised for the first time by the men of a new generation. It is an old standard which has been borne by many generations of Irish men, which has gone into many battles, which has looked down upon much glory and upon much sorrow; which has been a sign to be contradicted, but which shall yet shine as a star. There is no other standard in the world so august as the standard we bear; and it is the only standard which the men of Ireland may bear without abandoning their ancient allegiance. Individual Irishmen have sometimes fought under other standards: Ireland as a whole has never fought under any other.

We want recruits because we have a faith to give them and a hope with which to inspire them. They are a faith and a hope which have been handed down from generation to generation of Irish men and women unto this last. The faith is that Ireland is one, that Ireland is inviolate, that Ireland is worthy of all love and all homage and all service that may lawfully be paid to any earthly thing; and the hope is that Ireland may be free. In a human sense, we have no desire, no ambition but the integrity, the honour, and the freedom of our native land.

We want recruits because we are sure of the rightness of our cause. We have no misgivings, no self-questionings. While others have been doubting, timorous, ill at ease, we have been serenely at peace with our consciences. The recent time of soul-searching had no terrors for us. We saw our path with absolute clearness; we took it with absolute deliberateness. "We could do no other." We called upon the names of the great confessors of our national faith, and all was well with us. Whatever soul-searchings there may be among Irish political parties now or hereafter, we go on in the calm certitude of having done the clear, clean, sheer thing. We have the strength and the peace of mind of those who never compromise.

We want recruits because we believe that events are about to place the destinies of Ireland definitely in our hands, and because we want as much help as possible to enable us to bear the burden. The political leadership of Ireland is passing to us—not, perhaps, to us as individuals, for none of us are ambitious for leadership and few of us fit for leadership; but to our party, to men of our way of thinking: that is, to the party and to the men that stand by Ireland only, to the party and to the men that stand by the nation, to the men of one allegiance.

We want recruits because we have work for them to do. We do not propose to keep our men idle. We propose to give them work—hard work, plenty of work. We would band together all men capable of working for Ireland and give them men's work.

We want recruits because we are able to train them. The great majority of our officers are now fully competent to undertake the training of Irish Volunteers for active service under the conditions imposed by the natural and military facts of the map of Ireland. Those officers who are not so competent will be made competent in our training camps during the next few months.

We want recruits because we are able to arm them. In a rough way of speaking, we have succeeded already in placing a gun and ammunition therefore in the hands of every Irish Volunteer that has undertaken to endeavour to pay for them. We are in a position to do as much for every man that joins us. We may not always have the popular pattern of gun, but we undertake to produce a gun of some sort for every genuine Irish Volunteer; with some ammunition to boot. Finally:

We want recruits because we are absolutely determined to take action the moment action becomes a duty. If a moment comes—as a moment seemed on the point of coming at least twice during the past eighteen months—when the Irish Volunteers will be justified to their consciences in taking definite military action, such action will be taken. We do not anticipate such a moment in the very near future; but we live at a time when it may come swiftly and terribly. What if Conscription be forced upon Ireland? What if a Unionist or a Coalition British Ministry repudiate the Home Rule Act? What if it be determined to dismember Ireland? What if it be attempted to disarm Ireland? The future is big with these and other possibilities.

And these are among the reasons why we want recruits.

P. H. PEARSE.

CUMANN NA mBAN  
(IRISH WOMEN'S COUNCIL)

APPEAL FOR THE DEFENCE OF IRELAND FUND

(From Official copy in *Bulmer Hobson Papers*, N.L.I., MS. 13174(2).

MÚSGAIL Do MHISNEACH A BHANBA !

FELLOW COUNTRYWOMEN AND COUNTRYMEN,

We make a strong appeal to your patriotism and to that sense of nationality which neither wars, nor famines, nor oppressions have been able to crush in our people, to help us to arm our men and to organise our women.

It is not necessary to point out to you that the heart of the country is with the National Volunteers—you see the evidences of it everywhere around you. We want to arm and equip this disciplined national force, not as a menace to any section of our countrymen, for the rights and well-being of all are equally important to us, but as a means of gaining our clear political rights and of securing and defending the liberty of Ireland.

Help us by contributing generously to the Defence of Ireland Fund at this most critical moment, when the future of our nation is at stake.

We appeal to you to support the Defence Fund, not as you would wish to respond to any ordinary demand on your patriotism, but in a spirit of sacrifice and in recognition of a supreme opportunity that has never come before, and may never come again, in our lifetime.

#### A DHIA SAOR ÉIRE !

AGNES MACNEILL, 19 Herbert Park, Donnybrook.

J. WYSE POWER, 21 Henry Street.

N. O'RAHILLY, 40 Herbert Park.

MAUREEN MAC DONAGH O'MAHONY, Cuilleannach,  
Lindsay Road, Glasnevin.

MÁIRE TUOHY, 15 North Frederick Street.

AGNES O'FARRELLY, 26 Highfield Road, Rathgar.

LOUISE GAVAN DUFFY, 24 Cabra Road, Phibsboro.

MARY M. COLUM, Wentworth Cottage, Howth.

M. DOBBS, Cushendall, Co. Antrim.

*Provisional Committee.*

MARY M. COLUM

LOUISE GAVAN DUFFY

*Hon. Secs.*

J. WYSE POWER

M. MAC DONAGH O'MAHONY

*Hon. Treasurers.*

Contributions may be sent to any of the members of the Provisional Committee or to the Hon. Treasurers at Cuilleannach, Lindsay Road, Glasnevin. They will be duly acknowledged.



### 3. The State of the Irish Volunteers, October, 1915

In *The Irish Volunteer*, 6th November, 1915, pp. 2-3, 6.

AT THE Second Convention of the Irish Volunteers, held in the Abbey Theatre on Sunday, 31st October 1915, the Secretary, Bulmer Hobson, read out the following report:

The progress that we have to record after our year's work is that we have turned an organisation having in many places a nominal existence into an organisation that is in an active and vigorous condition, having over 200 corps actively training, and of which it can be truthfully said that any estimate of its strength based upon the reports received at Headquarters is an underestimate

#### *General Council*

Immediately after the Convention last year the Executive took steps to hold an election in each of the counties in which there were three or more Volunteer Corps in order to carry out the scheme of county representation on the General Council of the Irish Volunteers. At the beginning of December, Wexford, Queen's County, Cork City, Kilkenny, Limerick County and City, Kildare, Kerry, Louth, Galway County, Dublin County and City, King's County, Tipperary, Belfast, Derry County, and the North of England and Scotland had each elected their representative on the Council, and the first meeting of the General Council was held at Headquarters on the 6th December. Since then little has been done to extend the system of county representation, and throughout the year the General Council has not had anything like its full strength. Ten meetings were held during the year. It will be possible in the coming year to have representatives from nearly every county in Ireland; and the making of the General Council more representative of the less well-organised districts will have a beneficial effect on the movement.

#### *Headquarters Staff*

One of the first things taken into consideration by the Central Executive after the Convention of last year was the thorough organisation of the Irish Volunteers

as a military body. The first effective step towards this end was taken early in December, when the Executive decided to recommend the General Council to appoint a Headquarters Staff. The following compose the staff:

Chief of Staff,	[Eoin MacNeill]
Director of Arms,	[The O'Rahilly]
Director of Training,	[Thomas MacDonagh]
Director of Military Organisation,	[P. H. Pearse]
Quartermaster,	[Bulmer Hobson]
Director of Military Operations,	[Joseph Plunkett]

At a much later date was added a Director of Communications, [Éamonn Kent].

As a report is submitted from the Headquarters Staff it is not necessary for me to refer further to their work.

### *Organisers*

In order to carry out the work of training the corps it was necessary to appoint a number of organising instructors, and in October, 1914, Captain Liam Mellows, who had been acting as Secretary to the Central Executive, took up duty as an organising instructor in the country. A month later Captain Monteith, who had been acting as Instructor in Dublin, was ordered to leave Dublin under the Defence of the Realm Act. The Central Executive thereupon appointed him organising instructor, and he took up duty immediately in Limerick City and County, where he did excellent work up to very recently. In January the Central Executive decided to appoint two more organisers. For the first six months of 1915 these four organisers were at work in different parts of the country, but in July Messrs. Mellows and Blythe received orders to leave Ireland under the Defence of the Realm Act, and upon their declining to obey, were sent to prison for a term of three months. Mr. A. Newman, who had also been employed upon special work, received the same order, and underwent the same term of imprisonment. The Central Executive immediately upon their arrest appointed several new organisers to take up duty in their place.

A fortnight ago Mr. Monaghan received an order under the Defence of the Realm Act to leave Co. Cavan, and having ignored the order, is at present in prison. Desmond Fitzgerald has also been arrested, and is in gaol under the Defence of the Realm Act. In addition, several Dublin Volunteers gave up their holidays to organising work last summer; while in several centres—notably Cork City—the local Volunteers have done much to organise the surrounding country. It is hardly necessary, to speak of the excellent work done by our

organisers in the country, but I am glad to have this opportunity of saying that their devotion, capacity and energy has been beyond all praise.

### *Recruiting*

In addition to the work of the organisers, the Director of Recruiting organised several conferences when opportunity offered of getting any considerable number of Volunteers from different parts of Ireland together, with a view to spreading the organisation. At a later date County Conferences were arranged. Some of these have already been held, and it is expected that they will become in future a regular part of a system for recruiting existing corps and spreading the Irish Volunteer organisation where no corps exist.

### *The "Irish Volunteer"*

Towards the end of November, 1914, the proprietors of the Irish Volunteer informed Mr. MacNeil of their intention to discontinue publication of the paper. It was decided that it should be taken over, and since 5th December, 1914, it has been edited and managed at Headquarters, and has been most valuable as a propagandist organ throughout the year. The Editor is particularly indebted for the unfailing supply of articles on military subjects which have been contributed by two officers [J. J. O'Connell and Eimar O'Duffy] attached to Headquarters.

In addition the office at Headquarters has constantly during the year supplied the provincial Press with articles, reports and items of news concerning the Irish Volunteer movement, and many of the provincial newspapers rendered good service by publishing all the matter supplied.

### *Camps*

Early in the spring the question of organising training camps throughout the summer was considered by the Executive, and by the General Council; and the General Council decided to allocate the sum of £100 for the purpose.

It was found that there was much difficulty in procuring camping equipment from the regular manufacturers owing to the number of contracts placed by the English War Office. Apart from this, the type of tent most desirable for the Irish Volunteers, in view of our special necessities, would be more expensive than the English military tents, and it was necessary to effect economies. In consequence a special Volunteer tent was designed and their manufacture was undertaken at Headquarters. As a result all the tents needed for the training camps, in addition to a large number which have been sold to Irish Volunteers, were made at Headquarters. In use they have proved to be excellent, while their cost has been very considerably

below the prices charged by the regular manufacturers. The first Summer Camp was held in the middle of July in Co. Tyrone. In August two camps were held, one in Wicklow and one in North Co. Cork, and in September one was held on the Shannon in Co. Galway. About two hundred men in all attended at these camps, and benefitted greatly from the course of training. It is to be hoped that next year similar camps will be organised in various parts of the country on a much larger scale and much more frequently than was found possible on the first occasion.

### *An Cumann Cosanta*

The last Convention recommended to the Central Executive that a Defence Fund should be opened in order to assist Irish Volunteers who were prosecuted on account of their adherence to the movement. Very recently a Defence Fund was started which has been used solely to defray legal expenses in connection with the various trials.

Early in the year, however, the Central Executive and the General Council both had under consideration the position of men who were imprisoned or who lost their employment on account of their connection with the Irish Volunteers. It was felt that the best way to meet such cases was to establish a mutual insurance society and to offer to Irish Volunteers the opportunity of insuring themselves against loss of their means of livelihood on account of their connection with our movement. For this purpose *An Cumann Cosanta* was started, a large number of Volunteers have availed themselves of the facilities it offered, and are insured with it.

Since *An Cumann Cosanta* was started the Society has been able to meet all the claims that have become due without making any call upon Volunteer funds. It is to be hoped that during the coming year *An Cumann Cosanta* will be spread throughout the whole Volunteer movement, as it will introduce a financial solidarity that would enable the movement to come practically unaffected through any regime of coercion that may be instituted.

### *The Irish Volunteer Auxiliary*

Recently the Central Executive decided to start an Irish Volunteer Auxiliary organisation to meet the wishes of many people who for various reasons were unable to join an Irish Volunteer Corps and take part in training. The members of the Auxiliary pay an annual subscription to the Irish Volunteers, and are expected to become armed and to learn to shoot. The extension of the Auxiliary throughout the country would add greatly to the strength of the movement.

The Treasurer [O'Rahilly] presented his report on the finances, together with the audited balance-sheet report and certificate of Messrs. J. H. Reynolds

and Co., auditors. The Treasurer's report and balance-sheet were considered in detail by the Committee of the Convention, and their report to the general body expressed complete satisfaction with the financial state of the movement.

Reports were read from the Headquarters Staff, the Director of Military Organisation, Director of Recruiting, Director of Training, Quartermaster, Director of Communications, and Director of Arms. The following is a summary of their reports:

### *Headquarters Staff Report*

Commandant Plunkett reported on the formation of the Headquarters Staff of seven members, each in control of a department, who would presently give their own individual reports.

The Director of Organisation [P. H. Pearse] reported that a special scheme of organisation had been drawn up to suit the particular needs of the Volunteers, which had been followed with success. Its object was to combine flexibility with cohesion. The organisation of the smaller units was almost complete; that of the larger units was progressing satisfactorily. To keep the work of organisation going visits of inspection were necessary, and the Director had personally visited the better organised districts, while the Headquarters Organisers had been working in all parts of the country, and this work was going on undeterred by the periodical imprisonments of individual organisers.

The appointment of officers and the maintenance of discipline were other branches of this department's work. Breaches of discipline were of extremely rare occurrence.

In the sub-department of recruiting the work divided itself into the strengthening of existing units, the formation of new units, and the enrolment of individuals and small groups. Recruiting literature, window cards, etc., had been circulated, and recruiting bodies established.

The Director of Training [T. MacDonagh] reported that a special scheme of training adapted to the needs of the Volunteers had been published, and where it was followed had proved a success. A drill-book had been written, and would soon be published. During the winter the Dublin Brigade had undergone special practice training, and in the summer Volunteers from all Ireland had received instruction in the camps.

The Director of Arms [The O'Rahilly] reported that in spite of all opposition, the Volunteers were steadily arming themselves. The main difficulty lay in awakening the companies to the imperative necessity of taking up at a reasonable price every arm that became available. Every Volunteer, he said, must be armed, and armed immediately.

The Quartermaster [B. Hobson] reported that a large number of tents had been manufactured at Headquarters, and had been found very successful at the camps. They were also available for sale to Volunteers. Military equipment had also been manufactured at Headquarters.

The Director of Communications [E. Kent] reported that numerous lines of communication between Dublin and the provinces had been established.

A number of amendments were introduced into the Constitution dealing with the number of members on Central Executive and similar matters. The declaration of Policy adopted by the last Convention was reaffirmed without alteration. It is as follows:

Declaration of Policy of Irish Volunteers

1. To maintain the right and duty of the Irish Nation hence forward to provide for its own defence by means of a permanent armed and trained Volunteer Force.
2. To unite the people of Ireland on the basis of Irish nationality and a common national interest; to maintain the integrity of the nation and to resist with all our strength any measures tending to bring about or perpetuate disunion or the partition of our country.
3. To resist any attempt to force the men of Ireland into military service under any Government until a free National Government is empowered by the Irish people themselves to deal with it.
4. To secure the abolition of the system of governing Ireland through Dublin Castle and the British military power, and the establishment of a National Government in its place.

Motions dealing with the institution of a system of examination for officers, provision of arms, organisation, communications, and finance were dealt with.

Professor Eoin MacNeill was unanimously re-elected President of the Irish Volunteers, and the following were elected members of the Central Executive: O'Rahilly, Bulmer Hobson, P. H. Pearse, Seán MacDiarmada, E. Ceannt, J. Fitzgibbon, T. MacDonagh, Séumas O'Connor, J. J. O'Connell, Liam Mellows and Joseph Plunkett.

## 4. The Headquarters Staff of the Volunteers, 1914-15

*By F. X. Martin, O.S.A.*

THE FIRST convention of the Irish Volunteers was held in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on Sunday, 25th October, 1914, under the presidency of Eoin MacNeill. It was agreed that the Volunteers would be governed by a general council of 50, to meet monthly, and a central executive to meet weekly.

The Central Executive met at Headquarters, 41 Kildare Street, on Wednesday evening, 25th November, 1914, with Eoin MacNeill in the chair. A committee of military organisation was appointed, with the duty of submitting as soon as possible a scheme for a headquarters general staff (see *Irish Volunteer*, 5th December, 1914, p. 5).

The Committee rapidly drafted its proposals, which were presented to a special meeting of the Executive held at Headquarters on Saturday, 5th December, under the chairmanship of Eoin MacNeill. The recommendations of the Committee of Military Organisation as to the appointment of a headquarters staff were approved of and sent to the General Council (*ibid.*, 12th December, 1914, p. 5).

The General Council held its first meeting at Headquarters, on Sunday, 6th December, 1914, with Eoin MacNeill in the chair. Present were:

Eoin MacNeill, *President*

The O'Rahilly, *Treasurer*

Bulmer Hobson, *Secretary*

Seán Fitzgibbon      Séamus O'Connor

Pádraig Ó Riaín      P. H. Pearse

T. MacDonagh      Peadar Macken

Éamonn Ceannt      Piaras Béaslaí

M. J. Judge      Seán MacDermott

S. R. Etchingham (Co. Wexford)

Tomás Mac Curtain (Cork City)

P. Hughes (Co. Louth)

Frank Lawless (Co. Dublin)

- A. O'Connor (Co. Kildare)
- E. Comerford (Kilkenny City)
- J. Leddin (Limerick City)
- Pierce McCann (Co. Tipperary)
- E. Daly (Dublin City)

The recommendations of the Central Executive about a headquarters staff were adopted, and the appointments made comprising chief of staff, directors of organisation, military operations, training, transport and communications, and arms.

(*Irish Volunteer*, 19th December, 1914, p. 4). These were:

Chief of Staff:	Eoin MacNeill
Director of Organisation:	P. H. Pearse
Director of Military Operations:	Joseph Plunkett
Director of Training:	Thomas MacDonagh
Director of Arms:	The O'Rahilly
Quartermaster General:	Bulmer Hobson

There were two later additions to the Headquarters Staff:

Director of Communications: Éamonn Ceannt in August 1915 (see *Irish Volunteer*, 21st August, 1915, p. 4)

Chief of Inspection:	J. J. O'Connell
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on 10th November, 1915 (see *Irish Volunteer*, 20th November, 1915, p. 4)

Seán Fitzgibbon was appointed Director of Recruiting on 14th April, 1915, and re-appointed on 17th November, 1915 (see *Irish Volunteer*, 24th April, 1915, p. 4, 27th November, 1915, p. 4), but was not a member of Headquarters Staff.

## 5. Rule Britannia!

In *The National Student*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (December, 1915), Editorial.

WHILE THIS United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is in the midst of perhaps the greatest crisis in its history, insidious attempts are being made to disrupt its unity from within. The attempts without exception have their origin in that part of the Kingdom which is known as Ireland. Although all these plots aim at the disintegration of the Kingdom, yet the supporters of each are at variance with one another. The principal factions are the Separatists, who want to set up a Republic by force of arms; the Sinn Féiners, who want to get the Union repealed by means of passive resistance; and the Constitutionalists, who want to win Home Rule by speechifying. There are also some people who want to set up Home Rule by force of arms, but they are not worth considering, for they haven't any arms. With the Separatists and Sinn Féiners it is no use arguing; they ought to be shot. But it might be possible to convince the Constitutionalists, who have shown a modicum of British patriotism, that they are following wrong courses. We would like to show them how undesirable it is to tamper with the constitution of that United Kingdom which they love so well.

In the first place we would like to point out to them that the fundamental basis on which their whole argument stands is utterly wrong. They hold that Ireland is a nation. This cannot be. Ireland is only a part of the great British nation. Members of the Constitutional party themselves have lately, in connection with the recruitment campaign, referred to the United Kingdom as "the nation" and "the country." Surely Messrs. T. P. O'Connor, John Dillon, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, to whom I refer, could not for a moment maintain that the part is equal to the whole; that a part of a nation is a nation. We may then take it from their own mouths that Ireland is not a nation, and thus the principal argument in favour of Home Rule drops to the ground. We are sure that, having disposed of this point, we have convinced the majority of the students of the undesirability of Home Rule, since their attachment to it was mainly on grounds of sentiment. There are however some who supported the movement on more solid grounds, and we shall now turn to deal with them.

Some hold the opinion that Home Rule would alter economic conditions for the better. It is expected that a local Parliament in Ireland would cause an

increase of industry and commerce. This of course could never happen, for the Imperial Parliament—the Mother Parliament, if one may employ a metaphor—would be bound to see to it that the possession of special privileges should not give any of her children an unfair advantage over the others. Ireland must not be allowed to increase her industries, for any increase in that direction must be at the expense of England, whose just domain it is. Pasture and a certain amount of tillage appear to be Ireland's special vocation, and these have been encouraged to great effect by the Imperial mother. So satisfactory has been the increase in pasturage that the decrease in tillage has enabled more and more people to emigrate to the colonies and so insure a further increase of pasturage by geometrical progression. The sun shines down every year on a greener land, and soon tourists will be able to understand why it is called the Emerald Isle.

This picture of contentment and prosperity must convince all waverers of the iniquity of the Home Rule experiment. We have said enough on this subject and having disposed of one item in the Party's programme, we wish to pay a tribute to the excellence of the remainder. They have identified themselves honourably with the campaign of recruitment for the British army. Unlike the Sinn Féiners and Separatists they have strongly urged their faction to come forward to fight for the Empire. It is true that the wording of their appeal has often been at fault. For instance, they have appealed to the young men to fight for Ireland, frequently omitting all reference to the Empire, but this is probably due to a desire to propitiate the sentiment of their followers, who have not yet assimilated as much education as their leaders. Unfortunately their appeal has not been answered as satisfactorily as might be expected. Odious comparisons have been made between this and other portions of the Kingdom. There seems to be a general impression, based on a wrong understanding of the conditions, that Ireland is doing more than her fair share. Those who complain of the imaginary slackness of recruiting in England forget or ignore the fact that England is a manufacturing country, and cannot afford to dislocate her industries and interfere with the manufacture of munitions by sending too many men into the firing line. That honourable post must be filled by Irishmen, who have few industries, and those few of such unimportance that they could easily be closed, and who, by reason of the ordinary hardship of their lives, are better fitted to endure the privations of the trenches. Moreover Ireland can better stand the drain of blood than England, who will soon need every man to work her growing trade and industry, while loss of men will be rather an economic gain to Ireland, as it will leave more land vacant for grazing.

These arguments, convincing as they are to the educated, have little effect on the mass of the people, who, regardless of the war, continue their daily round unmoved, or, inflamed by Sinn Féin and Separatist orators, actively interfere with recruitment for his Majesty's forces. This disloyal spirit is, if anything, on the

increase of late, and the praiseworthy efforts of the Constitutional party—who have denounced the disturbers in no measured terms, by name and in general—have had little effect. There is but one remedy for this state of things. The British Government cannot go on for ever begging Britons to do their duty. The shirkers must be compelled to do their share. Conscription must be enforced at any rate in this portion of the Kingdom. Those other portions which are doing their duty might still remain exempt from the disgrace of having to be forced to fight. But Conscription is a necessity in Ireland, not only to ensure victory in the great war, but to check the growing spirit of disloyalty. This disloyalty has been allowed to show itself publicly without any opposition from the authorities. The number of seditious meetings that have been held lately in Ireland would come as a revelation to Englishmen. In Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Tralee enormous meetings were held lately to commemorate the hanging of three felons in Manchester fifty years ago. In Dublin alone the material for eight battalions marched in procession, but all the efforts of the recruiting sergeants failed to obtain one man willing to serve the Empire in its hour of need. These men who dare to march armed through a British city must be made to feel the omnipotence of the British Empire. They must be shown that treason is a crime, not a virtue. In Athenry recently a huge crowd, including, I regret to say, several clergymen of the Roman Catholic persuasion, turned out to welcome a traitor who had just served a term of imprisonment under the Defence of the Realm Act. These mistaken notions of liberty must be eradicated by forcing those who hold them to fight for true liberty on the Continent. Let those who prate of nationality be forced to act up to their words and defend the liberties of the oppressed small nationalities of Europe.

Perhaps what we have said may be considered by some to be a violation of the party truce imposed by the great war. Perhaps we have been a little too violent in the wording of our case. But when the Empire is in danger we think that party feeling should be set aside and that we should be actuated solely by our sense of duty. We feel that it is a duty for any loyal son of the Empire to speak his mind when he feels that the Empire is threatened, whatever may be the consequences to himself. Having acquitted ourselves of this task we now beg to give a special warning to students of the College. Young men are very apt to lose their heads and throw themselves into revolutionary movements without calculating the consequences. It is therefore extremely likely that some of our students may be ensnared by an organisation calling itself “The Irish Volunteers,” which is under the presidency of a professor of this College. The object of this body is to disrupt the United Kingdom by armed force, and its members are busy arming and drilling themselves with an enthusiasm and perseverance which would be admirable in any good cause. We warn students to have nothing to do with this disloyal organisation, whose headquarters are at 2 Dawson Street.



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1. Special Section Old A Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Rathfarnham, 5 September 1915. Photo courtesy of Kilmainham Gaol Museum.

Back Row L-R: Séán Tracy, Paudge O'Briain, Gabriel Murray, Brian McCormack, Séán O'Briain and Henry Murray.

Front Row L-R: Gerald Murray, Fred Schweppe, Pat Mason, Ed McNamara, Louis McDermott and Denis Dunne.

Thanks to James Langton for information on the names of the men in this photograph.



2. Joseph McGarrity (left) and (right) Bulmer Hobson (courtesy of James Langton, Archives and Research, Irish Volunteers Commemorative Organisation)



3. Éamonn Ceannt with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (courtesy of James Langton, Archives and Research, Irish Volunteers Commemorative Organisation)



4. Limerick City Volunteers and Cumann na mBan, c.1915. From the Daly Papers, courtesy of the Glucksman Library, University of Limerick.



5. Cork Volunteer Pipe Band 1914 (courtesy of Brian Wickham at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~bwickham/band14.htm#1>)

Company.....	No.....
<b>ÓS LÁÍS NÁ HÉIREANN—Irish Volunteers.</b>	
I, the undersigned, desire to be enrolled in the Irish Volunteers, formed to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland without distinction of creed, class, or politics.	
Name_____	
Address_____	
City Ward or Township_____	
Date_____	
P. Mahon, Printer, 3 Yarshall St., Dublin.	

6. Irish Volunteer Enrolment Form. (16FO ID21-06 Kilmainham Gaol Museum)



7. C Company, Irish National Volunteers (KMGLM 2012.0285 Kilmainham Gaol Museum) taken in either 1914 or 1915. This company won an All-Ireland competition for Irish National Volunteers. The Commandant of 3rd Battalion, Irish National Volunteers Thomas J. Cullen is the man to the right at the front of the photograph. The volunteers appear to be carrying Italian vetterli rifles, which were almost obsolete at this point as it was very difficult to obtain ammunition for them.



8. John Redmond overseeing the Blessing of Drums and Colours at an Irish National Volunteer parade, c.1914. Courtesy of Mercier Press Archives, Cork.



9. Irish Volunteer Officers at Shears Street, Irish Volunteers Hall in Cork, 1915. Courtesy of Mercier Press Archives, Cork.

ÓS LÁIS NÁ H-ÉIREANN

# The Irish Volunteers

President: EOIN MAC NEILL.

4th Batt. Headquarters:  
"Larkfield," Kimmage.

## The Irish Volunteers

Are Trained and Armed to fight IN Ireland to secure and  
maintain the Rights and Liberties common to all  
the People of Ireland.

Ireland needs ALL her sons for this purpose.

**Now is the Time to Join!**

---

Monday	...	...	A Coy.	...	Larkfield,	8 p.m.
Tuesday	...	...	B Coy.	...	do.	do.
Thursday	...	...	C Coy.	...	do.	do.
Friday	...	...	D Coy.	...	do.	do.
Thursday	...	...	E Coy.	...	Rathfarnham	do.
Monday and Friday			F Coy.	...	Inchicore	do.
Saturday	...	...	All Companies,	Larkfield	3.30 p.m.	
Wednesday	...	...	do.	First-Aid Lectures,	8.30 p.m.	
do.	...	...	do.	Signalling Class,	8 p.m.	
Sunday	...	...	Field Work.			

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MUSKETRY PRACTICE EACH DRILL NIGHT.

1st Bn. Headquarters ... 41 PARNELL SQUARE.

2nd Bn. do. ... FATHER MATHEW PARK, FAIRVIEW.

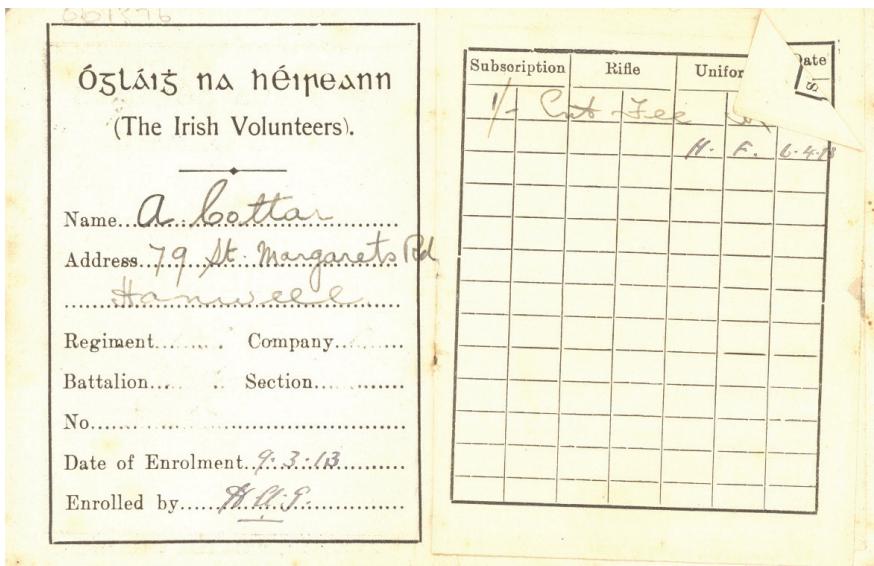
3rd Bn. do. ... 41 YORK STREET.

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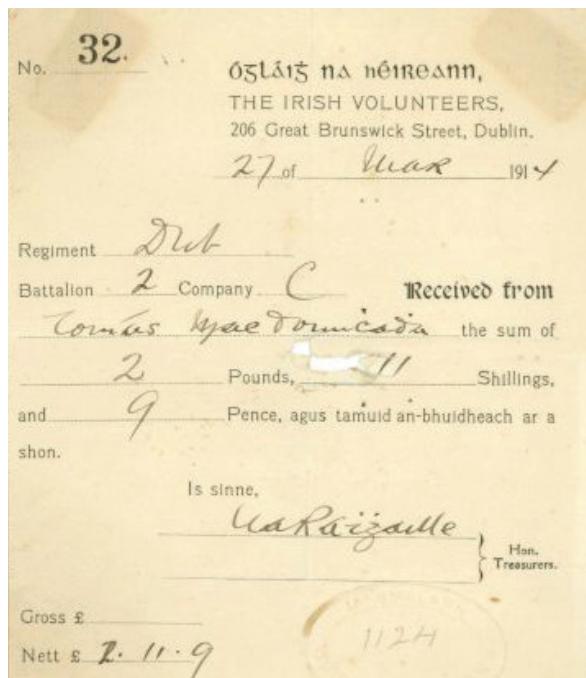
**GOD SAVE IRELAND !**

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10. Recruitment Handbill, 4th Battalion, Irish Volunteers 1914/1915, giving the drill times for each company. Most of them were based at Larkfield, Kimmage. (16NO-1D12-29 Kilmainham Gaol Museum)



11. Irish Volunteer Membership Card, issued to Mr. A. Cotter, 76 St. Margaret's Rd., Hanwell, 1913. (16MC-1C12-12 Kilmainham Gaol Museum)



12. Receipt for a Subscription to Irish Volunteer Funds by Thomas MacDonagh, March 1914, signed by The O'Rahilly. (16EF-1K51-12 Kilmainham Gaol Museum)

Óglaigh na hÉireann  
(The Irish Volunteers).



MEMBERSHIP  
CARD.

Published by "The Irish Volunteer."

13. Irish Volunteer Membership Card front, issued to Mr. A. Cotter, 76 St. Margaret's Rd., Hanwell, 1913. (16MC-1C12-12 Kilmainham Gaol Museum)