

THE IRISH UPRISING OF EASTER 1916 AND THE EMERGENCE  
OF ÉAMON DE VALÉRA AS THE LEADER OF THE  
IRISH REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

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## PREFACE

During the period of time in which I have been engaged in the preparation of this thesis I have frequently been asked why I chose to write about Éamon de Valéra and Ireland. Certainly in this day of tragic conflict in Northern Ireland, when almost daily the media brings news of destruction and violence, it is not difficult to explain one's interest in that tragedy-haunted island.

To understand the conflict of today it is necessary to look back over four centuries to see the development of the conditions which culminated in the partition of Ireland in 1921. This partition and the events of the ten years preceding it provide the immediate backdrop for the events of today, and it is that period--a specific part of that period to be precise--which provides the basis for this study.

I first became interested in the Easter Rising of 1916 some years ago when it formed part of the content of a course in which I was enrolled. When I began considering possible topics for a thesis, it did not take long for my thoughts to turn to Ireland. When I read my first biography of de Valéra, that Irishman with the Spanish name--to use a phrase sometimes applied to him--the matter of a topic was

settled. I found the story of de Valéra, which is, of course, inseparable from that of the Irish Republic, to be completely fascinating.

In deciding what aspect of this remarkable man to develop for a thesis it seemed reasonable to start with the beginning of his public involvement in the affairs of Ireland. Thus I have chosen to consider his emergence as the leader of Irish Republicanism and the Easter Rising which was the central event of the years immediately preceding the Partition.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Mrs. Mary Beth Chamberlin of the Inter-Library Loan Office of the Texas Woman's University Library for her generous help in locating some of the references not readily available, to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Kemp Yarborough, Dr. John L. Dawson, and Dr. Val Belfiglio, for their kind assistance, and especially to my thesis chairman, Dr. Harral E. Landry. His generous help and criticism and his continuing encouragement and confidence are gratefully acknowledged.

## CHAPTER I

### ÉAMON DE VALÉRA--THE STATESMAN

If any one man's name calls to mind Ireland in the twentieth century it must be that of Éamon de Valéra, "father figure of the republic and symbol of Ireland's growth to nationhood."<sup>1</sup> This man's public career stretches from 1916 and the Easter Rising in Dublin to the present, as he prepares to leave the presidency in June of 1973. When de Valéra first assumed leadership of the Irish nationalist movement, Herbert Asquith was Prime Minister of Great Britain; Lenin was barely known outside academic circles; and leaders such as Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Charles De Gaulle were names of the future.<sup>2</sup>

De Valéra has been and remains a puzzle to many people. He has stimulated comments and analyses of character as diverse and contradictory as the people who make them: "visionary or hard headed realist; unbelievably shrewd statesman or luckiest politician alive; agent of

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<sup>1</sup>"Éamon de Valéra Is Still Top Irishman," Valley Morning Star (Harlingen, Texas), February 7, 1971, sec. C, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Earl of Longford and Thomas P. O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1970), pp. xix-xx.

secret forces or author of a programme which he imposes upon those who have sought to make use of him."<sup>1</sup> An Irish writer has recorded a ballad sung about him by children:

Up de Valéra, you're the champion of the right,  
We'll follow you to battle 'neath the orange,  
green and white,  
And when next we meet the Sassennach, we'll  
beat him,  
Oh, we'll beat him in the fight--  
And make de Valéra King of Ireland!<sup>2</sup>

Desmond Ryan described de Valéra as a "unique dictator" and said that circumstances and his nature made him one of the best of present day "dictators" in ideals, methods, and personality.

. . . like Mussolini and Hitler he has in his time given lip-service to democracy and used the ballot to seize power and transform a machinery he distrusted to further his original programme; like them at their best, he expresses in himself deep national aspirations and burning national grievances, and, like them, at their worst he thinks he knows better than his own people what is good for them: and if individual freedom interferes with his sacred formulas so much the worse for individual freedom. But there the parallel ends. He is unique, and the best of the dictators in that alone of all the dictators can it be said of him that he himself is under the dictatorship of clear and cherished principles, consistent, unselfish, honest, his name unstained by a June Purge or a Matteoti. He has proved himself the most

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<sup>1</sup>Denis Gwynn, de Valéra (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1933), jacket and p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Seán Ó Faoláin, The Life Story of Éamon de Valéra (Dublin: Talbot Press Limited, 1933), p. 10.



astute living Irish politician, but his worst enemy will never prove him a party politician.<sup>1</sup>

In considering this judgment of de Valéra it must be kept in mind that Ryan was writing in 1936, years before the full perfidy of Mussolini and Hitler was known to the world.

Ryan went on to note that de Valéra had been accused of ". . . being a 'Kerensky' before he came to power and a 'Lenin' afterwards . . . of vanity, lack of humour, inhumanity, duplicity and selfishness." But Ryan also notes that these charges were without exception false. Critics have been unable to answer the central question of de Valéra's impact on Ireland: ". . . why has this unpretentious, persistent, scrupulous, scholarly and courageous man retained the affection and trust of his people for over twenty years, and why even with his course unfinished has he achieved so much of his original aims?"<sup>2</sup> The adjectives "unpretentious," "persistent," "scrupulous," "scholarly," and "courageous" are characteristic of those used by all of de Valéra's biographers and these qualities seem to shine through in all accounts of his life and activities.

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<sup>1</sup>Desmond Ryan, Unique Dictator: A Study of Éamon de Valéra (London: Arthur Barker Limited, 1936), p. 10. It would also be well to note that Ryan did not appear in any way to intend the implication that de Valéra was a dictator in actuality. The term appeared meant as a description of his personality and nature.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

Memories of two of de Valéra's six surviving children are revealing of his character. His son Ruairí tells this story as repeated by Longford and O'Neill:

' . . . soon after Daddy came out of jail, one evening Daddy was having his tea and I was playing with toy soldiers on the floor. He took an empty egg shell and threw it at some of the soldiers, saying: 'There's a shell'. I said: "Daddy you hit the wrong soldiers--these are the Irish". He said: "Who are the others?", and I said "the English". He said gently, "No, just call them the enemy". I think he did not want me to hate the English, or any other people. The enemy was impersonal.'<sup>1</sup>

Another son, Éamonn, came to recognize his father's sensitivity during a serious illness of the elder de Valéra:

'Tears and laughter are very close to the surface . . . that he is aloof and austere is untrue . . . I have seen him hard put to repress the tears. I remember reading a story of A. Conan Doyle's for him and it brought back memories of old comrades who had died in troubled times. His eyes filled with tears--eyes that, at that time, could see clearly only in memory. My father is a gentle person who abhors violence and brutality . . .'<sup>2</sup>

De Valéra's political career has been a checkered one. After the Easter Rising he emerged as the leader of Ireland in 1917 and held that position for some five years. Then, in 1922, he was swept away in the tide of civil war following the treaty settlement with England. De Valéra opposed the treaty because of the partition of the six

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<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 419.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 423.

counties of the North. Within four years, however, he was at the head of a new party, Fianna Fáil, gaining strength with each election until he was again undisputed leader of Ireland within only ten years of his defeat. When he returned to power in 1932 (with the support of Labour), de Valéra undertook a policy of economic reconstruction and political independence which was to bring temporary hardships and disadvantages to Ireland. Despite these difficulties he was to receive a mandate from the people in the form of an outright majority when he carried the issue to the country in early 1933.<sup>1</sup>

De Valéra was then to serve as leader of the Irish government until the late 1940's. During this time a new constitution was written and adopted. Under this new constitution, as working head of government de Valéra would then be known as "Prime Minister" rather than as "President." This former title of President would be reserved for the titular executive.<sup>2</sup> As World War II approached, de Valéra took an immovable stand for Irish neutrality, thus creating

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<sup>1</sup>Gwynn, de Valéra, p. 19; Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 285-87.

<sup>2</sup>Mary C. Bromage, de Valéra and the March of a Nation (New York: Noonday Press, 1956), pp. 257-58.

problems at home as well as in relations with England and eventually the United States.<sup>1</sup>

In the general election of February, 1948, Fianna Fáil lost seats in the Dáil and consequently Fine Gael, the major opposition party, formed a new coalition government. The coalition was unable to retain the confidence of the electorate for more than a few years, and, when it appeared that simply declaring the Republic and ending external relations with England would not solve the partition question, the electorate turned to economic interests and returned de Valéra to power in 1951.<sup>2</sup> Again in 1954 de Valéra's government was defeated and he became Leader of the Opposition for another three years. In 1957, however, Fianna Fáil and de Valéra were swept back into office with the first clear majority since 1944.<sup>3</sup>

In 1959 de Valéra determined to retire from active leadership of the party he had founded thirty-three years before. Since Seán T. O'Kelly could not be elected to a third term as President, de Valéra was the logical nominee of his party. He was elected by a solid majority. Thus, only a few months short of his seventy-seventh birthday,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 270-79, passim.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 294-96.

<sup>3</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 444.

de Valéra handed over the reins of active leadership to Seán Lemass and assumed the role of elder statesman.<sup>1</sup>

Some half-dozen quotations from several of de Valéra's speeches sum up many of the beliefs of this remarkable national leader.

"I believe fundamentally in the right of the Irish people to govern themselves. . . . I entered politics as a soldier, as one who stood for the principles of those who proclaimed the Republic in 1916. . . . I was reared in a labourer's cottage here in Ireland. I have not lived solely among the intellectuals. The first fifteen years of my life that formed my character were lived among the Irish people down in Limerick; therefore I know what I am talking about; and whenever I wanted to know what the Irish people wanted I had only to examine my own heart and it told me straight off what the Irish people wanted. . . . One of my earliest dreams, next to securing Irish independence, was that there might be reconciliation between the peoples of these two islands . . . a peace that can be as lasting as human peace can be. . . . Had our nation secured its complete freedom it would, I believe, be now leading the world in solving peacefully some of the problems that are likely to be solved elsewhere only by violent revolution."<sup>2</sup>

It can readily be seen that Éamon de Valéra's political career is unique in many ways, not alone in the length of time he was at the top of his country's government. Sir Winston Churchill's public career spans as great a time period but he did not reach the peak until 1940.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 446-49.

<sup>2</sup>Ryan, Unique Dictator, p. 12.

There has never been any question of scandal, either personal or official, connected with de Valéra. Everyone, including his detractors, unanimously agrees that de Valéra is a scrupulously honest and moral leader. How did a man of these qualities become a national political leader? He, like everyone else, is a product of all of his experiences. Perhaps it is to his early years, spent, in his own words, ". . . in a labourer's cottage . . . among the Irish people down in Limerick;" that we must look if we are to begin to understand Éamon de Valéra.

## CHAPTER II

### DE VALÉRA--THE PRIVATE YEARS

Éamon de Valéra was born in New York City on 14 October 1882; both of his parents were immigrants.<sup>1</sup> His mother, Catherine Coll, the eldest of four children, had left her home just outside the village of Bruree, County Limerick, in 1879, in search of a new start, like thousands of Irishmen before her. She had married Vivion de Valéra in September of 1881. He was a young man of delicate health who made his living by teaching music in New York City. Vivion de Valéra was Spanish by birth, his father being engaged in the sugar trade between Cuba, Spain and the United States. When young Éamon was not yet three years old his father died, leaving a young widow with a living to make and a small child to care for. The child was sent back to Ireland in the charge of his Uncle Ned Coll, who was, by good chance, leaving New York and returning to Ireland on a visit.

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<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 1-18, passim. Of several biographies this is the most recent and most comprehensive, having been written with de Valéra's cooperation. Therefore, for purposes of convenience, information concerning de Valéra's early years and adult life prior to his entrance onto the public stage will be taken from this source.

The youngster thus grew up in an Irish country farm house in the care of his grandmother, his Aunt Hannie Coll and his Uncle Patrick Coll. His childhood was apparently fairly typical; his family, while far from being "well off," was more fortunate than many. They lived in one of the first agricultural laborer's cottages built by the Liberals; it consisted of a kitchen, two small rooms and an overhead loft. His early association with politics was limited to the interests of his Uncle Pat and their neighbors, who appeared preoccupied with Charles Stewart Parnell, the Land and Labour League, and, later, Home Rule.

Eddie (as he was called--he did not use the Irish Éamon until much later) was sent to the National School at Bruree when he was six years old, and continued there for eight years. Frequently his attendance was irregular because of his home responsibilities, but his performance was nevertheless always satisfactory. After Eddie had been eight years at Bruree National School he finally succeeded in persuading his uncle to allow him to go on to the Christian Brothers in Charleville, where he hoped to win a scholarship to continue his education at college. His uncle objected to the idea, since they lacked any transportation; they could not even afford a bicycle. But Eddie's willingness to walk seven miles to school and seven miles home again when necessary convinced his uncle, and he began



his studies. He made rapid progress and on his first attempt at junior grade examinations he passed with honors. This was only a trial attempt because of his age, and the next year when he took the examinations a second time he again received honors in all subjects and was awarded a £20 scholarship for three years.

De Valéra was accepted at Blackrock College, Dublin, where he enrolled at the age of sixteen. He found the work difficult, and, at one point, considered leaving the school, but his interest in mathematics persuaded him to remain. Despite the difficulties with some of his subjects, his perseverance was rewarded when he received the highest average of scores on the middle grade examinations at Blackrock and placed eighth in all Ireland. This achievement brought him an increased scholarship--£30 a year for two years.

After completing senior grade examinations, this time with less than glorious results, he faced the usual problem of a Catholic student seeking higher education in Ireland. Trinity College, Dublin, was a Protestant institution and was therefore unacceptable to the Church. The Royal University of Ireland was an examining body only; since all the examining professors were from the Queen's Colleges, with none from Catholic colleges such as

Blackrock, Catholic students were at a distinct disadvantage. De Valéra hoped that hard work at University College, Blackrock, could make up for any such disadvantages, and he set himself a very strict, and somewhat overeager, regimen that would require thirteen hours of study a day, much of it on mathematics, which was unquestionably his strongest subject.

While at college de Valéra began to show interest in a wider variety of activities. He was athletic and enjoyed informal sports, though he engaged in organized sports activities only to a limited degree. He was interested in the debating society in which he served as a committee member and spoke frequently. His politics was certainly not radical at this point. On a debating motion, "That a constitutional monarchy as a form of government is preferable to republicanism" he was strongly in favor. He maintained "that constant elections disturb a nation and are thus not conducive to the prosperity of the people" and that "no rule could be more tyrannical than majority rule."

De Valéra was also very interested in the so-called "Irish University question," and spoke strongly on the subject, using a carefully researched argument. He favored expanding Dublin University to include a Presbyterian and a Catholic University College as well as Trinity College; he also stressed the need of the clergy for a university

education. During his college career, de Valéra also served as both secretary and president of the College branch of the St. Vincent de Paul Society; through his activities with the society he came into contact with the poor of the city and was strongly affected by the degree of pain and suffering he saw there.

De Valéra won a number of scholarships by scoring well on various examinations. While these scholarships were very helpful, they were not sufficient to cover all his fees. College officials allowed him to continue his studies nevertheless. He made up the difference by teaching without pay, and it developed that he was a very skilled teacher. When he heard of a vacancy at Rockwell College, near Cashel, de Valéra applied, received an appointment, and so began full time teaching. However, he was not satisfied with the situation, for he had not enough time to continue his own studies as he wished, and he felt that he would stagnate if he remained long; therefore he left after only two years.

In September of 1906, de Valéra began teaching at the Training College of Our Lady of Mercy, Carysfort, Blackrock, a school which prepared young women to teach in primary schools. His experience at Carysfort influenced his opinion of the education system; he felt that the students must be given a clear understanding of their subject matter

if they were to be expected to teach properly, but the rigidity of the system made this mastery of subject material difficult. While at Carysfort, he supplemented his income by lecturing at various educational institutions in Dublin and also by serving as an examiner at intermediate board examinations.

As a child, de Valéra had been interested in the Gaelic language and had learned some from his grandmother and other elders in Bruree. He had even tried teaching himself with the aid of lessons in a newspaper, but this had been unsuccessful. This early interest in Gaelic had now been rekindled, and in 1908, de Valéra joined the Gaelic League and began attending classes, determined to become proficient. While studying the language he met Sinéad Flanagan, one of his Irish teachers, who would become his wife two years later. The Gaelic League played an important role in de Valéra's expanding political interests; it was there that he first became acquainted with Dr. Douglas Hyde and Professor Eóin MacNéill. He took an active role in League activities--summer schools in the Gaeltacht (Western areas where Gaelic was still spoken as a native language), social activities, lectures, and various regional and countrywide conventions.

The Gaelic League, however, was by no means the only force at work which would ultimately bring de Valéra

to a position of leadership in the nationalist movement. For years Irish nationalists had directed their energies toward Home Rule.<sup>1</sup> The First Home Rule Bill of 1886 had failed of passage, as had the Second Home Rule Bill in 1893. However, by the time the Third Home Rule Bill was proposed in 1912, conditions had changed. The Parliament Act of 1911 now prevented the House of Lords from permanently halting passage of any bill--a bill passed three times in two years by the Commons became law, with or without approval of the Lords. Moreover, the act had been passed only with the support of Irish Nationalists sitting in Westminster. They were now in a position to consider Home Rule as a quid pro quo.

Ulster had always been in the van of objectors to Home Rule--the Orangemen of the northern counties feared dominance by a predominantly Catholic Irish Parliament and reprisals for years of Protestant oppression. Ulster had often threatened to fight. "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right" had been the slogan.<sup>2</sup> In Ulster, when it

<sup>1</sup>For an extensive discussion of Home Rule see Part Four of Robert Kee, The Green Flag: The Turbulent History of the Irish National Movement (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Walter Phelps Hall, Robert Greenhalgh Albion, and Jennie Barnes Pope, A History of England and the Empire Commonwealth, 4th ed. (New York: Blaisdell Publishing Co., a division of Ginn & Co., 1961), pp. 481-85.

began to look as though Home Rule would ultimately come, men began preparing to fight. Without interference on the part of the British--indeed with their unofficial sanction--Protestant leaders formed the Ulster Volunteers for the purpose of military resistance. Edward Carson's Ulstermen engaged in armed parades, drills, and generalized sabre-rattling; they armed themselves illegally by an exercise in gunrunning at Larne, while British officials closed their eyes to these activities. It was this activity in Ulster, along with his growing belief that only a show of force would be likely to bring any real measure of independence, that finally persuaded de Valéra to make an important decision. After reading an announcement of a public meeting to be held in Dublin's Rotunda Rink on 25 November 1913, de Valéra attended and filled out the enrollment forms passed through the crowd. The decision to join was no easy choice for a man with a wife and three young children to support; he firmly believed that the armed resistance movement launched that night could end no other way than in armed conflict with England, and his probable death. The organization to which de Valéra was thus committed was the Irish Volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 19-21. For the text of the Irish Volunteers' Manifesto read at this meeting see Appendix A.

The Irish Volunteers appeared to be a strictly independent organization, an outgrowth of nationalism encouraged and stimulated by the Gaelic League, Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin, the Gaelic Athletic Association, and the Irish literary revival. What was not known was that formation of the Volunteers was the direct result of the secret, oathbound, Irish Republican Brotherhood. Physical force and an armed uprising were integral parts of the IRB creed.<sup>1</sup> P. S. O'Hegarty, a member of the IRB Supreme Council, was quoted by Denis Gwynn:

"... Before ever there had been so much as a public whisper of a Volunteer force the Council had discussed it. It decided that any such force started by physical-force-men or by advanced Nationalists would be suppressed, but it felt also that the Ulster force made it difficult to suppress a Southern force which would be sponsored by unsuspectable people. And that was how Eóin MacNéill and Larry Kettle and other unsuspectable people started the Irish Volunteers. They thought they were acting on impulse when they were really acting on suggestion. Everything they did, then and afterwards was supervised."<sup>2</sup>

De Valéra's initiative was soon felt as the Volunteers were organized into squads based on home addresses of the men; he was put in charge of a group of recruits which drilled in Terenure, near his home in Donnybrook. Officers were chosen by popular vote and de Valéra was chosen first

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Gwynn, de Valéra, pp. 28-29.

as lieutenant and later as captain of E Company.<sup>1</sup> De Valéra was one of the "unsuspectables," and unsuspecting, of whom O'Hegarty spoke. Later, O'Hegarty talked specifically about de Valéra:

"He was unknown in Ireland outside Gaelic League and Volunteer circles in Dublin, and there he was not a leader nor did he aspire to be. He had no political ambitions and refused nomination for the Executive of the Volunteers because he did not want to touch the political end of the movement."<sup>2</sup>

De Valéra's ingenuity was demonstrated in the Howth gunrunning episode. A shipment of arms had been brought by Erskine Childers on his yacht and unloaded at Howth without incident. However, British troops intercepted the Volunteers as they were returning to Dublin, and the Volunteers took to the fields to hide their weapons. De Valéra's company served as part of a defensive screen to cover dispersal of the remaining Volunteers, but this left them in such a position that it seemed impossible to cross the Liffey and circle the city by morning. De Valéra dismissed two thirds of his company, ordering them to leave their weapons in the charge of the remaining third. He then crossed the city alone to Donnybrook, returned with his motor bicycle and side car, and proceeded to deliver his

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<sup>1</sup>Bromage, March of a Nation, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Gwynn, de Valéra, p. 29.



remaining men home, one by one, with their three rifles hidden under the side car apron--an operation which took all night.<sup>1</sup>

The Third Home Rule Bill, proposed by Herbert Asquith in 1912, in payment for Irish support in the election of 1910, finally passed over the objections of the House of Lords. However, it became law with a suspensory clause preventing implementation until after World War I, a condition which roused the anger of many Irishmen. The whole Volunteer organization had reluctantly accepted control by John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party; but when he, acting on his own, committed Ireland to support the British in the war, thus accepting suspension of Home Rule, the organization of the Volunteers divided into two bitterly opposed factions. Most of the original committee seceded and continued their activities with the small minority which followed them. Nationwide only about 12,000 seceded while 160,000 followed Redmond. Redmond's Volunteers were not an effective force for long, however, as their instructors were called back from the reserves and many of the men enlisted in the British army. The Irish Volunteers continued to drill and train as they had before,

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<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 22.

nominally still under the leadership of MacNéill, but, in actuality, under the control of the I.R.B.<sup>1</sup>

De Valéra was one of the minority who seceded. His unit dwindled after the split, but, by dint of stubborn determination, he rebuilt it to a thriving unit with the special assignment of serving as a scouting corps for the South City battalions. De Valéra was raised to the rank of Commandant, in charge of one of four battalions in Dublin, and was made adjutant of the Dublin brigade.<sup>2</sup>

When he realized that some of his men were apparently possessed of information to which not even he was privy, de Valéra complained to Thomas MacDonagh, his superior. It was explained that those who had special information were I.R.B. members and de Valéra was invited to take the oath. He refused because of the religious ban on secret organizations, and also because he did not want to be in the position of "serving two masters"--the I.R.B. and the Volunteers Executive. MacDonagh pointed out that there would not be two masters--that all Volunteer orders would be initiated by the I.R.B. De Valéra finally agreed to take the oath, but with the stipulation that he would only follow orders, not make them. Further, he would

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<sup>1</sup>Gwynn, de Valéra, pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 23-24.

attend no meetings, he would not know the names of members or share secrets beyond what was necessary for him to know in order to properly exercise his command.<sup>1</sup>

De Valéra's political beliefs had undergone considerable evolution. He had considered Home Rule a possibility in 1913, but the suspension of the Home Rule Act and the possibility of partition had converted him; by 1916, he was a committed Republican.<sup>2</sup> "'If liberty is not entire, it is not liberty,'" he told a friend on a cycling trip. "'You know that it was here in this Northern Land, it was here that the flag of the Republic was first raised . . .'"<sup>3</sup> Much that was sacred to Irish nationalism lay in Ulster--landmarks of St. Patrick, the homelands of Hugh O'Neill and Owen Roe, and Belfast, where Wolfe Tone and other Protestants of the United Irishmen began the Republican movement in the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Ireland stood now on the brink of the Easter Rising which would thrust de Valéra into national leadership.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 25; Bromage, March of a Nation, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Bromage, March of a Nation, pp. 39-40.

<sup>4</sup>For an extended discussion of the Republican Movement, see Part Two of Kee, The Green Flag.

### CHAPTER III

#### EASTER 1916--THE BLOOD SACRIFICE:

##### THE PRELUDE

'O words are lightly spoken,'  
Said Pearse to Connolly,  
'Maybe a breath of politic words  
Has withered our Rose Tree;  
Or maybe but a wind that blows  
Across the bitter sea.'

'It needs to be but watered,'  
James Connolly replied,  
'To make the green come out again  
And spread on every side,  
And shake the blossom from the bud  
To be the garden's pride.'

'But where can we draw water,'  
Said Pearse to Connolly,  
'When all the wells are parched away?  
O plain as plain can be  
There's nothing but our own red blood  
Can make a right Rose Tree.'<sup>1</sup>

On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916 there began in Dublin another in a long series of risings against British domination. This one would foreshadow the end of British rule and come to be regarded by the Irish as the most dramatic event in recent centuries. Not alone for the Irish has the Easter Rising held appeal; it has captured

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<sup>1</sup>W. B. Yeats, "The Rose Tree," in The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), pp. 180-81.

the imagination of people the world over. The names of the leaders are well remembered: the visionary Padraic Pearse; the dedicated labor leader, James Connolly; the old Fenian dynamiter, Tom Clarke; Tom MacDonagh, the college professor; Seán MacDermott, tireless despite the crippling of polio; the municipal officer, Edmund Kent; the strategist, Joseph Plunkett, so ill with glandular tuberculosis that he rose from his sickbed to participate in the Rising.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before noon on Easter Monday, the people of Dublin were busily engaged in enjoying the bank holiday. Many had gone to the shore; others had departed to the Fairymore Races, including great numbers of officers and men of the British garrisons; and others simply rode trams or walked leisurely about the city. It was the walkers on O'Connell Street (then known as Sackville Street) who were to witness the beginning of the Rising.

At about noon, or a few minutes before, a weird and motley group wheeled out of Lower Abbey Street and marched up O'Connell toward the General Post Office. Some were wearing the gray-green of the Volunteers, others the dark green of the Irish Citizen Army, and many were attired in civilian clothes with bandoliers crossed over the chest,

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<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 31.

and armbands. All were burdened with rifles, shotguns, sledgehammers, picks, axes, pikes, crowbars, ropes, shovels, haversacks, homemade grenades, and first aid kits. Marching at the head of the column were Commandants General James Connolly, Joseph Plunkett, and Patrick Pearse. Bringing up the rear were two trucks, a cab, and a Ford touring car, all as loaded as the men with additional weapons and supplies. Tagging along the sides and the rear were numbers of urchins from the Dublin slums, adding to the general confusion with questions, comments, and jeers.<sup>1</sup>

Countess de Markievicz, an officer in the Irish Citizen Army, remembered watching the troops as they assembled for parade in front of Liberty Hall in Beresford Place.

"The hour so anxiously awaited, so eagerly expected, had come at last. Our hearts' desire was granted to us and we counted ourselves lucky. Happy, proud and gay was Tom Clarke on that day. His life's work had borne fruit at last . . . It seems queer, looking back on it, how no one spoke of death or fear or defeat. . . . I stood on the steps and watched the little bodies of men and women march off, . . . all marching proudly, confident that they were doing right, sure at last that they had made the subjection of Ireland impossible for generations to come. . . ."2

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas M. Coffey, Agony at Easter: The 1916 Irish Uprising ([New York]: Macmillan Co., 1969), pp. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup>Jacqueline Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz: In the Cause of Ireland (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1967), p. 188.

To the citizens of Dublin it was a not unfamiliar sight, for the Volunteers were in the habit of making route marches in and about the city, and this was taken to be just another of the same. Most observers regarded them with mild amusement. Second-Lieutenant A. D. Chalmers, 14th Royal Fusiliers, remarked, "Look at that awful crowd!" and then pushed into the G.P.O. to send a telegram.<sup>1</sup>

When the column arrived in front of the G.P.O., a striking building with its Ionic columns supporting a pediment surmounted by statues of Hibernia, Mercury, and Fidelity, it halted on a command of Connolly. The command was unexpected and the men clanged and clattered to a ragged halt; a moment later they were further surprised by Connolly's shouted order, "Left turn. The G.P.O.-- Charge!" After several seconds of puzzlement, the troops realized the significance of this command, broke ranks and charged helter-skelter, some for the main door, some to the side entrance on Henry Street. Business in the post office had been brisk, but, with the advent of the shouting Volunteers onto the scene, patrons and employees alike froze as they were engulfed in the Volunteer wave.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Max Caulfield, The Easter Rebellion (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>The Volunteers consisted of elements of both the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army. These two

Connolly ordered everyone out, but few made any movement to leave. One of the first was Lieutenant Chalmers, urged into movement by a pike at his backside; he was taken prisoner, surrendering with dignity. As comprehension dawned, a mad scramble for the doors began. Clerks, leaving hats and coats behind, vaulted counters with the ease, if not grace, of athletes, and raced the customers for the exits. Shouts and curses, mixed with a few inadvertent shots, filled the air. One woman, however, continued to demand service--she had come for stamps and she intended getting them. At the door, Mr. E. A. Stoker, a Grafton Street jeweler, managed to force his way through the outgoing tide, only to be confronted by a young Volunteer who ordered him out. When Stoker inquired what was happening, he was told, "Hands up, or I'll blow your heart out!" Judging discretion to be the better part of valour, Stoker left.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary of the Post Office A. H. Norway was not present at the post office when it was taken by the Volunteers; he had been summoned to Dublin Castle by Under Secretary Sir Matthew Nathan. Nathan wanted Norway to take

groups were now fused into the Irish Republican Army and will henceforth be referred to in this paper as the "Volunteers" or the "Republicans."

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 13; Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 7-8.



steps to deny use of the telegraph and telephone services in areas of Southern Ireland to all but military and naval use. This restriction had been brought on following the arrest of a German ship carrying weapons apparently destined for the Volunteers.

Norway was writing out orders for Nathan's signature when they were both startled by the crash of musketry under the window. Jumping up, Nathan said, "Oh that's probably the long promised attack on the Castle," and left the room. (Sometime earlier Connolly's Citizen Army had actually carried out a daylight rehearsal for such an attack.) After a few minutes Norway ventured downstairs where he found a group of very frightened messengers; they had just seen the policeman at the gate shot down in his tracks. Nathan and Major Ivor Price had managed to close the gates of the Upper and Lower Castle Yards. Norway found Nathan and his storekeeper breaking open the armoury in hopes of arming the small group of Dublin Metropolitan Police who made up the Castle guard; they found revolvers but no cartridges.<sup>1</sup>

Francis P. Jones told a story, completely at variance with all other sources, concerning the attack on the

<sup>1</sup>Leon Ó Broin, Dublin Castle and the 1916 Rising (New York: New York University Press, 1971), pp. 90-91.

Castle. According to him the initial attack was made by Countess Markievicz and her troop of Fianna boys (teenage boy scouts organized to serve as messengers, etc.) and that it was the Countess herself who shot the guard at the gate. Jones' story recounted that the Fianna charged to the attack in an attempt to take the armoury, and then were dispersed by a troop of Lancers charging through the gate in a lather (having been routed from O'Connell St. by the G.P.O. garrison). The Lancers were in turn chased from the Castle yard by a troop of men under the command of Seán Connolly. Jones declared that the Castle, except for the armoury, was in the possession of the Volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

This story disagrees in almost every particular with all other sources. A troop of Lancers was routed from O'Connell St., but not until later, and there is no indication that they were in any way involved in the affray at the Castle. Countess Markievicz was at the Castle for only a few minutes, having driven there with Dr. Kathleen Lynn, bringing first aid supplies; Dr. Lynn remained at the Castle-City Hall area and the Countess continued on to her assigned location at St. Stephen's Green, with the remainder

<sup>1</sup>Francis P. Jones, History of the Sinn Féin Movement and the Irish Rebellion of 1916, with an introduction by Hon. John W. Goff (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1917), pp. 307-308.

of the supplies. The Countess did not shoot the guard; in fact she stated that she saw Seán Connolly ". . . [as he] raised his gun and shot the policeman who barred the way."<sup>1</sup>

Seán Connolly was in command of a small Volunteer force assigned to the Castle. Their original intention had been to take the Castle, but the force that mobilized was only a fraction of its scheduled size (this the result of confusion over whether the Rising was on or off), and consequently their orders had been changed; they were not to attempt to take the Castle, only prevent troops from leaving it. Therefore, they occupied the City Hall and the offices of The Evening Mail and The Daily Express, which commanded the Castle gate, and used these as sniping posts.<sup>2</sup>

It is probable that the Volunteers were unaware that the Castle was practically undefended. Certainly had they realized that Dublin Castle, symbol for years of British domination, was within their grasp, the Volunteers would have pressed the attack home at all costs. It can be speculated that, had the Castle fallen, it is possible that

<sup>1</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup>Dorothy Macardle, The Irish Republic: A Documented Chronicle of the Anglo-Irish Conflict and the Partitioning of Ireland, With a Detailed Account of the Period 1916-1923, with a Preface by Eamon de Valera (London: Corgi Books, A Division of Tranworld Publishers, 1968), pp. 158-59.

the general population might have joined in the Rising; in any case, His Majesty's Government would have suffered serious international embarrassment.

The attack on the G.P.O. occurred shortly after Norway had left. The guard unit at the upstairs telegraph center, for some unknown reason, had no ammunition. There are two stories, differing slightly, of the capture of this guard unit composed of British soldiers. According to Coffey and Caulfield, Michael Staines was leading a small group of Volunteers up the stairs when they suddenly found themselves covered by seven rifles. One Volunteer fired a pistol at the soldiers, grazing the forehead and downing the sergeant in charge; the others surrendered immediately and it was found they had no ammunition.<sup>1</sup> O Broin stated that the guard retreated into the telegraph room and barricaded the door; the rebels fired through the door, hitting a soldier in the face, and forced the guard to surrender.<sup>2</sup>

Norway later speculated on his actions had he been present; he would have been the only man armed.

'What then should I have done? I presume I ought to have tried to hold the staircase, and keep the mob down. I hope I should have done so. The certain

<sup>1</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, p. 20; Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>O Broin, Dublin Castle, p. 93.

result would have been that I should have been shot at once, and the probable result would have been that the Government in London would have declared the whole trouble to have arisen from my wicked folly in firing on a body of peaceful, if armed citizens. . 1

After the G.P.O. had been cleared of all but the Volunteer garrison and secured; the windows broken out, barricaded and loopholed; and guards and snipers posted; Pearse discovered he had forgotten the package of flags left behind at Liberty Hall. He dispatched Seán T. O'Kelly to get them, and, when he returned, ordered them raised above the G.P.O. One was the traditional green flag centered with an uncrowned Irish harp in gold, but now bearing, in addition, the inscription "Irish Republic"; the other was a new banner, a tricolor of green, white, and orange.<sup>2</sup> Pearse and Connolly had come out onto the portico, and Pearse proceeded to read to the puzzled and mostly derisive crowd the Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from whom she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

· · · · ·  
We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid..

<sup>2</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 25-26; Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 16; Kee, Green Flag, p. 549.

indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on the fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.<sup>1</sup>

Thus was the phoenix flame lighted once more and the Fenian torch carried on by a new generation.<sup>2</sup>

Aside from the idealism and emotional appeal of Pearse, a hint of Connolly's socialist ideas can be detected in the Proclamation. The statement of the "right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland" is an example. By signing on behalf of the Provisional Government instead of as members of the Government, the signatories allowed for the continuation of the Provisional Government after they themselves were executed, as they fully expected they would be. The Government was a secret one within the I.R.B., acting as trustees until the people could elect a permanent government; as long as there was an I.R.B. it could contain a provisional government, and the Republic, now declared,

<sup>1</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, p. 27. For the full text of the proclamation see Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 38.

would have continuity.<sup>1</sup> When the country had gained its independence and restored peace, the Provisional Government was to call a general election, using the existing electoral districts for convenience. Every Irish man and woman of legal age would be eligible to vote; anyone with enough signatures on nomination forms would be eligible to be elected President. Citizens of Ulster were to be on an equal basis with those of the three remaining provinces.<sup>2</sup>

The Easter Rising had its inception as early as 1914, when a small group of militants within the I.R.B. determined to stage an armed rising before the end of the War. They had in mind the saying of an earlier Irish revolutionary, John Mitchel, that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity."<sup>3</sup> At the time, such a plan was essentially academic, for the Volunteers had not recovered from the split occasioned by Redmond's promise of support to England's war effort. In fact, a significant increase

<sup>1</sup>Calton Younger, Ireland's Civil War (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1969), p. 24. For a brief look at Connolly's socialist philosophy see James Connolly, Socialism and Nationalism: A Selection from the Writings of James Connolly, with an Introduction and Notes by Desmond Ryan (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1948).

<sup>2</sup>Jones, Sinn Féin Movement, p. 224.

<sup>3</sup>Edgar Holt, Protest in Arms: The Irish Troubles, 1916-1923 (New York: Coward-McCann, 1961), pp. 63-64.

in numbers did not come until after the O'Donovan Rossa funeral in August of 1915.

The old Fenian, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, had died in America and his body had been returned to Ireland for burial. The funeral was a massive public demonstration. The body lay in state for four days at the City Hall, guarded by armed Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army men. There were seventeen special trains which brought mourners from all over the country and from England and Scotland. The procession to Glasnevin Cemetery, including armed units of the Volunteers and the Citizen Army in uniform, and a thousand members of Cumann na mBan (an Irish women's organization), took an hour and a half to pass a given point.<sup>1</sup> Pearse delivered the funeral oration, followed by the firing of a final salute over the grave. This panegyric has become a classic of Irish protest against British rule. He spoke, he said, ". . . on behalf of a new generation that has been re-baptised in the Fenian faith, "

. . . we pledge to Ireland our love, and we pledge to English rule in Ireland our hate. . . . I hold it a Christian thing as O'Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate untruth, to hate oppression, and hating them, to strive to overthrow them. . . . Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this Realm have worked well in secret and in the

<sup>1</sup>Kee, Green Flag, pp. 533-34; Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 70.



open. They think that they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools!--they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.<sup>1</sup>

Plans for the Rising had been proceeding apace. In May 1915 the I.R.B. executive had appointed a Military Committee, consisting of Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, and Edmund Kent, to plan the insurrection. These three had previously had some discussion of revolution, and Plunkett had worked out tentative plans. In September, Tom Clarke and Seán MacDermott were added to the committee, which then became known as the Military Council. The whole plan was so secret that not even the entire Supreme Council of the I.R.B. knew of it until September 1915.<sup>2</sup>

As time passed, the Volunteers, with Pearse as Director of Operations, engaged in demonstrations, route marches, and mock raids; the Citizen Army, under Connolly, became more and more militant, also. Pearse had stated publicly that no military action was anticipated, but, he continued,

. . . 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

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 127-28.

<sup>2</sup>Kee, Green Flag, p. 532.

determined to dismember Ireland? What if it be attempted to disarm Ireland?<sup>1</sup>

This statement would serve to lull any suspicions anyone might have regarding secret plans; it would also appeal for support for the Volunteer cause.

Closely involved with the planning of insurrection in Ireland was the ultra-nationalist Irish-American organization, the Clan-na-Gael, ruled by John Devoy, another ex-Fenian. An Ulsterman, Sir Roger Casement, late of the British Foreign Service, was also involved. With the outbreak of war, Devoy and the separatist Clan-na-Gael conceived the idea of securing German aid for an Irish rising, and so began negotiations with the German Ambassador to Washington.

Casement, recently retired from British service after being knighted for exposing the excesses of rubber planters in the Belgian Congo and the Putamayo area of Peru, had become an ardent Irish nationalist and had gone to America to secure financial aid for the Volunteers. After talking with Devoy and Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, Casement departed for Germany, arriving late in 1914. His high hopes were soon dashed. The Germans were simply playing with him,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 537.

preferring to negotiate directly with Devoy. Casement's efforts to build an Irish Brigade from Irish prisoners of war were rebuffed by the prisoners themselves; only about fifty finally joined the brigade. Early in 1916, Casement suffered a breakdown and spent several weeks in a sanatorium, leaving Robert Monteith, sent by the I.R.B. to aid Casement, to continue the negotiations.

Meanwhile, the Germans learned by cable from New York that the date of the Rising had definitely been set for Easter Sunday. The I.R.B. wanted the arms agreed upon to be landed in Tralee Bay between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Casement knew of none of this until mid-March, when he was appalled to discover that only twenty thousand old Russian rifles and ammunition were to be sent; no artillery and only ten machine guns were to be included.<sup>1</sup>

By now Casement was completely disillusioned with the Germans and would have liked to have tried to call off the whole affair, but he feared that his lack of information regarding details of the plan might cause him to endanger more people. He decided that he could do nothing but go ahead. Casement finally won the promise of his being landed, with Monteith and one other man, from a submarine well ahead of the arms shipment, ostensibly to ensure a safe landing

<sup>1</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, pp. 74-77.

of the arms. Secretly, he hoped to counsel postponement of the Rising.<sup>1</sup>

After an uneventful trip by submarine, Casement, Monteith, and a third man (referred to variously as Beverley or Bailey) arrived off Tralee Bay on the evening of Thursday 20 April; the Aud, bearing the arms, had also arrived in the area.<sup>2</sup> A pilot boat was to be waiting to take them ashore; the signal was to be two green lights. It was at this point that things began to go awry for the Volunteers. The original schedule called for the arms to be landed between Thursday night and Sunday morning. The Volunteers, however, feared that landing the arms so early, should they be discovered, might alert the British before the Rising could begin. Therefore, they changed the instructions so that the arms should in no case be landed before Sunday evening.

By the time this message had reached Germany, Casement was already at sea, and the Aud was also enroute. The

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<sup>1</sup>Roger McHugh, ed., Dublin 1916 (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1966), pp. 3-16, passim.

<sup>2</sup>In The Green Flag, p. 562, Kee referred to the third man as "Bailey," as did Caulfield in The Easter Rebellion, p. 45, who gave his full name and military title, "Sergeant Daniel Bailey." Monteith, however, called this man "Beverley" in his account included in McHugh, Dublin 1916. On p. 178 of Constance de Markievicz, Van Voris said "Bailey" was a pseudonym.

Aud was without wireless and thus could not be notified of the plan change. All of this transmission of messages was through Devoy in America, thus occasioning considerable loss of time. The message Devoy sent to Pearse telling him the arms would arrive according to the original schedule never arrived.<sup>1</sup> Common prudence should have dictated that the Volunteers would keep watch in case the ship should arrive early; this they failed to do. The pilot actually saw the Aud, but, having received orders for Sunday night, only wondered curiously what ship she was and went home.<sup>2</sup>

After waiting for the pilot's signal for some time, the submarine captain, fearing discovery by the coast guard if he waited longer, decided to take his boat as close to shore as he dared and land Casement, Monteith, and Beverley with a small boat. Despite his illness, Casement was cheerful, remarking that it would be more adventurous "going ashore in this cockle shell." The tub-like boat had to be propelled by oar as the captain refused to allow them to use the motor; its noise might attract unwelcome attention. They had difficulty reaching shore--Casement, in his weakened condition and knowing nothing of boats, could barely manage the steering oar; Beverley knew nothing

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Kee, Green Flag, p. 562.

of boats, either, and was of little use. Monteith had to do all the rowing, even though one hand and wrist were "swollen to an enormous size [and] was numb" from an accident earlier in the trip. They were swamped once, stuck on a sand bar, and all but drowned before they finally crawled ashore at Banna Strand, cold, wet, exhausted, and miserable.<sup>1</sup>

Monteith and Beverley, leaving the exhausted Casement behind, went in search of the Kerry Volunteers who were commanded by Austin Stack. Meanwhile, events continued to turn against the Rising. John MacCarthy, a farmer, had wakened at two o'clock on Good Friday morning and decided, for the first time in his life, to walk to a Holy Well to say his morning prayers. MacCarthy sighted the abandoned boat along the beach--it had resisted all Monteith's efforts to scuttle it--and summoned a neighbor to help drag it ashore. They found a dagger, a box of ammunition, and three loaded revolvers nearby; they also found the footprints of three men.

The police, having been sent for, spent most of the morning searching the neighborhood. They found Casement hiding in the ruins of a local landmark known as McKenna's Fort. He tried to pass himself off as a visiting English

<sup>1</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, pp. 26-30.

author, and might have succeeded, had the officers not noticed his wet trousers and the sand on his boots. On searching him, the police found a German rail ticket; they didn't recognize the language but knew it was not Irish, and so took him along to Ardfert police station. There, a further search turned up what appeared to be a code with references to "further instructions" and "further ammunition." Realizing the probable importance of this prisoner, the police at Ardfert transferred him to Tralee.<sup>1</sup>

Through a priest whom he was allowed to see, Casement managed to send a message to Pearse, telling him that German aid, beyond the arms aboard the Aud, could not be counted upon. Monteith also sent a message to Dublin, detailing the arms sent, and warning that, if it depended upon German aid, the Rising should not be undertaken; this message was delivered by a Volunteer to Connolly at Liberty Hall instead of to MacNeill as it should have been.<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, no effort was made to rescue Casement, even though he was at no time under heavy guard; it should have been a relatively simple task for the Volunteers of the area. Perhaps their hesitancy to act can be attributed to the fact that the young Volunteers were inexperienced and

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 151; Kee, Green Flag, p. 563.

hesitant to act without orders from their leader, Austin Stack. Stack himself had been arrested when he went along to the Tralee police barracks to make what he hoped were discrete inquiries about Casement. In addition, Pearse had given strict orders that no shots should be fired before the Rising began in Dublin.<sup>1</sup>

While these events were occurring on land, Captain Karl Spindler of the German ship Aud was having his own problems at sea. He arrived at the designated rendezvous point off Tralee Bay at the proper time Thursday afternoon, expecting the Irish Volunteers to give the agreed upon signal and send out the pilot. He found no sign of a signal or the pilot, and began to believe that possibly the Volunteers in the West had started premature trouble and that the British had declared martial law. Spindler took his ship into the bay and explored the coast line, finding no sign of trouble, but, equally, no sign of the Volunteers, either. He loitered about, fairly near shore, until midnight, hoping some signal would be forthcoming. When there was still no sign of a signal, the Aud moved back to the lee of Inishtooskert Island and anchored overnight.

<sup>1</sup>Younger, Ireland's Civil War, p. 21; Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 87.



Shortly after dawn, while Captain Spindler was considering his next move, the cry went up that the pilot steamer had been sighted. Worse luck--it was not the pilot at all but a British naval patrol. A number of British destroyers escorted the Aud to Queenstown, where her crew managed to blow her up and sink her in the channel on Saturday morning.<sup>1</sup> Now, not only were the German arms lost to the Volunteers, but the British must surely be alerted to the probability of a rising.

If things were going badly in the West for the Volunteers, they were going no better in Dublin itself. The latter part of Holy Week was a time of confusion--of accusations and reassurances, of commands and counter-commands, the Rising to occur and the Rising called off and then rescheduled again. Eóin MacNéill, the head of the Volunteers, had always believed that the Volunteers should be a defensive unit, that they should act only if conscription were forced on Ireland, or if the British moved to disarm them.

On Wednesday of Holy Week, a document, purported to be an official document stolen from Dublin Castle, was read out at a meeting of the Dublin Corporation. This document detailed plans for the arrest of Volunteer and

<sup>1</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, pp. 36-47, passim.

Citizen Army leaders, the seizure of Liberty Hall, Volunteer headquarters, the Sinn Féin building, and various other buildings and private homes; it also authorized the arrest of all Sinn Féin and Volunteer members.<sup>1</sup> The document had been in the hands of the Volunteers since Monday, the leaders debating whether to make it public or not, and finally ordering it printed. When it was deleted by the military censor, it was given to Alderman Tom Kelly to be read at the meeting.<sup>2</sup>

There has been considerable debate over the authenticity of the document. It was denied by Castle authorities, but Rory O'Connor, an engineer employed by Dublin Corporation, explained that it had been copied piecemeal from the files of the Castle and decoded for him by a contact inside the Castle.<sup>3</sup> It seems to have become generally accepted that this so-called "Castle Document" was a forgery, though a fairly accurate representation of the intentions of the Castle. Ivor Churchill Guest, Lord Wimborne, the Viceroy, had been pressing for some time to take a stricter line with the "Sinn Féiners," as all the Volunteers and separatists were called. By Sunday morning, he had persuaded

<sup>1</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 148-49.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Nathan to cable to Chief Secretary Augustine Birrell in London for permission to arrest the Volunteer leaders. Wimborne would have liked to have arrested some sixty to one hundred of the leadership immediately, but Nathan insisted on waiting for official permission.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently the spurious document was prepared by Joseph Plunkett. There was an error, referring to the Archbishop's house in Dublin as "Ara Coeli," actually the name of the Cardinal's residence in Armagh. This error led many to believe in the authenticity of the document, their reasoning being that such an error could not have been made by the Volunteers, but that the British might easily enough confuse "Archbishop" and "Primate." There were some who even attributed the forgery to Countess Markievicz, but most writers seem to support the theory of Plunkett's responsibility. Whether the confusing reference to the Archbishop's address was an oversight or an intentional "red herring" is not clear.<sup>2</sup> The commander of British troops in Ireland, Major-General L. B. Friend, said that the list of places to be raided included a number that the military could not even have thought of.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kee, Green Flag, pp. 564-66.

<sup>2</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, n. 14, pp. 182-83.

<sup>3</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 85.

MacNéill accepted the forged document at once, and, on Wednesday, issued orders for the Volunteers to be prepared to defend themselves against suppression. Thus he had done just what the planners of the Rising wanted; in effect he had mobilized the Volunteers for them. Certainly MacNéill had no intention that any but defensive action should be taken, and he did not have any idea that plans for a rising were well advanced. The first hint that anything of the sort was planned came late on Thursday night. Bulmer Hobson was Secretary of the Volunteers and it was to him that J. J. O'Connell and Eimar Duffy came with the amazing news--they had learned by accident that a rising was planned for Sunday. Hobson at once took them with him and went straight to MacNéill with the story.

In a rage, MacNéill stormed off to St. Enda's School, got Pearse out of bed, and demanded to know if a rising was indeed planned. When this was confirmed, MacNéill insisted he would stop it; he would do anything within his power "short of ringing up Dublin Castle" to insure that there would be no waste of lives for which he was responsible. With that he took his leave, leaving Pearse to debate with his conscience and finally to come to the decision that the Rising must go on.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 45-46.

Immediately after leaving Pearse, MacNéill issued orders cancelling "'all orders issued by Commandant Pearse or by any other person heretofore.'" When he heard of the countermand, Pearse sent for Seán MacDermott and Tom MacDonagh (who had only recently joined the Military Council) and by nine o'clock on Good Friday morning they were at MacNéill's home. For the first time, MacNéill was told of the Aud and the cargo she carried and something of the plans for the Rising. When he realized how far advanced the plans really were, and, knowing the chances of success would be improved immeasurably by the additional weapons, and still believing in the authenticity of the "Castle Document," MacNéill agreed not to interfere further. He authorized sending dispatches confirming that maneuvers should proceed as originally scheduled.<sup>1</sup>

At this point, however, the plans had already gone awry; the Aud was steaming, under escort, for Queenstown, and Casement would be in custody within a few hours. No one in Dublin knew of this, though, and they would not know until the next day. After MacNéill acquiesced to their plans, the Military Council took possession of Volunteer Headquarters on Friday afternoon. They were afraid that Hobson might urge further countermands on MacNéill, so the

<sup>1</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, pp. 177-78.

Council had Hobson detained under guard so that he could not contact anyone.<sup>1</sup>

Both Dublin Castle and the Military Council received the news of Casement's arrest and the sinking of the Aud at about the same time, on Saturday. Quite different reactions occurred in both places. The Castle authorities had known since 22 March that a rising was planned to take place at Easter, and that the militant Irish were in contact with the Germans, seeking arms and assistance.<sup>2</sup> The men of the Castle made plans for the arrest of the Irish leaders, but they felt no pressure of time. They believed that with Casement arrested and the arms at the bottom of the sea, the Volunteers would not go on with their plans; therefore, there was plenty of time to arrest the rebels Monday.

The rebels themselves were responding very differently, however. Pearse and his comrades felt it was absolutely necessary to go on as planned; they would surely be arrested now and the whole independence movement would be wrecked.<sup>3</sup> Also on Saturday, MacNéill began having second thoughts about allowing the Rising to proceed. Sketchy reports of arrests in Kerry alarmed him, and the arrival of

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>O Broin, Dublin Castle, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 51-53.

The O'Rahilly with more arguments against the Rising only agitated him the more. He wrote out a series of counter-manding orders but did not immediately dispatch them. Later MacNéill learned the details of the arrest of Casement and the loss of the Aud, and, after further angry exchanges with Pearse, ordered the countermand sent out. It was dated 22 April and was signed by MacNéill as Chief of Staff. It read, "Volunteers completely deceived. All orders for special action are hereby cancelled, and on no account will action be taken."<sup>1</sup>

Messengers were dispatched all over Ireland, by train, taxi, and private car. The O'Rahilly himself drove wildly through the night, carrying the message to Volunteer leaders in six counties before winding up in Limerick City on Easter Sunday. To make sure the message was received by all, MacNéill also wrote out a press release and personally delivered it to the offices of the Sunday Independent. The announcement read:

Owing to the very critical position, all orders given to Irish Volunteers for tomorrow, Easter Sunday, are hereby rescinded and no parades, marches, or other movement of Irish Volunteers will take place. Each individual Volunteer will obey this order strictly in every particular.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 54-55.

The newspaper announcement took many by surprise as they rose on Easter morning, keyed up for the scheduled three-day maneuvers. Those who knew of the plans for the Rising were appalled at MacNéill's action. Tom Clarke said to Pierce Beasley, his bodyguard, "'MacNéill has ruined everything--all our plans. I feel like going away to cry.'"<sup>1</sup> Countess Markievicz thought the cancellation announcement leaped out at her--it was the only paragraph she saw in the paper that day. Brokenhearted, she raced off to Liberty Hall to find out what had happened.<sup>2</sup>

De Valéra had known of the day and time set for the Rising since Wednesday when he had received secret orders from Pearse. He had made his preparations, both personal and official. On a personal level he had written out a simple will, witnessed by his neighbors, and said goodbye to his family, concealing his belief that he was going to his death. He had gone to church and made what he felt sure would be his last Confession. Officially, he carried out the briefing of officers under his command. This was done with a thoroughness remarkable to his men. He gave details concerning advantages and disadvantages to be found in each area, availability of tools and communications

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, p. 185.



facilities, and alternative water supplies. One of his officers wrote, "I cannot remember a query put to him that he was not able to answer immediately."<sup>1</sup>

When de Valéra awoke on Sunday morning, it was with a toothache which he could not ignore--an ignoble beginning for what was to be a great day. He went to the dental office of a relative of his wife, but he was concerned all the while about a phrase he had glimpsed on a newspaper billboard--something about all maneuvers being cancelled. Reading the cancellation order later came as a great blow--was their training and preparation to come to nothing? He was shocked and disappointed.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the leaders were meeting at Liberty Hall to try to salvage what they could of their plans. Clarke, Connolly, MacDermott, and Pearse were determined that the Rising must go on despite the loss of the rifles, British knowledge, and now MacNeill's untimely countermand.<sup>3</sup> Pearse, particularly, was anxious to go ahead. For him, success had always been of secondary concern; the main thing was that Ireland's honor must be redeemed. He had looked forward to the time when the "mystical 'red wine of

<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 153-54.

the battlefield'" would again stain Irish soil. Only thus could the banked fires of nationalism be resurrected.<sup>1</sup> (No doubt the choice of Easter Sunday for the start of the Rising had mystic significance to Pearse.) More evidence of Pearse's idea that blood must be spilled if Ireland were to gain her freedom can be found in the O'Donovan Rossa funeral oration: "Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations."

Yet another expression of Pearse's ideas about the necessity of bloodshed is found in the following: "'Bloodshed is a cleansing and 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.'"<sup>2</sup> In a play, The Singer, which Pearse wrote in 1915, an ancient Gaelic hero protested, "'We thought it a foolish thing for four score to go into battle against four thousand, or maybe forty thousand.'" Came the response, "'And so it is a foolish thing. Do you want us to be wise?'"<sup>3</sup> After considerable debate, it was deemed better not to try to carry out the Rising on Sunday

<sup>1</sup>Kee, Green Flag, pp. 551-53.

<sup>2</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, p. xvi.

<sup>3</sup>Kee, Green Flag, p. 551.

as planned. Instead, the decision was made to begin at noon on Monday.

There can be no doubt that MacNéill's countermand had serious effects; it considerably reduced the number of Volunteers who mobilized. The plans for the Rising had been based on the Volunteer forces available. In March of 1916, the total strength was between ten and fifteen thousand. Of these, about twenty-five hundred were in the Dublin area.<sup>1</sup> Various estimates of the number of Volunteers mobilized for the Rising have been made. Cathal Brugha, Kent's second-in-command, thought there were about one thousand. Desmond Ryan at the G.P.O. estimated eleven hundred. Twenty years later, Diarmuid Lynch set the figure at sixteen hundred, and, in 1956, Major Florence O'Donoghue put it at eighteen hundred. A publication of the Department of External Affairs, in 1963, returned to the one thousand figure.<sup>2</sup> In any case not all who eventually joined in the Rising were present from the beginning; many came later in the week. Probably only about one thousand were present on Monday.

At that time the British had about two thousand troops available in Dublin and several thousand more

<sup>1</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, p. xii.

<sup>2</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, n. 15, pp. 204-205.

reinforcement troops which were brought in later.<sup>1</sup> "If the unbroken strength of the Irish Volunteers had answered the call, it is probable that all Dublin would have been occupied by them, and the task of putting down the rebellion rendered tenfold more difficult, if not impossible."<sup>2</sup>

The planning of the military aspects of the Rising had been, to a great extent, the responsibility of Joseph Plunkett. The intended strategy was to take several key locations in the city center, and to control railway stations and approaches to the city in order to prevent the arrival of British reinforcements. The military barracks within the city were to be outside the Volunteer defense ring, and telephone and telegraph service was to be interrupted. The main points of the defense ring were to be: the G.P.O., as General Headquarters, and the Four Courts, to the north; the South Dublin Union to the west; to the south, Jacob's Biscuit Factory; St. Stephen's Green to the southeast; and, to the east, Boland's Mills. From each of these main points, small outposts were to be manned to complete the ring and

<sup>1</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, pp. 91-92. Macardle gives a figure of twelve hundred for the British strength on Monday. Most sources, however, use a figure closer to two thousand.

<sup>2</sup>W. Alison Phillips, The Revolution in Ireland 1906-1923, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), p. 100. The italics have been added for emphasis.

provide for greater ease of communication among the Volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

Five of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Republic were present at the Volunteers' General Headquarters in the G.P.O. In addition to Connolly, Pearse, and Plunkett, who held military titles, Tom Clarke and Seán MacDermott were among the headquarters garrison. The O'Rahilly was also present at the G.P.O. After his wild ride through the night, carrying MacNeill's countermand to the provinces, he had driven madly back to Dublin to join the muster at Liberty Hall, saying to Pearse, "'It's madness, yet it's glorious madness and I want to be in on it.'"<sup>2</sup> In his poem "The O'Rahilly" Yeats describes it thus:

He told Pearse and Connolly  
He'd gone to great expense  
Keeping all the Kerry men  
Out of that crazy fight;  
That he might be there himself  
Had travelled half the night.

'Because I helped to wind the clock  
I come to hear it strike.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, pp. 173-74.

<sup>2</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 17-18.

<sup>3</sup>Yeats, "The O'Rahilly," The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats, stanza 2, lines 3-8 and stanza 3, lines 7-8.

## CHAPTER IV

### EASTER 1916--THE BLOOD SACRIFICE:

#### MILITARY ACTION

At about 1:15 Monday afternoon, the Volunteers in the G.P.O. had their first taste of action. A cry went up from the crowd milling about in O'Connell Street, "The Lancers are coming!" and there was indeed a troop of Lancers approaching from the northern end of O'Connell. Haughtily, in precise columns, without glancing to either side, they continued toward the G.P.O.; fanning smartly across the street, they halted for a moment and then charged forward as their colonel gave the command. As they reached Nelson's Pillar in front of the G.P.O., they came into the Volunteers' sights. A single shot rang out, followed by a ragged volley. Four of the Lancers fell from their saddles, three killed and the fourth wounded. As another volley followed the first, a horse fell dead and the precise discipline of the troop vanished amid a milling crowd of horses and men. By some wonder, no others were killed; the colonel hastily issued a command and they disappeared at a gallop.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 36-38.

Throughout the remainder of Monday afternoon the Volunteers were left unchallenged. They made good use of the time, getting in supplies, commandeering medical needs from neighborhood pharmacies, and setting up outposts.<sup>1</sup>

During most of the week of the Rising the garrison in the G.P.O. saw relatively little action, although there was a considerable amount of sniping. On Wednesday the gunboat Helga steamed up the Liffey and, with support from artillery brought from Trinity College (held for the British by students of the Officers' Training Corps), destroyed Liberty Hall and then turned her guns on O'Connell Street. This bombardment continued on Thursday, bringing many buildings down and setting many more on fire. The upper floor of the G.P.O. was wrecked, but the men remained in their places, firing at any target that offered itself.<sup>2</sup>

The leaders in the G.P.O. managed to keep up the spirits of their men. On Tuesday, Pearse issued a somewhat overly optimistic report on the progress of the Rising.<sup>3</sup> Connolly was indefatigable, making the rounds among the men,

<sup>1</sup>For an extensive discussion of the events at the G.P.O. throughout the Rising, see Coffey's Agony at Easter. The entire book deals in great detail, and almost exclusively, with the G.P.O.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 110-11. For text of this proclamation, see Appendix C.

reassuring, comforting, sometimes scolding, but always showing his concern. Once he suddenly began singing a favorite marching song, "The Soldier's Song," which would one day be the national anthem of Ireland, and within a minute or two the whole building rang with song.<sup>1</sup> Even after he was injured, Connolly continued to direct activities, being wheeled about on a bed.<sup>2</sup>

In a conversation involving Pearse, Plunkett, and Desmond Fitzgerald, the morality of what was being done was explored. No attempt to deny responsibility for the death and destruction of the Rising was made. They debated how such death and destruction would appear in the eyes of God. They considered that they were waging a war, and the Church did not condemn war when fought for a worthy cause; and certainly Irish independence was a worthy cause.

On the other hand, the Church did condemn suicide, and was it not suicidal to undertake a war with such little hope of victory? No, it was, perhaps, sacrificial, but not suicidal. They were fighting furiously for their lives, even though they were willing to die, if necessary. Was such a sacrifice not similar, though certainly not on the same plane, to the ultimate Sacrifice of Christ for the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 162.



redemption of mankind? If Christ destroyed death by dying to remit the sins of man, and restored life when He rose again, did they not restore life to Ireland by dying themselves? Wasn't this the significance of having chosen the Feast of the Resurrection as the date to rise for Ireland?<sup>1</sup> Here, certainly, is a carefully thought out justification of the attitude and the actions of Pearse and the other leaders of the Rising.

At the Four Courts, the judiciary headquarters of Ireland, Edward Daly commanded the 1st Battalion of the Volunteers. This was an important location as it completed the northern side of the defense ring. Daly divided his force into six units, one to take the Four Courts itself, and the others to take up various positions in the surrounding neighborhood. They took the Four Courts with no difficulty at all, simply ordering a policeman to hand over the keys; litigants would have had more trouble gaining entrance. The business of setting up barricades and fortifying positions in the surrounding streets went ahead amid mixed reactions from the poor people of the area; a few were helpful, but most were hostile.

Into the midst of this activity blundered another troop of Lancers. This particular unit had been detailed

<sup>1</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 147-48.

to escort a small munitions convoy from the North Wall railway terminus. The Lancers and their convoy had already passed twice under Volunteer guns, once at Liberty Hall and again at O'Connell Bridge; the rebel guns in both locations had remained silent by order. It would be difficult to determine who was more surprised--the Volunteers, working on a barricade at Church Street Bridge, or the Lancers at whom these Volunteers loosed a fusillade of bullets. Horses reared and plunged, and several of the Lancers were unhorsed; the others abandoned dignity as they desperately attempted to control their mounts. Some charged toward the Four Courts, only to be met by more fire from the "Howth rifles"; these rifles created such an echo when fired that they sounded like small cannon, adding more to the confusion of the cavalry.

Many of the Lancers were led into the open space of the Ormond Market where they again came under fire. Any discipline which they might have retained now disappeared completely as men, horses, and munitions wagons milled about. Finally they broke into a dispersal and prepared to repel an attack which never materialized. In other streets, Lancers were taken captive; in one incident a child was killed by a wild shot from a Lancer's carbine, and two Lancers were killed. The long lance of one of the

dead men was stuck into a manhole in the street and used as a flagpole.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the week there was to be fierce fighting in the Four Courts area. By Wednesday, Daly's command was threatened from the north by troops at Broadstone station; an apparently invincible sniper had accounted for more than twenty casualties (by Saturday when he was killed, his toll had reached 53); and a machine gun was spraying the whole area from a roof top. Nevertheless, morale was high and no one thought of surrender.<sup>2</sup> Later in the week, the fighting in this area grew more fierce, and it became a street to street battle, and, in some cases, almost a house to house fight. For sixteen hours the British struggled to take one street, but still they were mocked by pockets of Volunteers; the area was never completely cleared by the British.<sup>3</sup>

The fourth battalion under Edmund Kent and Cathal Brugha was charged with responsibility for the South Dublin Union, a workhouse complex sprawling over fifty-two acres. It was actually a small town in itself, consisting of

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 69-73.

<sup>2</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, p. 144; Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 226.

<sup>3</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 335-43, passim.

streets, alleyways, wards, sheds, residences, dormitories, two churches, lawns, and open fields; all enclosed by a high stone wall, and with a population, exclusive of officials, of 3,282. It would be a strategic, but difficult, area to hold, for it controlled the Kingsbridge Station, where reinforcements from the Curragh would arrive. It also controlled the approaches to the Liffey quays and the Four Courts. The job of holding this complex was made infinitely more difficult by virtue of the fact that only 120 men out of approximately 700 of the battalion's membership had mobilized on Monday morning. Kent detailed three groups of about twenty men each to establish important outposts at two distilleries and a brewery in the area. In the Union itself, headquarters was established in a Nurses' Home, with small groups of men scattered about at strategic locations. In one group of sheds, a wardmaster was ordered to herd all of the lunatic patients in his charge into one dormitory, leaving the others to the Volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

Early on Monday afternoon, there was sharp fighting when a force of two hundred British troops attacked the Union. The major in command and his lieutenant were both killed, as well as other British and Volunteer troops. The British succeeded in breaking into the Union at two points,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 65-69.

though their attack on the main gate was repulsed. Late in the afternoon, the British launched the final assault of the day, against the Women's Infirmary. A running battle was carried from one ward to another as a small group of Volunteers fell to the floor for a few minutes, loosed off shots at the British, then rose to run into the next ward, pursued by the soldiers. In one ward the sounds of gunfire were punctuated by the screams of a few remaining patients who had not been evacuated when the attack began; they had barricaded themselves with beds in a corner. After a wild melee in another ward, the Volunteers scattered through hallways and finally escaped into the yard. After a last dash across an open court they reached the Nurses' Home headquarters.<sup>1</sup>

By Thursday morning the garrison in the Nurses' Home numbered twenty-seven. In the intervening days, there had been twenty casualties, and a dozen men in various locations in the Union had been captured. There were sixteen more Volunteers in another group of buildings on James Street, but they were not in a position to support the Nurses' Home immediately. Thursday morning was so quiet that the Volunteers were even able to shave. It was, however, the lull before the storm.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-103, 130-32.

During the morning, the 2/7th and 2/8th Sherwoods, who had, the day before, been caught in the fiercest fighting of the whole Rising in the Battle of Mount Street Bridge, had begun a march from Ballsbridge toward the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham. They reached the area of the Union at mid-afternoon, and found the approaches to a bridge covered by the Volunteers. A unit was sent into the Union to clear the Volunteers who imperiled any attempt to cross the bridge, one section approaching by way of the Bakehouse. After following a circuitous route which led them through a Maternity Hospital and an Old People's Ward, a second section broke through a brick wall into the lobby of the Nurses' Home. Here they came face to face with a formidable barricade thrown up across an archway. They were greeted by heavy firing, and several of the unit were killed.

At this point, confusion took over on both sides. Both the British and the Volunteers believed they were facing far larger numbers than was actually the case. The Volunteers, on seeing the long column of transports, believed they were faced with forces numbering as high as two thousand; actually, fewer than fifty men had been sent to deal with them, and most of these were held back while only a small reconnaissance force reached the Nurses' Home. On the other hand, the British unit sent into the Union had

no idea of the Volunteer strength, but were told by a Union official that there were some two hundred Volunteers holed up in the Nurses' Home. When the British broke into the lobby, Kent, knowing his line of retreat was endangered by the British in the Bakehouse, went to call up the men in the James Street buildings. A shout of "the British are in" was misinterpreted as meaning the barricade was breached, and Brugha ordered a retreat. As he crossed a stair landing, Brugha was hit by fragments of a grenade tossed over the barricade by the British. He was further injured by automatic and rifle fire raking the barricade.

Everyone had escaped but Brugha and John Joyce who was still firing at the Bakehouse from the upper floor. When Joyce came downstairs, Brugha sent him to report to Kent, saying he would hold by himself as long as he could. Only three of the small reconnaissance unit survived, and they did not attempt to breach the barricade; rather, they went in search of some other way of gaining entrance. Finding none, they returned to a small office between the Nurses' Home lobby and the Old People's Ward. One went off to report and see what was to be done, leaving the other two with the rest of the unit in the Old People's Ward. Meanwhile, despite twenty-five wounds, Brugha had crawled to a position where he could fire at the barricade from

relative safety. He fired short bursts at intervals, and, when none of the British responded, began to sing "God Save Ireland," challenging them to come and fight.

The Volunteers, with Kent, had taken refuge in a dormitory, and seemed totally demoralized. They sat gloomily about, waiting to be attacked. Brugh's singing seemed to stir them from their apathy, and Kent, suddenly revitalized, ordered them back to the Nurses' Home. They re-entered, blazing away with their weapons, and again took up their positions behind the barricade. The sudden return of the Volunteers caused all but one of the British to bolt. That one had about forty-eight grenades, and he and the Volunteers spent some time exchanging grenades and rifle fire, with no one being injured. When he had almost exhausted his grenades, the messenger returned with word that the brigade and the transports had crossed the bridge and were safe. They found their comrades who had bolted and left the Union to the Volunteers. It was then after 10:00 P.M.; the fighting had lasted nearly eight hours.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas MacDonagh and the Second Battalion occupied Jacob's Biscuit Factory in the center of the southern half of the Volunteers' defense ring. The position was impregnable, and the Volunteers spent their time alternately

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 275-86, passim.



waiting for action and beseiged by the British, who were unsuccessful in dislodging them. Apparently, for these Volunteers, the entire Rising was spent in this unrewarding manner.<sup>1</sup>

Also located in the southern defense segment was St. Stephen's Green, a large park with some wooded areas as well as open spaces and lakes, entirely surrounded by a high ornamental metal fence. The Green was the responsibility of about 120 men and women of the Citizen Army and twenty Volunteers, all under the command of Michael Mallin and the redoubtable Countess Markievicz. After seizing the Green, the rebels forced everyone not part of the Rising to leave. They locked the gates and set about barricading the gates and digging trenches.

The leaders detailed others to barricade as many streets as possible. Ten streets fed into those surrounding the Green, and many of them were considered strategic. All sorts of vehicles--trams, private cars, vans, anything that rolled--were commandeered from their astonished and protesting owners. The Royal College of Surgeons on the west side of the Green was also occupied. Unfortunately, there were too few of the rebels to occupy the Shelbourne Hotel to the north, and during Monday night British

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 315; Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 162.

soldiers moved into the hotel and set up a machine gun on the roof.<sup>1</sup>

On Tuesday morning the rebels in the Green were rudely awakened by machine gun fire from the hotel; hurriedly they abandoned the Green as untenable and moved into the College of Surgeons. Countess Markievicz was in the thick of things--directing activities in the Green, returning sniper fire, and offering advice and encouragement throughout the week. With their retreat to the College of Surgeons, this command lost any real military value, but they continued sniping from the roof and exchanged fire with the British throughout the week.<sup>2</sup>

After Seán Connolly's hit-and-run attack on the Castle, the City Hall became the rebel headquarters in the area. Connolly was killed on the roof in the early afternoon.<sup>3</sup> Later in the afternoon and evening, the British launched several fierce attacks on the City Hall. There was furious fighting for a while, and one wave of British attackers fell back before the Volunteers' fire. They ran into the next attacking wave and the two groups of British

<sup>1</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, pp. 189-91.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-92.

<sup>3</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 116.

each mistook the others for rebels and opened fire at close quarters, while the Volunteers on the stairs poured one volley after another into the melee. The confusion was soon cleared, however, and the British sorted themselves out and launched a combined attack which easily swept the Volunteers from the stairs. Once the lower floors were cleared, the British decided to wait until morning to attack the rebels on the roof.<sup>1</sup>

On Tuesday morning the British cleared the roof of the City Hall in less than half an hour; there were fewer than a dozen Volunteers left on the roof by then. Others, however, still held the Mail and Express offices and other small posts.<sup>2</sup> In the afternoon, British soldiers began the final campaign to clear the rebels from the area. Five waves of British charged the newspaper offices, one after another, the later ones stumbling over their predecessors, bogged down just inside the doorway. One British soldier, a Dublin Fusilier, came face to face with his younger brother and hissed at him, "Run, you young fool, run!" Within an hour the battle was finished and an unreal quiet descended. Bystanders saw seven rebels escape from a side window and disappear in the direction of the Liffey.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 137-42, passim.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 170-72.

Commandant de Valéra's Third Battalion was assigned to hold the Boland's Mill area in Ringsend, completing the defense circle on the east. Plunkett's original plan called for the occupation of sixteen outposts, including a railway station and two miles of track, signalling posts, several canal works, a gasworks, warehouses and mills, a bakery, a granary, a locomotive shop, and dock-milling premises. This would have required herculean effort, even if the battalion had been at full strength of something near five hundred men. De Valéra, like all the other commanders, had only a fraction of his battalion; only about 120 men had mobilized.<sup>1</sup>

The Boland's Mill area was one of distinct contrasts. In Ringsend there was the squalor of slums; in the area of Mount Street there were respectable old Georgian homes. During the week of the Rising, the equalizing power of war was especially noticeable in this area. Both the rich and the poor crouched in fear in their homes while battles raged outside. Stray shots struck down a raggedly clothed slum child, while, not far away, the crumpled body of a fur-coated professional man lay in the gutter for the whole of one day. The crazy, twisting alleyways and lane-ways, yards abutting one on another, the smooth unbroken

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

roofs of the Georgian homes, with their chimney pots, all combined to make the area a sniper's paradise. The military never knew from which direction death might suddenly strike, and neither did any civilians who might be foolhardy enough to venture outside or even to stand too near windows and doors.<sup>1</sup>

De Valéra's battalion headquarters were located in Boland's Bakery (not the same as Boland's Mills), with his personal headquarters in a dispensary adjacent to the bakery. Most of Monday was spent in preparation--getting in supplies, loopholing walls, and dispatching small parties to man various outposts. The gasworks was put out of commission to guard against possible explosions that could set fire to the whole area and endanger the civilian population. De Valéra did not forget the animals caught in the Rising. Arrangements were made for the bakery horses to be fed while food was available and to be turned loose when the food ran out. When it was apparent that a nearby animal shelter had been abandoned by the regular attendants, he liberated the dogs and cats so that they might fend for themselves.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ó Faoláin, Life of de Valéra, pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 39-40.

Communications was a serious problem for de Valéra, as it was for all the rebel commanders. The Cumann na mBan and the Fianna acted as couriers, but they were frequently unable to get through from one post to another, especially later in the week, with the result that most units were almost completely isolated and had to act independently.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the Volunteers did not manage to inflict similar problems on the British. Rebel planners had intended cutting telephone and telegraph lines, and a small party was dispatched to take over the entire Central Telephone Exchange. They turned back, without even investigating the telephone exchange, because an old woman told them the place was filled with soldiers. Actually, there were no British anywhere near.<sup>2</sup>

On Monday afternoon, in de Valéra's area, an unfortunate event occurred which the British attempted to turn into "atrocities" propaganda. A group of elderly unionist sympathizers who were known locally as the "Gorgeous Wrecks," from their armbands which were initialled "G. R." (Georgius Rex), formed a sort of home-guard corps. Dressed

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Redmond Fitzgerald, Crv Blood Crv Erin (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966), p. 81. This publication is copiously illustrated with photographs and drawings, many of which are not included in other readily available publications.

in khaki uniforms, they had been on a route march during the morning, armed with rifles but with no ammunition, and were returning to the city along Northumberland Road. Two of de Valéra's men, posted in the house at No. 25, opened fire on the elders, but ceased firing immediately upon realizing that they were without ammunition. Five of the "G. R.'s" were killed, but the remainder of the unit reached Beggar's Bush Barracks and spent the remainder of the week sniping at rebels from the barracks roof.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the week there was sniping in Ringsend and exchanges of fire between the Volunteers and the British. Wednesday, however, was a day not to be forgotten by any who were involved in the Battle of Mount Street Bridge. Several small outposts with no more than twelve to fifteen men were located in the area from the intersection of Northumberland and Haddington Roads to the Mount Street Bridge across the Grand Canal, a distance of about three hundred yards. This short space was to become a death trap for the 2/7th and 2/8th Sherwood Foresters.

At one end was No. 25 Northumberland, with only two Volunteers, and, at the opposite end, the bridge itself was commanded from the far side of the canal by Clanwilliam House, garrisoned by seven men. Between the two, a

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 83; Gwynn, de Valéra, p. 35.

parochial hall was manned by three more Volunteers, and another three or four held Robert's Yard near Clanwilliam House. The Sherwoods had landed at Dún Laoghaire (then Kingstown) and were marching to Kilmainham. The 2/5th and 2/6th were lucky; they were ordered through Stillorgan and Donnybrook, and reached Kilmainham after an uneventful march. The 2/7th and 2/8th, however, were ordered through Ballsbridge, by way of Northumberland Road. Thus, they marched straight into an ambush and the fiercest fighting of the entire Rising.<sup>1</sup>

The battle began shortly after noon when ten Sherwoods fell in the first volley from No. 25 Northumberland. For the next nine hours it seemed as though the demons of Hell had been loosed on them. It was all but impossible to move without attracting withering fire from the rebels. When, after several hours, they reached the bridge, attack after attack was thrown back by fire from Clanwilliam House and other posts. Only after grenade and machine gun reinforcements reached the British were they able to silence the firing from No. 25 and begin to make any progress against Clanwilliam House. Indeed, the British did not take the bridge until the Clanwilliam garrison were forced to abandon the house to engulfing flames. The British lost

<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 41-42.



234 killed and wounded, almost exactly half of their total casualties in the entire Rising; the Volunteer losses were four dead.<sup>1</sup>

During the week of the Rising, de Valéra was always busy with one concern or another, going without sleep for three or four days at a time. He was constantly concerned about the morale of his inexperienced troops, and felt a particular personal responsibility for discipline in the absence of many of his battalion officers. He frequently reminded his newly promoted officers to keep their men alert and occupied, but not to overwork them; there were likely to be rigorous days ahead.<sup>2</sup>

It has been reported that de Valéra's behavior was somewhat erratic; that he gave orders for various things to be done and then changed his mind and cancelled the orders before they could be carried out. The men began to wish he would make up his mind and stay with a decision once made; and some of the officers considered him too unorthodox and mercurial.<sup>3</sup> These criticisms are certainly open to

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 207-15, 232-54, passim. This work contains a detailed account of the fighting in the Northumberland Road-Mount Street Bridge area.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 145, 176, 268.

interpretation. It could be argued that what appeared to be erratic behavior was only a brilliant and agile mind, considering various possibilities--selecting, discarding, and making other selections more rapidly than others could follow. As for being unorthodox and mercurial, de Valéra was certainly not the first great leader possessed of these characteristics. A British colonel was quoted later as saying, "If all your commanding officers had had the ability of de Valéra, the 1916 rebellion would have lasted at least three times as long."<sup>1</sup>

One example of his ingenuity was the affair of the distillery tower. On Thursday, around noon, a new and more ominous sound had been introduced into the chorus of snipers' bullets--artillery fire. The aforementioned distillery tower was the tallest structure in the area, and it was not occupied by Volunteers--there had been too few men available. De Valéra, knowing that the bakery could not withstand artillery fire, and fearing that the British might occupy the tower, developed a stratagem which he hoped would solve both problems at once.

He mounted a green flag atop the tower, hopefully giving the impression that it was the headquarters. The idea worked and the artillery was turned against the tower.

<sup>1</sup>Ryan, Unique Dictator, p. 44.

The first round overshot the target and fell very near the gunboat Helga, anchored in the Liffey. Believing she was under fire, the gunboat returned fire, another shot fell near the ship, and, for a few minutes, it looked as though the British were going to duel with themselves. However, the gunner corrected his aim and the tower was soon so badly damaged that it would be useless to the British.<sup>1</sup> This flag was forgotten and remained hanging on the tower until the end of the Rising, when someone, probably a Volunteer who escaped arrest, hauled it down and brought it secretly to Mrs. de Valéra.<sup>2</sup>

All accounts, even Caulfield, despite his somewhat critical tone, agree about the feeling of de Valéra's men for him. His humanitarianism, his willingness to take personal risks, and his concern for innocent civilians endeared him to his men.<sup>3</sup> Ó Faoláin mentioned having been told by one of de Valéra's men that de Valéra, moving among the barricades, directing firing and taking no notice of bullets flying about him, reminded him of Napoleon at Lodi. Ó Faoláin continued, saying de Valéra's officers frequently

<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ryan, Unique Dictator, p. 59; Bromage, March of a Nation, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 177.

had to remind him to be more careful of his safety: "'Be careful, Dev, we can't afford to lose you.' 'Dev, remember we can't do without you! It's for you we're fighting!'"<sup>1</sup> To such remarks de Valéra responded, rather angrily, that they were fighting for Ireland and that better men than he were dying. Eighteen-year-old Andy McDonnell broke away from a woman who was trying to get him away to safety during the surrender. He explained his action thus: " . my one idea was to go with my comrades and, in particular the Commandant, as by that time I was willing to follow him anywhere."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps one of the most unusual aspects of this unusual revolution was the role of religion. Ireland has certainly always been a country in which their religion is an integral part of the lives of the people. The phrase "Island of saints and scholars" so frequently applied to Ireland gives some indication of the religious aspect of Irish life. As noted earlier, Pearse had distinctly mystical ideas regarding the Rising. He had instructed his battalion officers to tell their men to make their Easter Confessions and Communion early. On the evening of Monday, Pearse found that a considerable number of the men in the G.P.O. had missed opportunities or had

<sup>1</sup>Ó Faoláin, Life of de Valéra, pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, p. 181.

not been to Confession recently. He notified the Pro-Cathedral and Father John Flanagan responded by joining the men in the G.P.O. Pearse made a room available and the priest heard confessions for two-and-a-half hours.<sup>1</sup> On Thursday, Father Flanagan returned to the G.P.O. and remained with the garrison for the remainder of the week.

Sometime around mid-day on Thursday, while heavy fire was being directed at the men on the G.P.O. roof, an elderly, white-haired priest suddenly appeared on the roof. He announced that he intended granting conditional absolution in order to insure that the men were in a state of grace, since they had gotten themselves into such a "fine fix." When the men had told him they were sorry for their sins, he made the sign of the cross and pronounced the words of absolution while bullets flew about on all sides.<sup>2</sup>

Another instance of impromptu confessions had occurred on Monday. A group of de Valéra's men were busy clearing the Westland Row railway station when a group of priests appeared. After several minutes of discussion, during which one of the priests attempted to persuade the men to give up if the fight proved hopeless, the Volunteer who was in charge allowed the priests onto the platform.

<sup>1</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-27.

They moved up and down the platform, listening to the muted confessions of Volunteers who knelt, clutching their rifles.<sup>1</sup>

The Rosary was also an important devotion for the men of the Rising. One night, while making the rounds of the sentry posts, de Valéra found several sentries missing from their posts. He discovered them gathered in a hut. They were kneeling and reciting the Rosary, their weapons stacked in a corner. Similarly, a Cockney soldier in the Stephen's Green area remarked, "A rum lot of coves, these Shinnars! I thought they were singing, but blimey, it's chanting 'ymns they were!" These men, too had been engaged in the Rosary devotion.<sup>2</sup>

A less admirable aspect of the Rising, though the rebels were not involved, was the outbreak of looting in the city. In most circumstances of violence, if regular police protection is removed, looting may become almost a natural concomitant. Certainly Dublin in 1916 was no exception. The looting began on Monday afternoon in O'Connell Street. The cry of "They're raiding Noble's" went up as broken glass scattered onto the sidewalk. Sweets and candies of all sorts poured out of the display window

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 80-81.

<sup>2</sup>M. J. MacManus, Éamon de Valéra: A Biography (Dublin: Talbot Press Limited, 1944), pp. 41-42.

of the confectioner's, located opposite the G.P.O. Men, women, and children grabbed and clutched at the sweets, and many fingers and wrists were cut on shards of glass.

Within a short time the crowd turned to shops with more substantial wares, quickly breaking into a hat shop, a hosiery shop, and a boot company. The crowd was made up of the poor of Dublin's slums, the worst in Europe, with the possible exception of those of Naples--old women wrapped in their black shawls, ragged men, and darting young urchins. Ragged caps were thrown away, and men paraded the streets bedecked with silk top hats, boaters or bowlers. One urchin was seen wearing a variety of hats stacked one atop another. Women stood in the street and pulled silk stockings onto scrawny, unwashed legs, and then donned satin slippers or high Russian boots. Two women fought over a whole box of shoes but the victor turned away in disgust when she found the box contained only left shoes. Hats were kicked playfully about like footballs.

The insurgents in the G.P.O. were disgusted by such dishonorable behavior on the part of at least some of the Irish public. Men on the roof poured buckets of water down onto the crowd, but succeeded in dampening their spirits not at all. Others fired rifle volleys over the heads of the crowd from first floor windows, but this had no effect,

either. Connolly sent Seán T. O'Kelly with a squad of men to deal with the swelling crowd, but, as they cleared one store and moved on to another, the crowd flowed back into the cleared shop and continued as though there had been no interruption at all.<sup>1</sup>

On Tuesday, the crowds were on the streets by noon, looking for more excitement like that of the day before. A number of pubs were broken into and liquor only heightened the spirit of the crowd. The most amazing, and certainly the most entertaining, event of the day occurred in the middle of O'Connell Street. A girl emerged from a store with an armload of lingerie and began stripping off her clothes until she was completely naked. A crowd, hardly able to believe their eyes, gathered instantly, and watched in amazement as she tried on first one item and then another, tossing aside those that did not suit her.<sup>2</sup>

Volunteers still occasionally fired over the heads of the crowd in futile attempts to halt the orgy of looting. One woman, who watched from a window of her home, told of seeing a ragged old woman drop her armful of loot and fall to her knees in prayer whenever a shot came near,

<sup>1</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 54-59.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 96-97.



then pick it up and continue on her way until another bullet whined by.<sup>1</sup>

On Wednesday gunfire in O'Connell Street made it untenable, so the crowd moved into the side streets. One old crone left a cart, bearing the fruits of her morning's labors, on the street while she went into yet another store. She came out in a few minutes, carrying more booty, only to find her cart gone. "Could you believe it?" she lamented. "The bloody place is full of thieves!"<sup>2</sup>

If the poor people of the slums dishonored the Rising, as the Volunteers believed, they themselves were scrupulously honest. It was Volunteer policy to give cash payment or receipts for commandeered goods, and the men were trained to show respect for life and property.<sup>3</sup> Two incidents in de Valéra's area are good examples. A Dr. Healy's home and dispensary had been taken over by the Volunteers, and the doctor and his wife ordered to leave. After they were gone, six gold sovereigns were found lying loose. They were locked in a desk drawer and a note written telling the doctor where to find them. At Clanwilliam House, Volunteer George Reynolds suggested to the occupant,

<sup>1</sup>Younger, Ireland's Civil War, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 139-40.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-57.

Miss Wilson, that she pack her valuables into a suitcase. She soon filled two suitcases which were carried into a bedroom on the top floor. Reynolds locked the door in the presence of Miss Wilson and handed her the key.<sup>1</sup>

The Volunteers were also strictly prohibited from drinking liquor during the Rising, and they were warned that violators would be held severely accountable. One man in the G.P.O. unwisely accepted a bottle of stout from a woman in the street. Just as he raised it to his lips, it was knocked from his hand by an angry officer, who warned all within hearing that the next man who took a drink would be shot without warning.<sup>2</sup> On Friday the wounded from the G.P.O. were evacuated. The party carrying the wounded to Jervis Street Hospital took shelter from the gunfire in the restaurant-bar of the Coliseum Theater. One of the men lightened the atmosphere by offering to tend bar. Everyone laughed, but no one took him seriously; and Father Flanagan, who accompanied the wounded, was pleased to note that not one bottle of liquor appeared to have been touched, despite the fact that Volunteer forces had been in and out of the Coliseum all week long.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 77, 128.

<sup>2</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

There were reports of vehicles, commandeered for barricades, being taken without authorization and with no receipts given but apparently such incidents were relatively few. Most sources indicate that the Volunteers were intent only on doing their job of fighting for an Irish Republic.

Men who were taken prisoner by the Volunteers reported that they were well treated by their captors. At the G.P.O., The O'Rahilly was especially concerned for the safety of prisoners when the flames in the burning building endangered everyone. It would appear, therefore, that the Volunteers behaved in a disciplined and thoroughly appropriate manner. This is attested to by the following quotation from Captain R. K. Brereton, who was held by the Volunteers from Monday evening to Saturday.

What impressed me most was the international tone adopted by the Sinn Féin officers. They were not out for massacre, for burning, or for loot. They were out for war, observing all the rules of civilised warfare and fighting clean. So far as I saw they fought like gentlemen. . . . They treated their prisoners with the utmost courtesy and consideration: in fact they proved by their conduct that they were men of education incapable of acts of brutality.<sup>1</sup>

By Thursday the city had ground to a complete halt. Lack of food was a serious problem; there were no bread or milk deliveries within the British cordon. Factories were

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, n. 5, p. 171.

closed, as were all post offices, newspaper offices, and banks. Streets went uncleaned and there was no traffic. The food shortage was serious for everyone--rebels, British, and civilians alike. Where rebels controlled food stores of various kinds, they carefully doled these out to the public, but in most areas, people were on their own. A man with five children broke into neighboring houses until he found food. A mob of screaming women broke into a grocer's shop, beat him up, and took his entire stock. Other grocers sold below regular prices to try to prevent attack. Prices for many items, especially butter and fruits, soared upward. Meat was practically unobtainable as the military had commandeered all that they could find. People appeared at hotels, willing to pay large sums to buy a meal; they were asked if they had brought the food with them.<sup>1</sup>

Death was a common occurrence during the Rising, but funerals became somewhat unusual. Ceremonial funerals were prohibited; only the driver and one mourner could accompany the body to the cemetery. Sometimes the dead went unburied for several days; at other times, as at the Castle, when seventy sheet-wrapped bodies were buried in a common grave, they were buried with no ceremony at all. Death frequently came unexpectedly and to the least likely individuals--a

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 262-63.

man carrying a glass of water upstairs to his sick wife, a nun closing a convent window, a woman dying of sheer fright, a hospital patient lying in bed, and a woman sitting by her fireside. All over the city, the dead were buried in back gardens.<sup>1</sup>

By Thursday afternoon those in the G.P.O. knew that the building could not be held much longer, and the leaders began planning evacuation. All but three of the women were sent out; Connolly's secretary, Winifred Carney, and two nurses, Julia Grenan and Elizabeth O'Farrell, remained with the garrison. On Friday afternoon the wounded were evacuated to Jervis Street Hospital and the prisoners were freed to find their own way to safety. The rest of the garrison, with the wounded Connolly on a stretcher, left the burning G.P.O. by the side door, intending to try to find a safe route through the streets and join with Daly's men in the Four Courts area. Firing in the streets was so heavy that safety was sought in the first available place, a house in Moore Street, where they spent the night.<sup>2</sup>

After a conference of the leaders on Saturday morning, it was decided to surrender, and Elizabeth O'Farrell was sent out under a white flag to take a message to the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>2</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, pp. 206-207.

British commander. The first officer she met started not to even report the offer of surrender. A second officer insisted positively that Pearse was injured and required a stretcher. Miss O'Farrell was taken, ironically, to Tom Clarke's tobacco shop where she was received by Brigadier-General W. H. M. Lowe. She was directed to return to Pearse with a demand for unconditional surrender. After another exchange of messages, Pearse was received by General Lowe and surrendered his sword. Instructions were given for the G.P.O. garrison to surrender and stack arms at the northern end of O'Connell Street.<sup>1</sup>

It was decided to detain Miss O'Farrell in order that she might carry a surrender message to the other Volunteer commandants. Pearse wrote out the orders for surrender.

In order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin citizens, and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers, now surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered, the members of the Provisional Government present at headquarters have agreed to an unconditional surrender, and the commandants of the various districts in the city and the country will order their commands to lay down their arms.<sup>2</sup>

The order was signed by Pearse and countersigned by Connolly for the Citizen Army units.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 207-11.

<sup>2</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 116.

Miss O'Farrell took the message to Daly at the Four Courts late on Saturday afternoon. On Sunday morning she started out, under military escort, to deliver the surrender order to the remaining commandants. In some areas firing was continuing, and, in all areas, she was obliged to walk the last several blocks, as the escort officer would not or could not approach closer. When the message reached de Valéra, he thought it might possibly be a trick. He did not know Miss O'Farrell personally, and, only after she was identified by several men of his command, was he satisfied that the surrender order really came from Pearse. Even then he refused to accept it without agreement from his immediate superior, Thomas MacDonagh. MacDonagh would have no dealings with a surrender without first conferring with General Lowe, the other members of the Provisional Government, and his own officers. After all of these conferences had been arranged for, both MacDonagh and Kent surrendered.<sup>1</sup>

At Stephen's Green, a theatrical note was added to the surrender by Countess Markievicz. As she and Mallin led their forces out, she saluted the British officer and then kissed her revolver before surrendering it. She

<sup>1</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, pp. 210-15.

refused the offer of a car, saying she would march with her men and share their fate.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, after conferring with his vice-commander, de Valéra decided to surrender and set out with G. F. Mackay, a British army cadet who had been captured on Monday, to make arrangements. De Valéra had no thought that he might survive so he gave his automatic into Mackay's keeping with the request that he see that it was given to his eldest son, Vivion.

The men in de Valéra's command did not want to surrender, but were finally persuaded, and, after damaging their weapons so that they could not be used, they marched out.<sup>2</sup> As he surrendered, de Valéra announced, "You may shoot me, but my men must be unmolested when surrendering."<sup>3</sup> Something else that de Valéra said at the time of the surrender became well known and often quoted. In reference to the apathy of the general public, he said, "If the people had only come out with knives and hay forks."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, p. 196; Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Bromage, March of a Nation, pp. 54-55.

<sup>4</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. xxi.



And so this latest of the Irish risings was over, successfully put down by the British, as had all risings of past centuries. True, this one had lasted longer than any of the others, but now it was over and people could begin getting about their affairs. But this time things were to be different, for the victorious British now proceeded to do for the rebels what they had been unable to do for themselves. By the actions of British officials the defeat of the rebels would be converted to victory.

## CHAPTER V

### EASTER 1916--THE BLOOD SACRIFICE: FROM DEFEAT TO VICTORY

Throughout the Rising the attitude of most of Dublin's citizens had ranged from mild amusement at the beginning, through irritation over inconvenience, to outright hostility toward the rebels and support for the British.<sup>1</sup> For many it had been a spectacle. In the Stephen's Green area, old women had sat in chairs on the sidewalks of side streets to watch. As the body of one of the rebels was being removed, one of these old women shouted, "Let the carrion rot, bringing disgrace on the fair name of Ireland."

Later in the week others, watching the city in flames, grumbled, "They're as bad as the Germans, so they are . . . destroying the people . . . murdering everyone."<sup>2</sup> The British were welcomed with relief by most Irishmen who expected them to bring about a speedy return to

<sup>1</sup>For a dramatic picture of the attitude of many Dubliners during the Rising, as well as a vivid portrayal of the lives of Dublin's poor, and a look at looting in the city, see Seán O'Casey's play, The Plough and the Stars.

<sup>2</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 103.

normality.<sup>1</sup> As troops marched toward Dublin from Kingstown, women came to the road bringing tea, chocolate, and fruits to them and greeted them with such remarks as "Thank God you've arrived!"<sup>2</sup> Volunteers at the G.P.O. who had turned away women seeking their "separation money" (stipends granted to military dependents), had been subjected to a barrage of expletives--"bastards," "lousers," "shite-hawks," "bowsies"--when they explained that the women were now citizens of the Irish Republic.<sup>3</sup>

There were not many in Dublin like the girl who cried out, "Long live the Republic!" as a group of captured Volunteers were marched to jail.<sup>4</sup> Nor were there many as sensitive as the eyewitness in the Gresham Hotel who saw the captured rebels from the G.P.O. and the Four Courts marched down O'Connell Street on Sunday morning, and left an eloquent description of the scene.

<sup>1</sup>Younger, Ireland's Civil War, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Duff, Six Days to Shake an Empire: Events and Factors Behind the Irish Rebellion of 1916--An Account of That Rebellion and Its Suppression and of the Final Struggle for Self-government--With an Epilogue on the Dissolution of the British Empire into the British Commonwealth of Nations (New York: Modern Literary Editions Publishing Company, by arrangement with A. S. Barnes & Co., 1966), p. 158.

<sup>3</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 117.

"It's a sight I shall never forget. That thin line, some in the green uniform of the Volunteers, others in the plainer equipment of the Citizen Army, some looking like ordinary civilians, the others looking mere lads of fifteen, not a few wounded and bandaged, and the whole melancholy procession wending its way through long lines of khaki soldiers. But down-hearted--no! As they passed, I heard the subdued strains of the scaffold songs of many an Irishman before them--'God Save Ireland.' Dockers, labourers, shop assistants, all conditions of men; all have the same look of defiance which will haunt me to my dying day. Whatever else they were they were not cowards. If they had been at the front and accomplished what they had accomplished in the face of such odds, the whole Empire would have been proud of them, and the whole world ringing with their praises."<sup>1</sup>

Much more typical were those who called out, "Shoot the traitors!" and "Bayonet the bastards!" and, in some quarters, pelted the rebels with rotten fruits and vegetables, bricks and rocks, and even the contents of chamber pots. One rebel, when asked by a companion if he thought they might be released, looked at the hostile crowd and wryly answered, "Bejasus, I hope not."<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the week of the Rising and for months, and, in the case of some individuals, for years, afterward, the British believed that the Irish rebellion was heavily involved in a German plot. While it was certainly true that the I.R.B. and the Clan-na-Gael in America had actively sought German aid, it is difficult to see how blame could

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; Coffey, Agony at Easter, p. 260.

attach to them when one considers the situation from their point of view. They considered the British as aliens in occupation of their country, and accepted the dictum that "the enemy of your enemy is your ally." They, therefore, felt perfectly justified in seeking aid from Germany.

Consideration of Casement's experiences with the German leaders indicates that their agreement to supply even limited help was primarily a propaganda tool. They had been very cautious in their dealings with Casement, and the final agreement was distinguished by its vagueness.

In the event of a German naval victory affording the means of reaching the coast of Ireland, the Imperial German Government pledges itself to despatch the Irish Brigade and a supporting body of German officers and men, in German transports, to attempt a landing on the Irish coast.<sup>1</sup>

The vagueness of the document is obvious. How complete a naval victory would be required to "afford the means of reaching the coast?" Must the seas around Ireland be swept clear of all British vessels? How large a "body of German officers and men" would be sent? And it must also be remembered that the Irish Brigade numbered only about fifty men. It seems obvious that the Germans never intended to provide help to any appreciable degree; the arms sunk with the Aud were little more than scrap, being captured Russian

<sup>1</sup>Duff, Six Days, pp. 143-44.

weapons of 1905 vintage. In any case, by Easter, the rebel leaders had given up any hope of German aid, and believed that they must "go it on their own" with what arms and men they had available.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the British believed they were faced with a massive "German Plot." The following references and quotations give some idea of the British beliefs on the subject. On Monday--Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces, Lord John French, to Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, "The Germans are, of course, prompting this Rising in Ireland to prevent us from sending reinforcements to France or to delay their dispatch."<sup>2</sup> Ivor Churchill Guest, Baron Wimborne, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in a proclamation to the country, "Whereas, an attempt, instigated and designated by the foreign enemies of our King and country to incite rebellion in Ireland . . . on the British side, even the highest people in authority could not drive from their minds the burning fear that the German General Staff would at any moment spring some surprise which might change the whole situation . . ."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>2</sup>Ó Broin, Dublin Castle, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup>Duff, Six Days, p. 125.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

On Tuesday, Baron Wimborne, in a letter to Asquith, said the Rising did not miss success by much, and was connected by a chain of evidence with enemy assistance and instigation.<sup>1</sup> On Thursday, Mr. Asquith noted, in the House of Commons, "Steps have been taken to give full and accurate information to our friends abroad as to the real significance of this most recent German Campaign."<sup>2</sup> On Saturday, as Pearse was driven away after the surrender, a British officer commented to no one in particular, "It would be interesting to know how many [German] marks that chap has in his pocket."<sup>3</sup> Even John Redmond, with some idea of the extent and nature of the involvement of the I.R.B. with Devoy and the German Government, succumbed to wild exaggeration, "Germany plotted it, Germany organized it, Germany paid for it."<sup>4</sup> W. Alison Phillips, in a book published in 1926, said, "It may be doubted whether even now the world at large knows how great was the danger to the cause of the Allies of the Sinn Féin revolt, or how near this came to success."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ó Broin, Dublin Castle, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>Duff, Six Days, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 351.

<sup>4</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 119.

<sup>5</sup>Phillips, Revolution in Ireland, p. 103.

Within a short time after the surrender of the Volunteers, stories of terrible events began to circulate in Dublin. These stories stimulated a subtle change in the attitude of the people--a change not toward the rebels, but against the British. "Atrocity stories" usually accompany events of violence; sometimes true and sometimes false. Unfortunately, for the British, these atrocity stories turned out to be true, and the truth was almost as terrible as the rumors.

One of these stories involved one of Dublin's most eccentric "characters" and a demented Anglo-Irish officer in the British army. Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, "Skeffy" to most of Dublin, was an advocate of all sorts of causes, a pacifist, humanitarian, social reformer, and sometime journalist. He was a nationalist, but, as a pacifist, he was opposed to, and not involved in, the Rising. He was appalled by the looting in O'Connell Street and attempted to organize a citizens' league to try to stop it. As he was walking homeward on Tuesday evening with a group of people, he was arrested and taken into custody at Portobello Barracks. He was well-known as a harmless eccentric and his appearance, with beard, glasses, cloak, knickerbocker suit, loose umbrella, and a "Votes for Women" badge on his



lapel, only served to confirm his harmlessness.<sup>1</sup> When asked if he was sympathetic to the rebellion, he said he was, but that he opposed militarism and favored passive resistance. The Castle, when asked for instructions, ordered Skeffington held, and it was then that he came into the hands of Captain J. C. Bowen-Colthurst. Colthurst searched him, listed the contents of his pockets, and had the adjutant make a copy of the list.<sup>2</sup>

Later in the evening Colthurst took Skeffington from the guard room, without authorization, to use as a hostage in a raid he planned on a nearby public house. The soldiers in his raiding party were astounded when Colthurst removed his hat and intoned, "O Lord God if it should please Thee to take away the life of this man, forgive him for Our Lord Jesus Christ's sake." As the party passed a church they met two youths, one a seventeen-year-old named Coade, leaving the church. These youths were accosted by Colthurst who suddenly ordered his men to "Bash him" when Coade tried to leave. He was struck in the face with a rifle butt and fell to the ground with a broken jaw, whereupon Colthurst shot him dead with his revolver.

<sup>1</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>Duff, Six Days, p. 148.

On reaching his objective, Colthurst had James Kelly's public house bombed with grenades. He then entered the premises and took four survivors into custody. Two of these were journalists, Thomas Dickson and Patrick McIntyre, editors of The Eve Opener and The Searchlight, respectively. These papers were both strongly Loyalist in editorial stance, but this had no influence with Colthurst, who ordered them into the guard room with Skeffington. Colthurst returned to his quarters, where he spent the night in distorted prayer and Bible reading.<sup>1</sup>

By morning Colthurst had found a scripture which, to his unbalanced mind, justified his next actions. The scripture was St. Luke 19:27, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." He ordered a firing squad formed and had Skeffington, Dickson, and McIntyre taken into the courtyard, where he ordered them executed. The first volley was not fatal to Skeffington, and Colthurst, when he was informed, ordered the firing squad back to the courtyard to finish the job of execution.<sup>2</sup> This, however, was not the end of Colthurst's maniacal behavior. On Friday evening he and a party of soldiers broke into the

<sup>1</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 183-84.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 200-201.

Skeffington home, terrorizing Mrs. Skeffington and her small son, ransacked the house and carried away bundles of papers and books.<sup>1</sup>

Wednesday had also seen Colthurst add two more victims to the toll of his personal campaign of extermination. A Volunteer officer was flushed from a suspect building and came into Colthurst's hands. Under Colthurst's questioning, the Volunteer, Dublin city councilor Richard O'Carroll, proudly admitted being a "Sinn Féiner." Colthurst, without hesitation, fired his revolver, the bullet passing through O'Carroll's lung. Colthurst started to walk away, but was detained by one of his men who told him O'Carroll was not yet dead. With unbelievable callousness, Colthurst replied, "Never mind, he'll die later. Take him into the street."<sup>2</sup> He was left lying in the gutter, from which he was finally removed by the driver of a bread van; he died ten days later. Colthurst's last victim was a boy in his early teens. The youngster was accosted by Colthurst, who demanded information about the Volunteers. When the boy refused to tell him anything, Colthurst forced him to kneel in the street and shot him in the back of the head.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Duff, Six Days, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The Castle had been informed of Colthurst's behavior, but had ordered no action. After the Rising, when military officials tried to hush-up the affair, Major Sir Francis Vane tried to publicize it. According to Caulfield, Vane had been outraged when he discovered Colthurst's activities, and had persuaded the commanding officer of Portobello Barracks to confine him to quarters on Wednesday.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not Vane had Colthurst confined to quarters, he certainly was active in trying to see justice done, and was poorly rewarded for his efforts. He was relieved as second in command at Portobello and, ironically, replaced by Colthurst himself. Vane continued his efforts by seeing Colonel Kinnard, Major Ivor Price, and General L. B. Friend at the Castle. Receiving no satisfaction in Dublin, Vane went to London and apprised Lord Horatio H. Kitchener of the situation. Kitchener's telegram to General Sir John Maxwell, then in charge in Ireland, was ignored,

<sup>1</sup>An element of incompatibility enters here. If Colthurst was confined on Wednesday, how was he able to invade the Skeffington home on Friday? Both Caulfield and Younger agree in saying that he was confined. Duff makes no mention of confinement and neither does Macardle; both agree that he was with the party that invaded the Skeffington home. Macardle makes reference to Vane's own story in his book Agin the Governments, but just what that story is, is not made clear. In any case, Mrs. Skeffington places Colthurst in her home on Friday in a speech delivered in 1917, and excerpted by McHugh, Dublin 1916.

and Vane was deprived of his rank and dismissed from the service at Maxwell's instigation.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the persistence of Mrs. Skeffington, Colthurst was finally court martialled in June, found "guilty, but insane," and placed in Broadmoor. A later Commission of Inquiry, though hampered by restrictions and lack of cooperation, established a number of facts--Colthurst's promotion, the lack of disciplinary action against other officers, the dismissal of Vane, and raids on the Skeffington home for incriminatory evidence after the fact. Doubt was cast on Colthurst's insanity and the Military was censured.<sup>2</sup>

If the Bowen-Colthurst affair had not been enough, there was another story, concerning the brutal murders of a number of civilians by soldiers in the North King Street area. As bad or worse, this story added more fuel to the fires now beginning to burn against the British. North King Street was in the Four Courts area to which the 2/6th South Staffordshires were assigned. The South Staffs were caught in a fierce battle in King Street, and several units apparently descended to the level of barbarity. No fewer than fifteen civilian men were either shot or bayoneted out

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<sup>1</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 285-87.

of hand. According to numerous statements from relatives, friends, and fellow occupants of the houses, there had at no time been any Volunteers in any of the houses.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that there seemed to be no evidence against any of the fifteen men, and despite the pleas of their families, they were all killed. In several cases, other occupants of the houses were locked into single rooms for periods of several hours.

Rumors of atrocities in the area circulated about the city for some time, but the authorities took no notice until the bodies of two victims were dug up in a cellar where they had been buried by the South Staffs. The commander of the unit, Colonel Henry Taylor, deprecated the atrocity stories. The Coroner's court, however, offered the following verdict.

"We find the said Patrick Bealen died from shock and haemorrhage, resulting from bullet wounds inflicted by a soldier, or soldiers, in whose custody he was, an unarmed and unoffensive prisoner. We consider that the explanation given by the military authorities is very unsatisfactory, and we believe that if the military authorities had any inclination they could produce the officer in charge."<sup>2</sup>

General Maxwell offered a feeble tacit admission. "Possibly some unfortunate incidents, which we should

<sup>1</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, pp. 220-39. The statements are reproduced in full in these pages.

<sup>2</sup>Caulfield, Easter Rebellion, pp. 372-73.

regret now, may have occurred . . . it is even possible that under the horrors of this attack some of them 'saw red'; Attempts at having the survivors identify the guilty soldiers were unsuccessful, allegedly because the culprits had been speedily sent back to England. One of these was referred to in a communication from Maxwell to Kitchener: "In one case a sergeant acted like a mad-man, the redeeming feature being that he reported what he had done."<sup>2</sup> In his report to the House of Commons concerning the results of the inquiry, Prime Minister Asquith concluded, " . But after careful inquiry it is impossible to bring home responsibility to any particular person or persons."<sup>3</sup>

It was not only the actions of Bowen-Colthurst and the 2/6th South Staffs, and the official attempts to cover up these terrible events that turned the people of Ireland against the British. These, plus the stupid handling of the executions of the rebel leaders, were to convert rebel defeat into victory, and provide Ireland with a new generation of martyrs. It could not be expected that the leaders of the Rising would not be executed. There was no doubt of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 374.

their guilt, and, in any country in the world, they would doubtless be executed. It has been suggested that the British should have made light of the whole thing and avoided the making of martyrs. Considering the cost of the Rising--450 dead and 2,614 wounded, and property damage in excess of £2,500,000--leniency would have been impossible.<sup>1</sup> Probably it was not the mere fact of execution--most Irishmen expected and favored this, as already reported--but the way in which the British went about it, that changed the attitude of Dubliners and Irishmen in general.

Major-General Sir John Maxwell arrived in Ireland on Friday of Easter Week, with "full plenary powers" to deal with the rebellion and its aftermath. One of his first actions was to order the digging of a lime pit in the courtyard at Arbour Hill Prison, big enough, it was said, to hold fifty bodies.<sup>2</sup> This should have been some indication of the course he intended following. There were warnings against wholesale executions. John Dillon, who was John Redmond's chief aid in the Irish Parliamentary Party, was present in Dublin during the Rising, and wrote

<sup>1</sup>Holt, Protest in Arms, pp. 116-17.

<sup>2</sup>Brian O'Neill, Easter Week (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 65.



to Redmond with this warning:

. . . You should urge strongly on the Government the extreme unwisdom of any wholesale shooting of prisoners. The wisest course is to execute no one for the present . . . If there were shootings of prisoners on a large scale the effect on public opinion might be disastrous in the extreme. So far feeling of the population in Dublin is against the Sinn Féiners. But a reaction might very easily be created .<sup>1</sup>

Chief Secretary Augustine Birrell, in a letter to Asquith, wrote, ". . . it would be a pity to give them [the Nationalists] any excuse for holding aloof from the Government whilst engaged in the effort of crushing the rebellion."<sup>2</sup> After the executions had begun, Asquith became concerned and sent a message to Sir John French, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, saying that he was a "little surprised and perturbed by the drastic action of shooting so many rebel leaders."<sup>3</sup> Later he directed that Maxwell be reminded that wholesale executions might cause revulsion in Britain and lay up future trouble in Ireland.<sup>4</sup> The Irish Party sent a resolution to Asquith, which said, in part, "The continuance of military executions, carried out against persistent protests . . . has caused rapidly increasing bitterness

<sup>1</sup>Ó Broin, Dublin Castle, pp. 102-103.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

amongst the large majority of the Irish people who had no sympathy with the insurrection."<sup>1</sup>

Even Sir Edward Carson appealed for wisdom in a statement in the House of Commons:

'No true Irishman calls for vengeance. It will be a matter requiring the greatest wisdom and the greatest calmness in dealing with these men. Whatever is done, let it be done not in a moment of temporary excitement but in a moment of deliberation.'<sup>2</sup>

Younger expressed the feeling in Ireland very well, as follows.

Perhaps it is only in retrospect that one can see that Irish fealty was thin ice which had been recklessly walked over for a long time. Beneath it flowed unseen the real faith of the Irish in themselves, and it needed but that one hammer blow from Maxwell to smash the ice. .<sup>3</sup>

Maxwell delivered the "hammer blow" in a heavy-handed way that showed he had no acquaintance with Mazzini's dictum that, "Ideas ripen quickly when watered by the blood of martyrs." He was soon to be known in Ireland as "Bloody Maxwell." The executions began on 3 May, with no advance explanations. The first information available to the public was a brief announcement that Pearse, MacDonagh, and Clarke had been court martialled and sentenced to death.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>Duff, Six Days, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup>Younger, Ireland's Civil War, p. 37.

"The sentence having been duly confirmed the three above-mentioned men were shot this morning."<sup>1</sup> An example of the British insensitivity, which was to attend the whole period during which the executions were carried out, occurred here. A priest was allowed to give the condemned men Holy Communion a few hours before execution, but he was ordered from the building and not allowed to be with them at the end, as was customary.<sup>2</sup>

On the following day, the fourth, four more executions were carried out, on Plunkett, Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan, and William Pearse (younger brother of Patrick). Plunkett was the only one of these who had been truly a leader of the Rising, though it was not unreasonable for the British to assume that Daly was a leader, in view of his command of the Four Courts area. O'Hanrahan was only a clerk at Volunteer headquarters, and the younger Pearse would appear to have been executed primarily for the offense of his relationship with Patrick, for he was not known as a leader of the Volunteers, and he had no knowledge of his brother's plans. The British, no doubt, considered that they had been very generous in allowing Plunkett to marry his fiancée, Grace Gifford, a few hours

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>Kee, Green Flag, pp. 573-74.

before the executions. This "generosity" was not, however, what struck the people of Dublin; they saw a man, dying of tuberculosis, unfeelingly shot down by a British firing squad.<sup>1</sup>

The announcement of further executions was to continue for several days. On 5 May, Seán MacBride, a rank-and-file I.R.B. member, who had led an Irish Brigade against the British in the Boer War, was shot. This circumstance made it appear to many that the British were seeking vengeance for past actions. On the sixth there were no executions. Instead, more death sentences were commuted to penal servitude; the first such commutations had been announced on the fourth. The seventh was Sunday, and no action was taken; but, on the eighth, four more executions were announced--Cornelius Colbert, Seán Heuston, Edmund Kent, and Michael Mallin. Colbert and Heuston had been active organizers in Fianna Eirann, the scout organization, but were not otherwise leaders of the rebellion. Kent, of course, was a leader, and Mallin had been second-in-command of the Citizen Army. The ninth of May saw the toll rise by only one--Thomas Kent, who had killed a policeman while resisting arrest two days after the rebellion was over, was shot in Cork. The last to be executed (with the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 574-75.

exception of Roger Casement, later hanged after a treason trial in England) were Seán MacDermott and James Connolly, on the twelfth.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the execution of Connolly revolted the Irish sensitivities more than any other. He had been seriously wounded in the leg, and required considerable medical treatment.<sup>2</sup> His daughter Nora, who was present, described the last visit of her parents shortly after midnight the morning he was to be shot. Connolly was so weak that he could only raise his head and shoulders from the bed to embrace his wife. The priest who was with Connolly told how he was carried from the ambulance to the jail yard, propped in a chair, and shot.<sup>3</sup>

Altogether, ninety rebels were sentenced to death; all but fifteen of these sentences were commuted to penal servitude for varying periods.<sup>4</sup> Among these were several persons who would play important roles in years to come--William T. Cosgrave, Constance Markievicz, Austin Stack, and Éamon de Valéra. By 1 July a total of 3,149 men and 77 women had been arrested. Of these, 1,104 men and 71 women

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 575-78.

<sup>2</sup>McHugh, Dublin 1916, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 268-70.

<sup>4</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 175.

were released; 183 were tried by courts martial, and 23 of these were acquitted. The remaining 1,862 men and 5 of the 6 women were interned without trial.<sup>1</sup>

There has been considerable discussion of how de Valéra escaped execution, the only one of the major commandants to do so. It has frequently been said that he was spared because of his "American citizenship." His wife did approach the American Consul in Dublin with the claim that he was an American citizen because of his birth in New York City, and the Consul wrote to Under-Secretary Sir Matthew Nathan on the point.<sup>2</sup> Influential Irish-Americans took a similar position, questioning the legality of accusing a man of treason if he owed no allegiance to England to begin with. Actually, de Valéra was not an American citizen; in order to be so considered, it would have been necessary for him to have registered with a United States consulate at the age of eighteen and to have taken the Oath of Allegiance at twenty-one, and he had done neither.<sup>3</sup> In addition, as a child, he had been adjudged a British subject by the British-appointed Attorney-General

<sup>1</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, n. 23, p. 206; Holt, Protest in Arms, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Bromage, March of a Nation, p. 58.

of Ireland, for purposes of a scholarship application.<sup>1</sup> In any case, de Valéra himself made no claim of American citizenship; at his court martial he made it very clear that he considered himself an Irishman.<sup>2</sup>

It is more likely that de Valéra escaped death by a combination of fortuitous circumstances. He was held in Ballsbridge for several days and not transferred to Richmond Barracks until after a number of courts martial had already been held. He and Thomas Ashe, who was arrested outside Dublin and also was delayed in being transferred to Richmond, were tried on 8 May. By then public opinion, not only in Ireland, but also in England and the United States, was rising against the executions. In the words of the Manchester Guardian, executions were "becoming an atrocity."<sup>3</sup> Probably the reprieve for de Valéra and Ashe resulted from the delay in trying them and from the aroused public feeling against the executions. The fact that both men were sentenced and reprieved at the same time tends to support this view.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 174.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 173-74; Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 49-50.

Since the major leaders of the Rising had been executed, de Valéra remained as the highest ranking survivor of Easter Week. As attitudes began to change in the weeks following the Rising, the survivors gained more respect and support. It was to be from this base that de Valéra would begin to emerge as the foremost leader of the Irish Republican Movement.

Within the space of only a few weeks the tide of Irish nationalistic feeling had turned completely. Prisoners being marched to the docks for deportation were surprised when crowds pressed forward, cheering and blessing them; and women broke through the guard lines to fill their pockets with gifts.<sup>1</sup> Pictures of the new heroes were displayed in Irish shop windows and homes, along with those of earlier Irish martyrs such as Robert Emmet; their speeches and poetry were bought, read, and quoted throughout Ireland. Bits of tricolor ribbon were sported on men's hats and women's blouses, and the churches were filled with mourners for the national dead.<sup>2</sup> Pearse had been proved correct--a blood sacrifice had raised Ireland from her

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>Lawrence J. McCaffrey, The Irish Question: 1800-1922 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 167; Fitzgerald Cry Blood Cry Erin, p. 112. There are photographs and copies of a number of souvenir mementoes--letters, poems, prints, etc.--included in this publication.



apathy, and Cathleen ni Hoolihan again walked proudly, her honor redeemed. Seán O'Casey's lyrical expression of the resurgence of Irish nationalism is a fitting conclusion to the story of Easter Week.

The bonfires of Sinn Féin began to blaze on every Irish hillside, and thousands of the Irish people danced around the blaze of Sinn Féin, as if they warmed themselves at the fire of life. Parliamentarianism was a sinking fire, and now, not all the united breath of a united party could ever again succeed in blowing it into an inspiring flame.<sup>1</sup>

For evermore, Ireland's Easter lilies would have a crimson streak through them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>P. O Cathasaigh, The Story of the Irish Citizen Army (Dublin: Maunsell & Co., 1919), p. 63. Presumably this is Seán O'Casey; a work so entitled and agreeing as to publication data is attributed to him in Current Biography 1962. Additionally Duff attributes the same quotation to O'Casey.

<sup>2</sup>Seán O'Casey, Drums Under the Windows (New York: Macmillan Co., 1946), p. 423.

## CHAPTER VI

### DE VALERA--COMING TO LEADERSHIP

Though the bonfires of Sinn Féin were blazing on the Irish hillsides--to use O'Casey's phrase--de Valéra and the other survivors of Easter Week were not in Ireland to see them. They were in various jails and internment camps in England. De Valéra, along with Robert Brennan, Thomas Ashe, Austin Stack, Harry Boland, and others, was first sent to Dartmoor prison.

It was at Dartmoor that de Valéra began to emerge as the accepted leader of the "men of Easter Week." His natural leadership, and his magnanimity as well, were demonstrated by an event that occurred within weeks of their arrival at Dartmoor. Eóin MacNéill was transferred to Dartmoor and his arrival aroused mixed feelings among the Irish prisoners because his countermand had diminished the effectiveness of the Rising. Robert Brennan described de Valéra's actions when MacNéill was brought into the area where the prisoners were assembled.

To our amazement, de Valéra stepped out from our ranks and faced us. His voice rang out:

"Irish Volunteers! Attention! Eyes left!"

The command--a salute to MacNéill--was obeyed with military precision.

"Eyes front!" Again the command was obeyed and de Valéra stepped back into the ranks, leaving us all a bit dazed by his amazing chivalry and courage.<sup>1</sup>

For this act of "mutiny" de Valéra was placed in solitary confinement. He was returned to his usual cell later on the same day, however; the prison Governor had decided against harsh measures.

On another occasion de Valéra was again sentenced to solitary confinement--this time for tossing a loaf of bread across the hall to another prisoner. De Valéra and certain other prisoners had received extra bread because they had been losing weight; customarily they shared the extra loaf with other less fortunate prisoners. In response to the sentence of solitary confinement and a bread and water diet, de Valéra went on hunger strike.<sup>2</sup>

British authorities later transferred de Valéra to Maidstone Prison and from there to Lewes, where some 130 Irish prisoners were collected from various prisons. At Lewes, as in other prisons where the authorities allowed it, most of the prisoners engaged in a variety of studies. Several languages, science, chemistry, Italian literature,

<sup>1</sup>Robert Brennan, Allegiance (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, Limited, 1950), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

and ancient Irish history were only some of the subjects studied.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to such conventional studies, the prisons also became classrooms for the new interpretations of Sinn Féin thought.

. , the principle of non-recognition of British authority was forged into an orthodoxy, logical, rigid and complete, and was obeyed with a consistency which called down the whole cycle of prison punishments on its exponents. These prison contests grew to be an invaluable part of the National struggle, preserving the morale of prisoners, convincing the authorities of the sincerity and determination of the Irishmen opposed to them and inspiring the Irish people with a new self-confidence and pride.<sup>2</sup>

One such prison contest resulted from the demand of the Irish prisoners to be treated as prisoners of war rather than as common criminals. When satisfaction of this demand was not forthcoming de Valéra ordered a strike. The men refused to obey all orders and systematically proceeded to break up the prison. On the first night cell windows were the targets; on the next night attention shifted to the spyholes and then to the lamp screens. All of this activity was accompanied by the singing of "God Save Ireland" and a great deal of cheering and shouting. Prisoners took walls apart brick by brick, and, in one instance, they tore

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 118-19.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 188.

down the walls separating three cells. They damaged doors and left them sagging in their frames. Attempts to end this resistance by separating the prisoners and transferring some to other prisons were unavailing.<sup>1</sup>

Through the months de Valéra had been accepted as the leader of the Irish prisoners. Robert Brennan recalled de Valéra's growing leadership.

. how easily and naturally de Valéra stepped into the leadership. Apart from the fact that he was the ranking survivor . . . he became the leader of the prisoners in Dartmoor from the day he gave the salute to MacNéill. In Lewes he became the leader of us all, without any consultation, debate or election--there was an election later, but long before that he became "the chief." Whenever any proposal was made or discussed, the first question everyone asked was: "What does Dev think of it?" . . .

When the election of a Council was held, Dev's selection as chief was almost unanimous. . . . He did not at all resent the opposition, but when the election was over he did very strongly object to the efforts of the minority to nullify the decisions of the Council. His attitude then, as later, was that of a constitutional autocrat. He would allow the greatest latitude in discussion and, generally, he managed to talk us all into his way of thinking by his clear, commonsense arguments. When, however, he was likely to fail in this, he did not hesitate to throw his own personality and worth into the balance against all opposition. In other words: "You can talk about this as much as you like, the more the better and from every possible angle. . . . if you don't agree with me, then I quit. You must get someone else to do it." And they never could afford to let him quit. . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Brennan, Allegiance, pp. 130-32; Longford and O'Neill, Eamon de Valéra, pp. 58-59; Ryan, Unique Dictator, pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup>Brennan, Allegiance, pp. 128-30.

However, prison doors were about to open for the Irish prisoners and de Valéra's leadership abilities were soon to be tested in other fields.

David Lloyd George, now the British Prime Minister, had conceived the idea of holding a convention to be composed of representatives of all shades of Irish opinion. Lloyd George declared that he would accept whatever solution such a convention might agree upon, believing all the while that any "substantial agreement" would be virtually impossible. This conference was all but defeated before it began--it would be boycotted by Sinn Féin and sabotaged by Unionists in Ulster and London alike.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the United States had by now entered the war, the British felt constrained to do everything possible to strengthen the American belief that England was fighting for the same causes as the United States--specifically the rights of small nations.<sup>2</sup> Additionally it was deemed wise to try to soothe the feelings of the large

<sup>1</sup>Kee, Green Flag, pp. 599-600; Constantine Fitzgibbon, The Life and Times of Eamon de Valéra, with illustrative material by George Morrison (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973), p. 65. This new publication contains a large number of photographs ranging from the 1860's to the present, and a brief generalized text.

<sup>2</sup>Kee, Green Flag, pp. 599-600.

Irish population in the United States.<sup>1</sup> To this end many of the untried Irish prisoners had been released in December 1916. In order to improve the atmosphere for the opening of his Irish Convention and to further placate the Irish-Americans, Lloyd George ordered the remaining Irish prisoners released in June 1917.<sup>2</sup>

As de Valéra emerged from prison in 1917 he received word that he had been chosen to contest a bye-election in East Clare on behalf of Sinn Féin. This was part of a new policy which Sinn Féin had begun in February of that year.

Sinn Féin had put forward the name of George Noble Count Plunkett in the Roscommon bye-election. The Count, whose title was a Papal one, was the father of Joseph Plunkett, who had been executed as a leader of the Rising. Plunkett was at something of a disadvantage--his opponent was a well known local man, and Plunkett himself was ill in

<sup>1</sup>For an indication of the feelings of most Irish-Americans regarding the Rising and its handling by the British, see the American press of the period, especially the New York Times. See also the Irish press in America--San Francisco Leader, New York Irish World and Industrial Liberator, and New York Gaelic American. The Leader can be obtained on microfilm from the University of California at Berkeley, but the Irish World and Gaelic American which are held on microfilm by New York Public Library are not loaned. They are included here and in the bibliography for purposes of information; they would be extremely valuable for any serious student of the period.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 191-207.

England until only a few days before the election.

Plunkett's campaign was energetically carried on by Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, other recently released Volunteers, and Father Michael O'Flanagan. Plunkett was victorious, as had been predicted, but the size of his majority amazed everyone. The results were: Plunkett, 3,022; Parliamentary Party Candidate, 1,708.<sup>1</sup>

In May a second bye-election was contested by Sinn Féin--this time in South Longford, a stronghold of the Parliamentarians. The candidate put forward by Sinn Féin was Joseph McGuinness, then languishing in Lewes Prison. Trying to get him elected into Parliament, the slogan of the McGuinness campaign was "Put him in to get him out!" Sinn Féin was again victorious, though by a margin of fewer than forty votes.<sup>2</sup> A point worthy of note concerning this election was made by Macardle. "It was noticed that while the older priests supported the Party candidate, the younger priests appeared wearing the tricolour badges to vote on the Republican side."<sup>3</sup> Obviously it was not only radicals and revolutionaries who supported Republicanism.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 196-97; Kee, Green Flag, pp. 596-97.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 201-202.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 202.



De Valéra, who had never had any experience of public speaking and had certainly never entertained any idea of seeking office, threw himself into the campaign wholeheartedly. He insisted that Eóin MacNéill accompany him on the campaign trail, despite the objections of some of his advisers.<sup>1</sup> De Valéra's speeches made it clear that he supported the principle of the Proclamation of Easter Week and that he would not attend at Westminster if elected. His speeches were described as vigorous, lucid, direct, sincere, and without flourishes.<sup>2</sup>

De Valéra insisted upon a clean campaign fought upon issues, not personalities. Gallagher quoted Colonel George O'Callaghan-Westropp's statement in the Irish Times; O'Callaghan-Westropp had contested for the same seat in 1892. He was a Unionist and would not vote for de Valéra, he said, but the gospel of Sinn Féin as preached in East Clare was "wholly free from incitements to class and religious hatred, from abuse of opponents and from personalities of the bitter and objectionable kind which formerly characterized similar contests."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Frank Gallagher [David Hogan], The Four Glorious Years (Dublin: Irish Press, 1953), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 63-64; MacManus, de Valéra: A Biography, pp. 64-65.

<sup>3</sup>Gallagher, Glorious Years, pp. 12-13.

At first people came out of curiosity to hear de Valéra speak, and then out of conviction. As crowds grew larger, the Royal Irish Constabulary was more and more evident. Finally violence erupted; de Valéra's car was fired upon at a road block. At his next meeting de Valéra proposed that if the police were withdrawn both sides could manage their meetings in peace; they did not need the military. The Clare men accepted this plea and the eager young Volunteers listened to de Valéra's admonition not to engage in violence so as to avoid damaging Ireland's name before the world. It was reported to be the most orderly election that the old people could remember. Meetings were so well policed that the Constabulary stood by with nothing to do and opposing forces exchanged jokes when they met at the submission of nomination forms.<sup>1</sup>

Kee commented upon two notable features of de Valéra's campaign. First, the conspicuous presence of many middle-aged and younger priests at de Valéra meetings indicated that more and more churchmen were turning to Republicanism. Second, the Volunteers were excellently organized in support of de Valéra. On election day a large number of automobiles were available to assist voters to the polls and additional Volunteers served as body guards, a fortunate

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-15.

circumstance in view of several stoning attacks directed against Sinn Féin autos by Redmond supporters.<sup>1</sup>

The candidate of the Redmondites was Patrick Lynch, K.C. who was well known and popular in the county. It was predicted that de Valéra would win by a margin of about one thousand votes. Actually the results were a landslide: de Valéra, 5,010; Lynch, 2,035. Eighty-seven per cent of the electorate cast their ballots.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the election of de Valéra in East Clare can hardly be over estimated. It was apparent that de Valéra and his stand for a Republic had appeal for other than his fellow prisoners from Easter Week. It was also obvious that the earlier Sinn Féin victories in Roscommon and Longford were indicative of a national trend. De Valéra and the Republican movement in Ireland were forcefully brought to the attention of His Majesty's Government by this election triumph.

English newspapers reported that "The young men appear ready to follow de Valéra anywhere. This tall, stern man, in his early thirties, with angular features and burning eyes, seems destined to be the leader of Sinn Féin."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kee, Green Flag, p. 602.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>MacManus, de Valéra: A Biography, p. 66.

According to F. S. L. Lyons the real significance of the Clare election was ". . . that it marked the emergence of de Valéra as a national leader."<sup>1</sup> Macardle said that the primary significance of de Valéra's victory was not the margin of victory but the reception of that victory throughout Ireland. There was great rejoicing in all parts of the country. "Nothing so universal had been known within living memory, . . . Clare spoke for the Irish nation: . . . de Valéra, was the nation's representative and leader now."<sup>2</sup>

The Sinn Féin policy of contesting all bye-elections was continued. Within weeks of the landslide victory in Clare, Sinn Féin was engaged in an election campaign in Kilkenny City, the first urban constituency Sinn Féin had contested. The Republican candidate was W. T. Cosgrave, another veteran of the Rising. Cosgrave was victorious by a vote of nearly two to one.<sup>3</sup>

Within five months of his election in Clare, de Valéra's leadership of the entire Sinn Féin movement was confirmed. In October 1917 nearly two thousand people met

<sup>1</sup>F. S. L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 383.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 210-11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

in Dublin for the first Árd-Fheis (convention) of the new Sinn Féin. There were representatives of Count Plunkett's Liberty Clubs, the old Sinn Féin groups of pre-1916 years, and the Volunteers. The group included people of quite divergent opinions--ranging from the relatively moderate views of Arthur Griffith's original organization with its emphasis on the idea of a constituent assembly all the way to those who would accept nothing less than complete independence and the establishment of a Republic.

The task of creating a constitution that would be acceptable to all was a delicate one. De Valéra proposed a compromise phrasing which he believed defined the aims of Sinn Féin broadly enough to be acceptable to all.

'Sinn Féin aims at securing the international recognition of Ireland as an independent Irish Republic. Having achieved that status, the Irish people may, by referendum, freely choose their own form of government.'<sup>1</sup>

De Valéra felt that it was only as a Republic that there was any chance of recognition; the important thing was to gain independence first and then settle any differences that might remain concerning the specific form of government.

It had been expected that the election of a president might cause a serious rift in the organization. The

<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 67.

names of Plunkett, Griffith and de Valéra were to be put forward, and each had a solid following among the representatives. However, both Plunkett and Griffith withdrew and Griffith nominated de Valéra with the statement "De Valéra is a man of cool judgment. In him, as President, we will have a statesman as well as a soldier."<sup>1</sup> De Valéra was elected unopposed.

Another rift cropped up in the process of selecting the council and other officers. When Eóin MacNéill's name was proposed, Countess Markievicz denounced him bitterly, asking that his name be stricken from the ballot. De Valéra, as he had done twice before, defended MacNéill. He quoted the statement Pearse had made in the manifesto issued to his men on Friday of Easter Week. " . Both Eóin MacNéill and we have acted in the best interests of Ireland."<sup>2</sup> When the election results were announced MacNéill was at the top of the list of those elected to the Executive. It was becoming apparent to all that de Valéra had the leadership skills that would enable him to be a strong leader, drawing various factions together under one leadership.

<sup>1</sup>Gallagher, Glorious Years, p. 22. For the text of de Valéra's speech on this occasion see Appendix D.

<sup>2</sup>Van Voris, Constance de Markievicz, p. 240.

Sometime later the Volunteers held their convention.<sup>1</sup> De Valéra was elected President, thus bringing the leadership of the two most important Republican organizations into the hands of one person. The leadership of the Volunteers, however, represented two distinctly separate views.

De Valéra had refused to continue his relationship with the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Aside from religious objections he felt that the Volunteers could function openly and that secret brotherhoods were no longer necessary. There was also the problem of conflicting orders to be feared, as Easter Week had only too clearly demonstrated. Cathal Brugha, the newly appointed Chief of Staff, shared de Valéra's view of the I.R.B. Other members of the Volunteers Executive, however, were I.R.B. members. Michael Collins, as Director of Organization, was then in the upper levels of I.R.B. leadership; Diarmuid Lynch and Seán McGarry, Director of Communications and General Secretary, respectively, were also members of the I.R.B.<sup>2</sup> Thus, there could

<sup>1</sup>There is some discrepancy concerning the date of this convention. Longford and O'Neill said it was the day following the Sinn Féin Árd-Fheis. Kee said both were held at the same time. Macardle and Van Voris both specified November 19, and Brennan said the Volunteers met "later in the year."

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 66; Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 220.

be no doubt that the secret organization would continue to wield considerable influence on the policy of the Volunteers.

Early in 1918 Sinn Féin was defeated in three bye-elections. None of these defeats, however, was considered a serious setback. In the case of South Armagh, an Ulster constituency, the Unionist candidate withdrew; this undoubtedly brought more support to Sinn Féin's Parliamentary opponent. Patrick McCartan, the Sinn Féin champion, was defeated by a margin narrower than the usual total Unionist vote.<sup>1</sup>

The second Sinn Féin defeat came in Waterford, in an election made necessary by the death of John Redmond. Redmond's son was the nominee of the Parliamentary Party and obviously commanded much personal support from the Party organization. In addition he could count on several hundred Unionist votes being cast against Sinn Féin. In a campaign marred by several violent attacks against the Republicans, Sinn Féin was defeated by 478 votes out of a total of just over two thousand.<sup>2</sup>

The third defeat for Sinn Féin was sustained in another Ulster constituency--East Tyrone. At first, Sinn Féin had not intended entering the contest but then decided

<sup>1</sup>Kee, Green Flag, p. 616.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



to do so, mainly as a test of strength. They gained twelve hundred votes out of a poll of approximately three thousand.<sup>1</sup>

Though these defeats were not considered setbacks by Sinn Féin, it might have appeared to some that Sinn Féin's strength had been illusory. To offset any such appearance, the British government was about to come to the aid of Irish Republicans again. The war situation was desperate, and it was imperative to get replacements for the heavy losses being suffered on the Western Front. Early in April, Lloyd George's government announced the decision to extend conscription to Ireland.

Lloyd George had been warned that it would be very unwise to conscript Irishmen to fight for England. Henry Duke, Chief Secretary of Ireland, and other officers of the Irish government offered strenuous objections. Members of the Cabinet were also skeptical of the advisability of conscription. Some thought Irish soldiers would be more trouble than they would be worth. The number of men required to enforce conscription could not be afforded. Duke even said that they would do as well to enlist Germans. Others favored conscription, however, as there would be the added dividend that the removal of many young men "would

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 617.

cut the claws of the Sinn Féin movement."<sup>1</sup> The entire Irish Party voted against the conscription bill and John Dillon, successor to Redmond, led his Party from the House of Commons in protest. They returned to Ireland to organize resistance.<sup>2</sup>

All of Ireland was ablaze with anger and none were to be pacified by Lloyd George's incredible offer of immediate Home Rule based on partition.<sup>3</sup> A few years later, Darrell Figgis remembered the unprecedented unity felt throughout the country.

I am sure there never has been such concord in Ireland. Enemies forgot their enmities and hastened to be first in friendship. Yet emotion did not rest at concord, but pressed on to an enthusiasm that was like the advent of new national being.<sup>4</sup>

The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Laurence O'Neill, invited leaders of all factions to meet at the Mansion House in Dublin to discuss united opposition. Present were representatives of the Parliamentary Party, Sinn Féin, the dissident elements of the old Home Rule Party, and Labour.

<sup>1</sup>War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 6 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1933-37), 5:188-90.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 232.

<sup>3</sup>Kee, Green Flag, p. 618.

<sup>4</sup>Darrell Figgis, Recollections of the Irish War (Garden City and New York: Doubleday, Doran, & Co., n.d. [publisher's note indicates written in 1921-1922]), p. 195.

De Valéra was given much of the credit for the accomplishments of the conference. Figgis said that the "greater part of the credit of the leadership of the Conference belongs to Éamon de Valéra" <sup>1</sup> It was de Valéra who formulated the anti-Conscription Pledge which the Conference suggested should be taken in every parish in the country on the next Sunday. "Denying the right of the British Government to enforce compulsory service in this country, we pledge ourselves solemnly to one another to resist Conscription by the most effective means at our disposal." <sup>2</sup> T. M. Healy credited de Valéra with the suggestion that a deputation be sent to Maynooth where the Irish bishops were sitting in conference to secure a statement from them. De Valéra exerted great persuasiveness to bring the Cardinal and the other bishops to agree to firm action. The manifesto which the bishops published was unequivocal, stating that forced conscription was oppressive and inhuman and that Irishmen had the right to resist by any means consonant with the law of God. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup>T. M. Healy, Letters and Leaders of My Day, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1929), 2:595-96; Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 73.

De Valéra then undertook to write a defense of the Irish case against conscription, directing it to President Woodrow Wilson and the people of the United States. De Valéra and other Irish leaders believed that Ireland's best chance for recognition lay with the United States and their opportunity to present their case before the peace conference which would follow the war. De Valéra's presentation was reasoned and carefully presented. He pointed out the depredations committed by England against Ireland in maintaining the Union, and that Ireland had never accepted Union with England. He called into question England's sincerity in supporting the principle of self-determination while at the same time refusing to apply those principles to Ireland. The entire presentation was copiously documented with quotations and statements of many British leaders and statesmen, both contemporary and historical.<sup>1</sup>

During this period de Valéra granted an exclusive interview to a correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor. In a wide-ranging discussion de Valéra spoke of the necessity for the Irish to be suspicious of the pronouncements of English statesmen based on their past record of broken promises. He also discussed the economic ability

<sup>1</sup>Éamon de Valéra, Ireland's Case Against Conscription (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Co., 1918), pp. 1-15 passim.

of Ireland to exist independently of English "aid," citing figures that showed the money taken out of Ireland in the previous year would have been sufficient to operate the governments of Norway, Denmark, and Bulgaria--including "police, soldiers, ships, guns, and all." Much of the interview centered around Ulster and the presumed "religious problems," which de Valéra declared were exaggerated by the British for their own ends.<sup>1</sup>

The demonstration of solidarity exhibited by the vast numbers who signed the anti-conscription pledge and supported a twenty-four hour general strike called by organized Labour brought the British Government to the point of placing Ireland under military command. Field Marshal Lord John French replaced Ivor Churchill Guest, Lord Wimborne, and commanded with the title "Lord-Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland."

Within five days of his arrival, French proclaimed that a "German Plot" had been discovered in Ireland; Sinn Féin was in treasonable communication with Germany. Government police immediately arrested seventy-three of Sinn Féin's top leaders, including Griffith and de Valéra.

The evidence against Sinn Féin appeared very flimsy --most of it related to the contacts of the planners of the

<sup>1</sup>Christian Science Monitor, 15 May 1918.

Rising with the Germans. The only piece of evidence that might have had any relevance was the arrest of James Dowling who had been one of Roger Casement's Irish Brigade. He had been arrested in Galway after landing from a German submarine. He had been sent by Germany to discover what plans for resistance were contemplated by the Irish. This, in itself, should have been proof enough that the Irish leaders were not in contact with the Germans. The "German Plot" simply provided England with an excuse for removing the Sinn Féin leaders from the scene.<sup>1</sup>

De Valéra and the other arrested leaders were quickly transported to England where they were separated into two groups; one group was sent to Usk Prison and the other group, which included de Valéra and Griffith, to Lincoln Jail. They were imprisoned without being charged or tried, to be held for an indefinite period of time.<sup>2</sup>

Nor did the arrests cease with the leaders of Sinn Féin. The British were determined to suppress Sinn Féin and His Majesty's representatives in Ireland bent every effort to that end. Nationalist organizations of all kinds were proclaimed; activities which might bring groups

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 236; Kee, Green Flag, pp. 620-21; Lyons, Since the Famine, pp. 393-94.

<sup>2</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 78; Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 236.

together and cause "disaffection" were prohibited. Entire cities and counties were proclaimed dangerous, and some were made "Special Military Areas." People were arrested for all sorts of offenses, such as wearing tricolor badges, singing "disloyal" songs, and giving their names in Gaelic when questioned by a policeman on the street. A movie theater was prohibited from showing films of Dublin's welcome of the prisoners released in 1917 and of the funeral of Thomas Ashe, a Republican who had died as the result of bungled forcible feeding while on hunger strike in jail. By October 1918 some five hundred Irishmen were imprisoned.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the difficulties with which they had to contend, Sinn Féin was gaining support on all sides. To many, the Government's campaign against the Republicans made them appear to be the most effective unit in the fight against conscription. However, at this point Sinn Féin's main efforts were directed toward securing the largest possible victory in the 1918 General Election, scheduled for December.

The conditions under which Sinn Féin had to fight the campaign were very adverse. Most of their leaders were

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 238; Kee, Green Flag, p. 622.

in prison, election meetings were proclaimed, their election manifesto was heavily censored, Republican newspapers were banned, and all other newspapers were subject to censorship.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, most of Sinn Féin's experienced speakers and campaigners were in jail, or soon to be there. Frank Gallagher, who was an active campaigner, had kept a list of arrests and said that each day brought more arrests of key-workers. The last on his list was a man who served as both Director of Meetings and Transport in County Westmeath, arrested two days before election day. According to Gallagher, Sinn Féin had lost 560 people imprisoned since the "German Plot" arrests.<sup>2</sup>

Not only were many campaign workers in jail, but more than half of the candidates were there also. Of seventy-three Sinn Féin candidates on the ballot for the elections, forty-seven were imprisoned; de Valéra, of course, was among these. Few of the candidates were able to get election addresses out of prison intact. Most of these addresses were stopped in the prisons, and others were confiscated in the Post Office. De Valéra declined

<sup>1</sup>Kee, Green Flag, p. 623; Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 244. For the text of the election manifesto as written and as censored see Appendices E and F.

<sup>2</sup>Gallagher, Glorious Years, p. 52.



to issue an address acceptable to the censors, commenting that silence was preferable to mutilated statements.<sup>1</sup>

The results of the election gave Sinn Féin an unquestioned victory. Of 105 seats in Ireland, Sin Féin won seventy-three, the Unionists, twenty-six, and the Parliamentary Party, six, plus one elected from a Liverpool constituency. The Parliamentarians had been reduced from the eighty seats they had held at the beginning of the year to seven. John Dillon, who had succeeded Redmond as the Party's leader, lost his seat in Mayo to de Valéra by a margin of nearly two to one.<sup>2</sup>

The results of this election in Ulster are particularly interesting in view of the British talk of partition. In only four of Ulster's nine counties were the Unionists in the majority. In two others they were a minority; in the remaining three counties no Unionists were elected. Such results indicate that, were six counties in Ulster to be partitioned, a Nationalist minority would be created there that would exceed the Unionist minority in these same counties when considered in the whole of Ireland. In view

<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, p. 80; Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 247.

of this, such a plan of partition would hardly seem consonant with democratic principles.<sup>1</sup>

De Valéra was later to use the results of this election to document various written statements in support of Irish independence. One such statement he addressed to the President of the United States. De Valéra drew upon statements of various national leaders, such as Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, Arthur Balfour, Andrew Bonar Law, Lord Robert Cecil, Sir Edward Grey, Winston Churchill, Georges Clemenceau, and Raymond Poincaré to show that one of the aims of the war was the security of the rights of small nations. He also included an analysis of the treatment of Ireland by England and the "myth of religious differences." It is essentially a sound presentation of Ireland's case.<sup>2</sup>

On 21 January 1919 the first Dáil Éirann (Irish Assembly) met in the Mansion House, Dublin. It was the first representative Irish assembly since "Grattan's Parliament" was disbanded at the time of the Union. Everyone who

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.; Kee, Green Flag, pp. 626-27.

<sup>2</sup>[Éamon de Valéra], Ireland's Claim to the Government of the United States of America for Recognition As a Sovereign Independent State (Washington, D.C.: Irish Diplomatic Mission, 1920)]; Éamon de Valéra, The Foundation of the Republic of Ireland in the Vote of the People: Results of the General Election of December, 1918--A National Plebiscite Held Under British Law and British Supervision ([New York]: n.p., [1919]).

had been elected in the 1918 General Election was invited to attend, but only Republican deputies attended. When the roll was called the response to one name after another was "imprisoned by the foreign enemy"; thirty-six of seventy-three Republican representatives were in jail.<sup>1</sup>

When the Provisional Constitution of the Dáil had been read and passed, the Declaration of Independence was read in both Irish and English. When the reading had been completed, Cathal Brugha, in the chair, said

'Deputies, you understand from what is asserted in this Declaration that we are now done with England. Let the world know it and those who are concerned bear it in mind.'

The Deputies, standing, affirmed:

'We adopt this Declaration of Independence, and we pledge ourselves to put it into effect by every means in our power.'<sup>2</sup>

Éamon de Valéra, Arthur Griffith, and Count Plunkett were appointed to serve as delegates to the Peace Conference. An address to the Free Nations of the World was read in Irish, French, and English. This statement called upon all free nations to recognize and support Ireland's national status. The session concluded after the reading of the Democratic Programme of Dáil Éirann.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 252-53.

<sup>3</sup>For the texts of the various documents adopted at the first session of Dáil Éirann see Appendices G. H. I, and J.

Most observers were impressed by the dignity and the decorum with which the proceedings were carried out. The special correspondent for the Times (London) reported ". . . that the proceedings throughout were orderly and dignified, not a word being uttered that could provoke ill-feeling."<sup>1</sup> This meeting, simple and brief though it was, was the beginning of a new epoch in Irish history. The first steps toward an independent Ireland had been taken; all that remained was to make that independence an accomplished fact. This task would be no easy one, as the years ahead would prove.

Even as Dáil Éirann met for the first time, de Valéra and two of his fellow prisoners were planning an escape from Lincoln Jail. The story of this escape must surely be one of the classic escape stories of modern time, involving keys and files baked into cakes, signals in the dark of night, and relays of automobiles waiting to take the escapees away.

It began when de Valéra, in his role as server at Mass, managed to secure a wax impression of the chaplain's key. Exact diagrams of the key and an explanation in Gaelic were sent out disguised as a humorous Christmas card. The prisoner's wife who received the card did not take it

<sup>1</sup>Times (London), 22 January 1919, p. 9.

seriously and failed to pass it on to the Volunteers. More letters with carefully composed information and instructions were sent out of the prison, and finally a cake with the key baked into it arrived; the key did not fit. More exchanges of messages brought another cake with a second key. It also failed to operate the lock. At this point de Valéra suggested that a blank key and files be sent. These duly arrived in a third cake, but the key could not be used as it had a slot in the center. Yet another cake was delivered to the prison, containing another blank key. This time the prisoners succeeded in making a key that worked perfectly.

Finally, after six weeks of planning and delays, the escape plan was put into action on the night of 3 February 1919. As soon as it was dark, signals were exchanged between the prisoners and Michael Collins and Harry Boland who waited on the outside. All went well until Collins and Boland broke the shank of a duplicate key in the lock of the outside door. De Valéra, however, managed to push the broken key from the lock with his own key and unlock the door from the inside.

All that remained was for de Valéra, along with Seán McGarry and Seán Milroy, who accompanied him, to get safely away. This necessitated passing the gates of a hospital where many soldiers were saying good-night to

their girl friends. De Valéra's face was so readily identifiable that, in order to disguise himself, he wore Boland's heavy fur coat and he and Boland strolled arm-in-arm past the hospital gates, looking very much like just another fond couple walking home. A car took the escapees to Manchester, where hiding places had been prepared. After being hidden in Manchester for several weeks, de Valéra returned to Dublin on the twentieth of February. He remained hidden for several weeks longer, until the other "German Plot" prisoners were released in early March.<sup>1</sup>

It had been planned that de Valéra, Griffith, and Plunkett should travel to Paris to bring Ireland's case before the Peace Conference, but it had begun to appear unlikely that such a journey would be possible. The Irish delegates were unable to obtain passports. Aside from this difficulty, it seemed that such a mission, even if it was possible, would be unsuccessful. Seán T. O'Kelly had succeeded in getting to Paris, but he was having little luck in his attempts to see President Wilson. O'Kelly found that the famed Fourteen Points were being applied only to nations held by the losers of the war. Such questions involving the victors were being treated as "domestic issues."

<sup>1</sup>Longford and O'Neill, Éamon de Valéra, pp. 81-88.

In this way the British had succeeded in denying Ireland access to the Conference.<sup>1</sup>

As it seemed that the Peace Conference offered no chance of recognition, de Valéra began to consider other possibilities. For some time he had felt that the United States offered the best hope of recognition, and he now decided to make a journey to America and take Ireland's case to the people of the United States. Hopefully, the pressure of public opinion could be brought to bear on President Wilson.<sup>2</sup>

When the second session of Dáil Éirann met on 1 April de Valéra was present. Cathal Brugha, who had been elected Acting President in January, resigned and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>For the story of de Valéra's American mission, which was to last eighteen months, see: Patrick McCartan, With de Valéra in America (New York: Brentano, 1932); Katherine O'Doherty, Assignment: America; de Valéra's Mission to the United States (New York: De Tanko Publishers, 1957); Charles Callan Tansill, America and the Fight for Irish Freedom 1866-1922: An Old Story Based on New Data (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1957). In addition, the American press of the period is useful, as are various Irish-American newspapers: Philadelphia Irish Press, San Francisco Leader, New York Irish World and Industrial Liberator, and New York Gaelic American. The Irish Press is not available on microfilm, but Villanova University holds a complete file. It is included here and in the bibliography for purposes of information.

de Valéra was elected President by a unanimous vote.<sup>1</sup> By this vote, what everyone had known and accepted was made official--Éamon de Valéra, as President of Dáil Éirann and the Republic of Ireland, was the undisputed leader of Irish Republicanism.

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, p. 263. On 10 April de Valéra addressed a public session of the Dáil, outlining the policy of the Republican government and its relation to the British Administration and British forces in Ireland. For the text of this speech see Appendix K.



## CONCLUSION

In 1913 Éamon de Valéra had been an unknown mathematics teacher, a student of the Gaelic language, and a family man. He had once looked forward to a lifetime spent in studious pursuits; yet in only five-and-a-half years he had emerged as the elected leader of his people. Though Ireland had not yet been recognized as a nation, she had created a cohesive body of nationalist thought and elected a representative government. That government was diligently working toward complete independence, and within a short time it would be the only effective government in Ireland, accepted and obeyed by the people.

What brought this man from anonymity to international recognition? On the surface it would appear to be a series of chance happenings--his appointment as a commandant of the Volunteers, his survival of the Easter Week executions, and his position of leadership among the Irish prisoners held in British jails.

However, leadership is not a question of chance. It is, rather, a combination of personal traits and characteristics. To understand de Valéra's emergence as a leader it is necessary to consider his character.

His childhood and youth provided the initial molding of his character. Reared in rural poverty and without the closeness of a natural family unit, de Valéra early learned self reliance. In his youth he also absorbed the history of his nation and looked with the worshipful eyes of the young at such fiery heroes as Robert Emmet, Theobald Wolfe Tone, and Daniel O'Connell. He grew to adulthood in the midst of the Home Rule agitation during the "Parnell Era," and the Celtic Renaissance.

In considering de Valéra the statesman Ryan said that critics have been unable to answer the question of why this " . unpretentious, persistent, scrupulous, scholarly, and courageous man retained the affection and trust of his people . " Perhaps the answer is in the question itself. The adjectives used to describe de Valéra tell much about his character.

Unpretentiousness is not always, or even often, a quality displayed by national leaders, yet it is accurate in reference to de Valéra. He did not seek out public acclaim; it sought him. Indeed, Ryan tells us, it is known that he has always disliked crowds and public meetings and has endured them at the sacrifice of his personal preference for simplicity.

De Valéra would have been content to spend his life in studious pursuit of his mathematical studies as he had expected to do until the intervention of Easter Week. Throughout the years he turned to mathematics for relaxation. During the various periods of imprisonment he found relief from the tedium of prison life by studying Einstein and higher mathematics. It was the same in later years when similar studies provided a release from the tensions of public life. No doubt it was the early training of his mind in the precision of mathematical thought that gave him the faculty of considering any proposed action from all sides. No decision was ever taken unless he could assure himself that a strong and logical case could be made for such action.

De Valéra seems to stand out as a man of principle. When convinced of the rightness of a particular course he has always adhered to it with great strength. It would certainly have been easier to accept the Treaty of 1921; indeed many other Republicans did, among them Michael Collins. However, de Valéra has never been one to accept the easy way if he did not believe it was also the right way. Thus he resigned as President of the Dáil and, with his followers, took the more difficult way which led ultimately to bloody civil war. Not the easy way, but de Valéra

believed acceptance of partition would have been wrong, as indeed it seems to have been in view of the problems which plague Northern Ireland half a century later.

Another example of de Valéra's steadfastness in the face of opposition was the course he chose during World War II. He led his countrymen in a policy of neutrality which brought harsh criticism from both Sir Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Certainly such a policy could not have been easy, but again de Valéra chose what he believed to be the right way. Even so, the policy of neutrality was not meant to be directed against England as some critics said. German pilots who parachuted from crippled planes were interned; allied pilots in similar circumstances were quietly allowed to "escape." When Belfast was bombed by the Germans the Dublin fire brigade was immediately sent to aid the stricken city.

It would not be particularly surprising, in view of the centuries of ill feeling between Ireland and England--not to mention his personal experiences with the English--if de Valéra felt hatred for England. However, this has never been so. In the years of strife he often said that if Ireland was allowed complete independence the geographic proximity of the two islands would draw them together in friendship for mutual benefit. The story told by his son

Ruairí, repeated in Chapter I, shows his disinclination to hatred of the English or anyone else.

When he returned to power in 1932 de Valéra refused to take vengeance on the police and military of the Free State. Many of his associates urged him to reorganize these units and remove their leaders from power. He would have none of it, just as he had refused to ostracize Eóin MacNéill in earlier years. Unity of the various factions of Irish thought was always an important goal for de Valéra.

Always a man dedicated to his ideals, as he has been to his Church, scrupulously honest in all things, he has been unswerving in his devotion to the concepts of democracy and the rights of individuals. Despite the personal characteristics that have led some to describe him as a "dictator" or an "autocrat," he has always been a constitutional democrat, preferring the constitutional approach to all problems, resorting to violence only as a last resort. He has also been accused of believing that he ". . . knows better than his own people what is good for them: " It strikes me that he has not so much been guilty of knowing better than his people, but sooner than they, what they wanted. It seems that he has often initiated ideas and, by careful explanation, discussion, and debate, crystallized the opinions of the majority of the people.

Undoubtedly the most dominant force in his life has been his religious belief. He has been a devout and regular communicant of the Roman Catholic Church all his life.

His religious belief, however, has not exerted any "narrowing" influence as is often the case with extremely religious people. He has been proud of Catholic Ireland's tradition of religious tolerance, pointing out that both Jews and Protestants have historically found refuge in Ireland when they were unwelcome elsewhere. De Valéra's son Eamonn has said of his parents "Both have been given a luminous faith which has always supported them."

A fitting conclusion to this study of Eamon de Valéra is a quotation from Longford and O'Neill. "President de Valéra has been admired by very many, from far and near. But those who have known him best always admired him most."

## APPENDIX A

### THE MANIFESTO OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS<sup>1</sup>

Read at their Inaugural Meeting in Dublin,  
25 November 1913

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 a display of military force and the menace of armed violence the determining factor in the future relations between this country and Great Britain.

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.

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 representative 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.

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 831-33.

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 rights is our duty first and foremost. 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?

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.

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 programme 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.

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.

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 co-operation. 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.

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.

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.

## APPENDIX B

### PROCLAMATION OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC<sup>1</sup>

Issued from the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin,  
Monday 24 April 1916.

"Poblacht na h-Éireann

The Provisional Government  
of the  
IRISH REPUBLIC  
To the people of Ireland

"Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom

"Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

"We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 155-56.

lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare and of its exaltation among the nations.

"The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences, carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

"Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland, and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people. We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

"Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

Thomas J. Clarke

Sean Mac Diarmada

P. H. Pearse

James Connolly

Thomas MacDonagh

Éamonn Ceannt

Joseph Plunkett."

## APPENDIX C

### MANIFESTO TO THE PEOPLE OF DUBLIN<sup>1</sup>

Read by Patrick Pearse from the steps of the General Post Office, Tuesday 25 April 1916.

The Provisional Government to the Citizens of Dublin. The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic salutes the Citizens of Dublin on the momentous occasion of the proclamation of a SOVEREIGN INDEPENDENT IRISH STATE now in the course of being established by Irishmen in arms.

The Republican forces hold the lines taken up at Twelve noon on Easter Monday, and nowhere, despite fierce and almost continuous attacks of the British troops have the lines been broken through. The country is rising in answer to Dublin's call, and the final achievement of Ireland's freedom is now, with God's help, only a matter of days. The valour, self-sacrifice, and discipline of Irish men and women are about to win for our country a glorious place among the nations.

Ireland's honour has already been redeemed; it remains to vindicate her wisdom and her self-control.

All citizens of Dublin who believe in the right of their country to be free will give their allegiance and their loyal help to the Irish Republic. There is work for everyone; for the men in the fighting line, and for the women in the provision of food and first aid. Every Irishman and Irishwoman worthy of the name will come forward to help their common country in this her supreme hour.

Able-bodied citizens can help by building barricades in the streets to oppose the advance of the British troops. The British troops have been firing on our women and on our Red Cross. On the other hand, Irish regiments in the British Army have refused to act against their fellow countrymen.

The Provisional Government hopes that its supporters--which means the vast bulk of the people of Dublin--will preserve order and self-restraint. Such looting as has already

<sup>1</sup>Coffey, Agony at Easter, pp. 110-11.

occurred has been done by hangers-on of the British army. Ireland must keep her new honor unsmirched.

We have lived to see an Irish Republic proclaimed. May we live to establish it firmly, and may our children and our children's children enjoy the happiness and prosperity which freedom will bring

Signed on behalf of the  
Provisional Government

P. H. Pearse  
Commanding in Chief the Forces of the Irish  
Republic, and President of the Provisional  
Government.

## APPENDIX D

### SPEECH OF DE VALÉRA<sup>1</sup>

Speech of Éamon de Valéra on his election as President of Sinn Féin, 25 October 1917.

It is a pleasure to me that my first duty should be to convey your thanks and the thanks, in your name, of the people of Ireland to those leaders who have brought this movement to its present condition, when, rather than have voting between them, they retired in order that we might strengthen the new position which we occupy--a position in which we tell the world that we want no connection with England. The only particular value in having me here is this. In the contested election of Clare the people of Clare did me the honour of choosing me as their representative. I stood then for the policy which is the aim of the new organisation. That policy was endorsed by the free votes of the electors of East Clare, and by electing me unanimously here, you, the people of Ireland, have endorsed the voice of the people of East Clare, and declared to the world that the policy which we put before the people of East Clare is the policy of the people of all Ireland.

The Constitution of this new movement which you have adopted is one which it may be well to lay stress on. It says that this organisation of Sinn Féin aims at securing international recognition of Ireland as an independent Irish Republic. That is what I stand for, what I stood for in East Clare and it is because I stand for that that I was elected here. I said in East Clare when I was elected that I regarded that election as a monument to the dead. I regard my election here as a monument to the brave dead, and I believe that this is proof that they were right, that what they fought for--the complete and absolute freedom and separation from England--was the pious wish of every Irish heart.

They said: "We know that is the opinion of the people of Ireland. We know that in going out to fight the

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 840-41.

British Empire, small in numbers though we are, we are asserting to the world that Ireland is a nation, and that Ireland has never agreed to become a subject nation or a part of the British Empire." They said: "We know, and the people of Ireland, that the people of Ireland are kept from expressing their views simply by the naked sword of England. England pretends it is not by the naked sword, but by the good will of the people of this country, that she is here. We will draw the naked sword to make her bare her own naked sword, to drag the hypocritical mask off her face, and to show her to the world for what she is, the accursed oppressor of nations." These glorious men did what they felt they were quite justified in doing. They said: "What we aim at is the freedom of the people of Ireland. We are not a mere party here or a small section. We represent in our hearts the solid, sensible opinion of Irishmen and if we are to win that freedom the first step in that battle must be to get the people of Ireland themselves determined to win it; and even though the first battle in that political fight might be a military defeat it will lead to final success." That has ever been in my mind their moral justification.

. This Constitution that we are setting up says we are striving to get international recognition for our Irish Republic, and there is an added clause to it which I would like to explain, that, having achieved that status, the Irish people may by referendum freely choose their own forms of government. This is not the time for this, for this reason, that the only banner under which our freedom can be won at the present time is the Republican banner. It is as an Irish Republic that we have a chance of getting international recognition. Some of us would wish, having got that recognition, to have a Republican form of government. Some might have fault to find with that and prefer other forms of government. This is not the time for discussion on the best forms of government. But we are all united on this--that we want complete and absolute independence. Get that and we will agree to differ afterwards. We do not wish to bind the people to any form of government. Some of my friends may have different opinions from mine on forms of government.

This is not the time for that; this is the time to get freedom. Then we can settle by the most democratic means what particular form of government we may have. I only wish to say in reference to the last clause that there is no contemplation in it of having a Monarchy in which the Monarch would be of the House of Windsor.

We say it is necessary to be united under the flag under which we are going to fight for our freedom: the flag of the Irish Republic. We have nailed that flag to the mast; we shall never lower it. I ask you all to salute that flag, nailed to the mast, which we shall never lower to salute the flag and in Grattan's words to say "Esto perpetua."



## APPENDIX E

### THE MANIFESTO OF SINN FÉIN<sup>1</sup>

as prepared for circulation for the General Election of December, 1918.

#### GENERAL ELECTION

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##### Manifesto to the Irish People

The coming General Election is fraught with vital possibilities for the future of our nation. Ireland is faced with the question whether this generation wills it that she is to march out into the full sunlight of freedom, or is to remain in the shadow of a base imperialism that has brought and ever will bring in its train naught but evil for our race.

Sinn Féin gives Ireland the opportunity of vindicating her honour and pursuing with renewed confidence the path of national salvation by rallying to the flag of the Irish Republic.

Sinn Féin aims at securing the establishment of that Republic.

1. By withdrawing the Irish Representation from the British Parliament and by denying the right and opposing the will of the British Government or any other foreign Government to legislate for Ireland.
2. By making use of any and every means available to render impotent the power of England to hold Ireland in subjection by military force or otherwise.
3. By the establishment of a constituent assembly comprising persons chosen by Irish constituencies as the supreme national authority to speak and act in the name of the Irish people, and to develop Ireland's social, political and industrial life, for the welfare of the whole people of Ireland.
4. By appealing to the Peace Conference for the establishment of Ireland as an Independent Nation. At that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 842-44.

conference the future of the Nations of the world will be settled on the principle of government by consent of the governed. Ireland's claim to the application of that principle in her favour is not based on any accidental situation arising from the war. It is older than many if not all of the present belligerents. It is based on our unbroken tradition of nationhood, on a unity in a national name which has never been challenged, on our possession of a distinctive national culture and social order, on the moral courage and dignity of our people in the face of alien aggression, on the fact that in nearly every generation, and five times within the past 120 years our people have challenged in arms the right of England to rule this country. On these incontrovertible facts is based the claim that our people have beyond question established the right to be accorded all the power of a free nation.

Sinn Féin stands less for a political party than for the Nation; it represents the old tradition of nationhood handed on from dead generations; it stands by the Proclamation of the Provisional Government of Easter, 1916, reasserting the inalienable right of the Irish Nation to sovereign independence, reaffirming the determination of the Irish people to achieve it, and guaranteeing within the independent Nation equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens.

Believing that the time has arrived when Ireland's voice for the principle of untrammelled National self-determination should be heard above every interest of party or class, Sinn Féin will oppose at the Polls every individual candidate who does not accept this principle.

The policy of our opponents stands condemned on any test, whether of principle or expediency. The right of a nation to sovereign independence rests upon immutable natural law and cannot be made the subject of a compromise. Any attempt to barter away the sacred and inviolate rights of nationhood begins in dishonour and is bound to end in disaster. The enforced exodus of millions of our people, the decay of our industrial life, the ever-increasing financial plunder of our country, the whittling down of the demand for the "Repeal of the Union," voiced by the first Irish Leader to plead in the Hall of the Conqueror to that of Home Rule on the Statute Book, and finally the contemplated mutilation of our country by partition, are some of the ghastly results of a policy that leads to national ruin.

Those who have endeavoured to harness the people of Ireland to England's war-chariot, ignoring the fact that only a freely-elected Government in a free Ireland has power to decide for Ireland the question of peace and war, have forfeited the right to speak for the Irish people. The Green Flag turned red in the hands of the Leaders, but that shame is not to be laid at the doors of the Irish people unless they continue a policy of sending their representatives to an alien and hostile assembly, whose powerful influence has been sufficient to destroy the integrity and sap the independence of their representatives. Ireland must repudiate the men who, in a supreme crisis for the nation, attempted to sell her birthright for the vague promises of English Ministers, and who showed their incompetence by failing to have even these promises fulfilled.

The present Irish members of the English Parliament constitute an obstacle to be removed from the path that leads to the Peace Conference. By declaring their will to accept the status of a province instead of boldly taking their stand upon the right of the nation they supply England with the only subterfuge at her disposal for obscuring the issue in the eyes of the world. By their persistent endeavours to induce the young manhood of Ireland to don the uniform of our seven-century old oppressor, and place their lives at the disposal of the military machine that holds our Nation in bondage, they endeavour to barter away and even to use against itself the one great asset still left to our Nation after the havoc of centuries.

Sinn Féin goes to the polls handicapped by all the arts and contrivances that a powerful and unscrupulous enemy can use against us. Conscious of the power of Sinn Féin to secure the freedom of Ireland the British Government would destroy it. Sinn Féin, however, goes to the polls confident that the people of this ancient nation will be true to the old cause and will vote for the men who stand by the principles of Tone, Emmet, Mitchel, Pearse and Connolly, the men who disdain to whine to the enemy for favours, the men who hold that Ireland must be as free as England or Holland, or Switzerland or France, and whose demand is that the only status befitting this ancient realm is the status of a free nation.

Issued by the Standing Committee of Sinn Féin.

## APPENDIX F

### TEXT OF THE SAME MANIFESTO AS PASSED BY THE DUBLIN CASTLE CENSOR<sup>1</sup>

The coming General Election is fraught with vital possibilities for the future of our nation. Ireland is faced with the question whether this generation wills it that she is to march out into the full sunlight of freedom, or is to remain in the shadow of XXXXXX imperialism XXXX  
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Sinn Féin aims at securing the establishment of that Republic.

1. By withdrawing the Irish Representation from the British Parliament and by denying the right XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXX of the British Government XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXX to legislate for Ireland.
2. XXX  
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3. By the establishment of a constituent assembly comprising persons chosen by Irish constituencies as the supreme national authority to speak and act in the name of the Irish people, and to develop Ireland's social, political and industrial life, for the welfare of the whole people of Ireland.
4. By appealing to the Peace Conference for the establishment of Ireland as an Independent Nation. At that conference the future of the Nations of the world will be settled on the principle of government by consent of the governed. Ireland's claim to the application of that principle in her favour is not based on any accidental situation arising from the war. It is older than many if not all of the present belligerents. XX

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 845-46.

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Sinn Féin stands XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX for the Nation; it represents the old tradition of nationhood XX XX reasserting the inalienable right of the Irish Nation to sovereign independence, reaffirming the determination of the Irish people to achieve it, and guaranteeing within the Independent Nation equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens.

Believing that the time has arrived when Ireland's voice for the principle of untrammelled XXXXXXXX self-determination should be heard above every interest of party or class, Sinn Féin will oppose at the Polls every individual candidate who does not accept this principle.

The policy of our opponents stands condemned on any test, whether of principle or expediency. XX XX Any attempt to barter away the sacred and inviolate rights of nationhood begins in dishonour and is bound to end in disaster. The enforced exodus of millions of our people, the decay of our industrial life, the ever-increasing financial plunder of our country, the whittling down of the demand for the "Repeal of the Union," voiced by the first Irish Leader to plead in the Hall of the Conqueror to that of Home Rule on the Statute Book, and finally the contemplated mutilation of our country by partition, are some of the ghastly results of a policy that leads to national ruin.

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XX By declaring their will to accept the status of a province instead of boldly taking their stand upon the right of the nation, they supply England with the only subterfuge at her disposal for obscuring the issue in the eyes of the world. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
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Sinn Féin goes to the polls handicapped by all the  
arts and contrivances that a powerful and unscrupulous enemy  
can use against us. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX of Sinn Féin  
to secure the freedom of Ireland the British Government  
would destroy it. Sinn Féin, however, goes to the polls  
confident that the people of this ancient nation will be  
true to the old cause XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
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XX and whose demand is that the only  
status befitting this ancient realm is the status of a free  
nation.

Issued by the Standing Committee of Sinn Féin.

## APPENDIX G

### IRISH DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE<sup>1</sup>

Adopted at the first session of Dáil Éirann, 21 January 1919.

Whereas the Irish people is by right a free people:

And whereas for seven hundred years the Irish people has never ceased to repudiate and has repeatedly protested in arms against foreign usurpation:

And whereas English rule in this country is, and always has been, based upon force and fraud and maintained by military occupation against the declared will of the people:

And whereas the Irish Republic was proclaimed in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916, by the Irish Republican Army, acting on behalf of the Irish people:

And whereas the Irish people is resolved to secure and maintain its complete independence in order to promote the common weal, to re-establish justice, to provide for future defence, to insure peace at home and good will with all nations and to constitute a national polity based upon the people's will with equal right and equal opportunity for every citizen:

And whereas at the threshold of a new era in history the Irish electorate has in the general election of December of 1918, seized the first occasion to declare by an overwhelming majority its firm allegiance to the Irish Republic:

Now therefore, we, the elected representatives of the ancient Irish people in national parliament assembled, do in the name of the Irish nation, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make this declaration effective by every means at our command:

We ordain that the elected representatives of the Irish people alone have power to make laws binding on the

<sup>1</sup>Edmund Curtis and R. B. McDowell, eds., Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922 (London: Methuen & Co., 1943), pp. 318-19.

people of Ireland, and that the Irish parliament is the only parliament to which that people will give its allegiance:

We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English garrison:

We claim for our national independence the recognition and support of every free nation in the world, and we proclaim that independence to be a condition precedent to international peace hereafter:

In the name of the Irish people we humbly commit our destiny to Almighty God Who gave our fathers the courage and determination to persevere through long centuries of a ruthless tyranny, and strong in the justice of the cause which they have handed down to us, we ask His Divine blessing on this the last stage of the struggle we have pledged ourselves to carry through to freedom.

Minutes of the proceedings of the first parliament of the republic of Ireland, pp. 15-16.



## APPENDIX H

### CONSTITUTION OF DÁIL ÉIREANN<sup>1</sup>

As approved provisionally 21 January 1919.

#### First Section:

Dáil Éireann shall possess full powers to legislate and shall be composed of Delegates (Teachtaí) chosen by the people of Ireland from the present constituencies of the country.

#### Second Section:

(1) Full executive powers shall be held at any time by the Ministry (Aireacht) in office at the time.

(2) The Ministry shall be composed of the following: A Prime Minister (Príomh-Aireach) chosen by Dáil Éireann, and four other Ministers, viz.:

Minister of Finance (Aireach Airgid),

Minister of Home Affairs (A. Gnóthaí Duthchais),

Minister of Foreign Affairs (A. Gnóthaí Coigcríoch),

and

Minister of Defence (A. Cosanta).

The Prime Minister shall nominate the four others, and shall have power to dismiss them from office.

(3) Every Minister must be a member of the Dáil, and shall at all times be answerable to the Dáil.

(4) The names of Ministers must be put before the Dáil for ratification at the first assembly after their nomination by the Prime Minister.

#### Prime Minister.

(5) The Prime Minister shall hold office as soon as elected and the other Ministers as soon as their appointment is ratified by the Dáil.

(6) The Dáil shall have power by vote to dismiss the Ministry or any of the Ministers from office if a written order in the form of a unanimous resolution be presented for that object seven days previously.

<sup>1</sup>Macardle, Irish Republic, pp. 848-49.

Section Three:

Every meeting of the Dáil shall be presided over by a Chairman (Ceann Cómhairle) or Vice-Chairman (Ceann Ionaid) chosen by the Dáil for the year. Should the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be absent, the Dáil shall select substitutes or elect a Provisional Chairman (Ceann Cómhairle Sealadach).

Section Four:

The Ministry shall receive whatever money it needs, by vote of the Dáil. The Ministry shall be answerable to the Dáil for such moneys, and the accounts shall be audited with regard to the spending of money for the Dáil twice yearly, viz. at Samhain and Bealtaine (November and May). The auditing shall be carried out by an auditor or auditors chosen by the Dáil. No member of the Dáil shall be chosen as auditor.

Section Five:

The present is a provisional constitution, and may be altered on a written unanimous order being given to that effect seven days previously.

## APPENDIX I

### MESSAGE TO THE FREE NATIONS OF THE WORLD<sup>1</sup>

Issued in Irish, English, and French by Dáil Éireann at its first meeting, 21 January 1919.

#### To the Nations of the World--Greeting.

The Nation of Ireland having proclaimed her national independence, calls, through her elected representatives in Parliament assembled in the Irish Capital on January 21st, 1919, upon every free nation to support the Irish Republic by recognising Ireland's national status and her rights to its vindication at the Peace Congress.

Naturally, the race, the language, the customs and traditions of Ireland are radically distinct from the English. Ireland is one of the most ancient nations in Europe, and she has preserved her national integrity, vigorous and intact, through seven centuries of foreign oppression; she has never relinquished her national rights, and throughout the long era of English usurpation she has in every generation defiantly proclaimed her inalienable right of nationhood down to her last glorious resort to arms in 1916.

Internationally, Ireland is the gateway to the Atlantic; Ireland is the last outpost of Europe towards the West; Ireland is the point upon which great trade routes between East and West converge; her independence is demanded by the Freedom of the Seas; her great harbours must be open to all nations, instead of being the monopoly of England. To-day these harbours are empty and idle solely because English policy is determined to retain Ireland as a barren bulwark for English aggrandisement, and the unique geographical position of this island, far from being a benefit and safeguard to Europe and America, is subjected to the purposes of England's policy of world domination.

Ireland to-day reasserts her historic nationhood the more confidently before the new world emerging from the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 850-51.

war, because she believes in freedom and justice as the fundamental principles of international law; because she believes in a frank co-operation between the peoples for equal rights against the vested privileges of ancient tyrannies; because the permanent peace of Europe can never be secured by perpetuating military dominion for the profit of empire but only by establishing the control of government in every land upon the basis of the free will of a free people, and the existing state of war, between Ireland and England, can never be ended until Ireland is definitely evacuated by the armed forces of England.

For these among other reasons, Ireland--resolutely and irrevocably determined at the dawn of the promised era of self-determination and liberty that she will suffer foreign dominion no longer--calls upon every free nation to uphold her national claim to complete independence as an Irish Republic against the arrogant pretensions of England founded in fraud and sustained only by an overwhelming military occupation, and demands to be confronted publicly with England at the Congress of the Nations, that the civilised world having judged between English wrong and Irish right may guarantee to Ireland its permanent support for the maintenance of her national independence.

## APPENDIX J

### DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME OF DÁIL ÉIRANN<sup>1</sup>

Read during the first session of Dáil Éirann, 21 January 1919.

We declare in the words of the Irish republican proclamation the right of the people of Ireland, to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be indefeasible, and in the language of our first president, Pádraig MacPhiarais, we declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the nation, but to all its material possessions, the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the nation, and with him we reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.

We declare that we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of liberty, equality, and justice for all, which alone can secure permanence of government in the willing adhesion of the people.

We affirm the duty of every man and woman to give allegiance and service to the commonwealth, and declare it is the duty of the nation to assure that every citizen shall have opportunity to spend his or her strength and faculties in the service of the people. In return for willing service, we, in the name of the republic, declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the nation's labour.

It shall be the first duty of the government of the republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, or clothing, or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as citizens of a free and Gaelic Ireland.

The Irish republic fully realizes the necessity of abolishing the present odious, degrading, and foreign poor

<sup>1</sup>Curtis and McDowell, Irish Documents, pp. 319-20.

law system, substituting therefor a sympathetic native scheme for the care of the nation's aged and infirm, who shall not be regarded as a burden, but rather entitled to the nation's gratitude and consideration. Likewise it shall be the duty of the republic to take such measures that will safeguard the health of the people and ensure the physical as well as the moral well-being of the nation.

It shall be our duty to promote the development of the nation's resources, to increase the productivity of its soil, to exploit its mineral deposits, peat bogs and fisheries, its waterways and harbours, in the interests and for the benefit of the Irish people.

It shall be the duty of the republic to adopt all measures necessary for the recreation and invigoration of our industries, and to ensure their being developed on the most beneficial and progressive co-operative industrial lines. With the adoption of an extensive Irish consular service, trade with foreign nations shall be revived on terms of mutual advantage and goodwill, and while undertaking the organization of the nation's trade, import and export, it shall be the duty of the republic to prevent the shipment from Ireland of food and other necessities until the wants of the Irish people are fully satisfied and the future provided for.

It shall also devolve upon the national governments to seek [the] co-operation of the governments of other countries in determining a standard of social and industrial legislation with a view to a general and lasting improvement in the conditions under which the working classes live and labour.

Minutes of the proceedings of the first parliament of the republic of Ireland, pp. 22-3.

## APPENDIX K

### PRESIDENT DE VALÉRA'S SPEECH<sup>1</sup>

Delivered before the Dáil, 10 April 1919.

. There is in Ireland at this moment only one lawful authority, and that authority is the elected government of the Irish republic. .

Our attitude towards the powers that maintain themselves here against the expressed will of the people shall then, in a word, be this: We shall conduct ourselves towards them in such a way as will make it clear to the world that we acknowledge no right of theirs. Such use of their laws as we shall make will be dictated solely by necessity, and only in so far as we deem them for the public good.

In order to secure for our own de jure government, and for the Irish republic which the Irish people have willed to set up, the necessary international recognition, we shall send at once our accredited representatives to Paris to the peace conference and to the League of Nations.

We shall send also to other countries a number of duly accredited ambassadors and consuls to see that the position of Ireland is understood as it truly is, and not as English propaganda would represent it, and in general to see that the interests of Ireland in these countries are in no way neglected. We shall thus resume that intercourse with other peoples which befits us as a separate nation, that intercourse which it has been the chief aim of English statescraft to cut off and which indeed English power has succeeded in cutting off for over a century.

At the present time of general world-reconstruction it is most important that the internal interests of this country at home be also looked after, and by Irishmen. It will be the duty of our ministry to secure co-operation and to co-ordinate the activities of the various bodies which have taken voluntarily to themselves the safeguarding and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 320-21.

advancement of these interests. Towards English legislation interfering with these interests we shall act in accordance with the general principles I have already indicated, that is, we shall act as we think best for the general good.

To measures such as the English Ways and Communications bill, designed, as regards Ireland, to prevent Irishmen from using the natural resources of their own country to benefit their own nation, handing over on set purpose to an English bureau complete control of the communications of this country, so that they may be used solely in the interests of England--to such measures we shall offer all the resistance we can command as being both injurious and unjust. It shall be the especial duty of our director of trade to examine, in co-operation with public bodies, how best to make our resistance effective.

The ministers and directors at the heads of the other departments--labour, industries, agriculture, local government--will similarly be charged with seeking co-operation with all interested in their departments. The minister of national defence is, of course, in close association with the voluntary military forces which are the foundation of the national army.

It is obvious that the work of our government cannot be carried on without funds.

The minister of finance is accordingly preparing a prospectus, which will shortly be published, for the issue of a loan of one million sterling--£500,000 to be offered to the public for immediate subscription, £250,000 at home and £250,000 abroad, in bonds of such amounts as to meet the needs of the small subscriber.

Minutes of the proceedings of the first parliament of the republic of Ireland, pp.45-7.



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