

Kilmainham Gaol Document Pack THE 1916 RISING

KILMAINHAM GAOL DOCUMENT PACK

THE 1916 RISING

CONTENTS

Unit 1 – The Rising

- 1A** Ireland and the First World War: Extract from a 1915 speech by James Connolly
- 1B** The Aims of the Irish Volunteers: Extract from Memorandum I written by Eoin Mac Néill in February 1916
- 1C** A Citizen's Account of the 1916 Rising: Extract from the diary of Mrs. Augustine Henry
- 1D** Roger Casement and the 1916 Rising: Extract from the diary of Roger Casement written in Berlin, St. Patrick's Day 1916
- 1E** A British Soldier's Account of the 1916 Rising
- 1F** Resistance at the GPO: War Bulletin issued by Patrick Pearse on the 28 April 1916 from the GPO, including Surrender Order to De Valera and Instruction by General Lowe to De Valera of 29 April 1916

Unit 2 – The Aftermath

- 2A** The Trial of Countess Markievicz: Extracts from court proceedings and trial papers
- 2B** Eamonn Ceannt's Last Letter
- 2C** Maxwell and the Rebel Flag: The British view of the Rising
- 2D** Maxwell and the Irish Church: Correspondence between General Sir John Maxwell and the Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick
- 2E** John Dillon and the Aftermath of the Rebellion: Extracts from John Dillon's speech in the House of Commons

INTRODUCTION TO KILMAINHAM DOCUMENT PACK THE 1916 RISING

Kilmainham Gaol was opened in 1796 as the gaol for the County of Dublin. It underwent frequent structural changes and, in 1862 a spectacular improvement was achieved with the addition of the East Wing. Apart from common convicts, state (or political) prisoners were held there from time to time. During the era of transportation, it acted as a depot for transportees bound for the convict colonies of Australia. Many of the most prominent personalities in Irish history were imprisoned, and in some cases executed, there.

This Document Pack contains a selection of documents relating to the events surrounding the 1916 Rising. They highlight the social conditions in Dublin at the time; the important backdrop of 'The Great War'; the differing approaches of the key participants; the executions in the stone-breaking yard of Kilmainham Gaol; and, of course, the change in public opinion by the end of 1916. The selection is intended to give a feel for the period as experienced by the people of the time. The sources include contemporary pamphlets, newspaper reports, personal diaries, correspondence, court reports and parliamentary reports.

The Junior Certificate History syllabus recommends the 'proper use of appropriate documentary sources' by teachers in the classroom. The documents in this Pack can be used in the study of this period for the Junior Certificate and also possibly as a special topic for the Leaving Certificate. They might equally form the basis for a Transition Year project. The teacher will be the best judge of the use of the documents, but a visit to Kilmainham Gaol is recommended to add to the learning experience.

Pat Cooke
Curator
Kilmainham Gaol

Dóirín Creamer
Chairperson
Blackrock Teachers' Centre

Additional Packs in this series include:

Kilmainham Gaol Document Pack: Primary

Kilmainham Gaol Document Pack: 1796-1849

Kilmainham Gaol Document Pack: Charles Stewart Parnell

IRELAND AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The following extract is from a speech attributed to James Connolly in 1915 in which the background of the 'Great War' and the poverty of Dublin come across as forceful considerations in the writer's mind. The reference to the role of Germany in the war also throws light on the thinking of many Irish revolutionaries at this time.

The Slums and the Trenches

A speaker at a recent recruiting meeting in Dublin declared that the Dublin slums were more unhealthy than the trenches in Flanders and the same 'bright saying' has been reprinted in a circular issued by the recruiting authorities.

It is the English idea of wit. Consider it, my friends, consider it well. The trenches in Flanders have been the graves of scores of thousands of young Irishmen, scores of thousands of the physically strongest of the Irish who have met their deaths there in desperate battle with a brave enemy who bore them no malice and only intended well for their country.

A very large proportion of these young Irishmen were born and reared in the slums and tenement houses of Dublin. These same slums are notorious the world over for their disease – breeding, unhealthy character. All the world over it is known that the poor of Dublin are housed under conditions worse than those of any civilised people on God's earth.

From out of these slums, your misguided brothers of arms have been tricked and deluded into giving battle for England – into waging war upon the German nation which does not permit anywhere within its boundaries such slums and fever dens as the majority of Dublin's poor must live in.

When at last the common sense of the people of Dublin reasserts itself and men and women begin to protest against this suicidal destruction of the Irish race in a war that is not of their making, and for an empire they abhor, the cheap wits of the recruiters sneeringly tell them that there is more danger of death in a Dublin slum than in the trenches in the line of battle.

But you can die honourably in a Dublin slum. If you die of fever, or even of want, because you preferred to face fever and want rather than sell your soul to the enemies of your class and of your country, such death is an honourable death, a thousand times more honourable than if you win a V.C. committing murder at the bidding of your country's enemies. These are war times.

UNIT 1

THE RISING



DOCUMENT

—1A—

*'The Slums and
the Trenches',
a speech by
James Connolly.*

Questions

- (1) What tactic was reportedly used by recruiting officers in Dublin?
- (2) What was Connolly's opinion of Germany, as seen in this extract?
- (3) Who did Connolly blame for the notorious slums of Dublin?
- (4) The Irish Citizen Army, which Connolly led to the GPO in 1916, had as its motto 'We serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland'. Does this thought emerge in the extract quoted above?



The majority of Dublin's working class in the early 1900s lived in tenements such as these in 'Monto' on the North Strand.

DOCUMENT
— 1 B —

*Extract from
Memorandum I
written by
Eoin MacNeill in
Feb 1916.*

THE AIMS OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS

In February 1916, a meeting of the Executive Council of the Irish Volunteers was held at Eoin MacNeill's house in Woodtown Park, Rathfarnham. He was Chief-of-Staff of the Irish Volunteers and had drafted a document at the instigation of Bulmer Hobson who had become alarmed that plans were being made by Patrick Pearse and others to organise a rebellion. The following extract is taken from that document.

MacNeill began by stating that the only reason that could justify a revolt 'would be a reasonably calculated or estimated prospect of success in the military sense'. He argued that this 'estimate must depend on the actualities known to us' and not on instinctive feelings or maxims such as 'Ireland has always struck too late' or 'in military matters the advantage lies with the side that takes the initiative'. He went on to argue that England had the power to crush the Volunteers and were only waiting for an opportunity to do so. A rising would give them that opportunity.

**Extract from Memorandum I
written by Eoin MacNeill in February 1916**

What is the alternative policy?

In the first place, we must avow to ourselves clearly and courageously, without heeding either sneers or jeers or even the most honest reproaches, that if we can win our rights by being ready to fight for them but without fighting, then it is our duty to do so and we shall not be ashamed of it. I am aware that this is a difficult position to assert to the general body of men organised as a military force, carrying military arms, and trained in military exercises. It might be misunderstood by them, and might lead them to think that in the minds of their leaders their military character was a sham. Even in regular armies, under states which have no *casus belli*, the courageous military man does not like the notion of going through his military career without ever fighting a battle or an engagement. But it must be remembered that the Irish Volunteers, if they are a military force, are not a militarist force, and that their object is to secure Ireland's rights and liberties and nothing else but that. The reproach of the former Irish Volunteers is not that they did not fight but that they did not maintain their organisation till their objects had been secured.

Secondly, we must clearly recognise the position in which we stand and which we have already gained. Until a short time ago, England ruled Ireland normally by what are called peaceful means. The country was controlled, even politically, by the police. Except rarely in the case of a formidable street riot, the military were not called into action; in fact, Ireland was – to outward appearance at least, and in substance – governed as England itself is governed.

We have now reached this position, that the ordinary citizen in Ireland is no longer dominated by the English government's peace establishment. The Irish Volunteers no longer stand in danger of the police. The only question with them for a long time past has been on what occasions they ought to resist wrongful police action by force of arms. Moreover there is good ground for believing that among the police there is, to say the least, a considerable leaven of men who feel strongly that they should not be used in hostility to the Irish Volunteers.

It is not perhaps generally realised what a great change this means in the whole Irish situation, and what a substantial gain it is for the Irish Volunteers and by them. It is in fact a substantial military gain for them, being due to their own sturdiness, discipline, and courage – as much a gain as if they had marched against and occupied a military position of the first importance. Its importance is this – not that it makes the Irish Volunteers a match in any sense for the military force at the disposal of the government but that it makes it impossible for the government to suppress the Volunteers without adopting military measures. Now the government wants and has always wanted to suppress the Irish Volunteers. It could at any time have used sufficient military force to suppress them if opposed by them in military fashion. Why then has the government not employed military force against us? Because the government is convinced that it would lose more than it could gain by moving its military forces against us, unless we create a special opportunity for it.

Moreover, the position we have gained is such that it enables us to strengthen our general position still further and indefinitely, by increasing our numbers of armed men and developing their training and organisation, and by getting the country more and more on our side. Our policy in these circumstances is to use these advantages, not to throw them away or bring them to a standstill. At present we are far from being at a standstill. We are gaining steadily in numbers, in armament, and in training – also in organisation. But it is incomprehensible to me that any of us should be as childish as to think that the comparative state of efficiency that has been reached in Dublin is at all representative of the condition of the Volunteers elsewhere. Some of us are plainly obsessed by the efficiency of Dublin. No doubt it could not be helped that our H.Q. staff should have worked so much in Dublin and so little out of it. In general, outside of Dublin, our training of officers is only as yet begun.

There is plenty of scope for courage and enterprise and intelligence in the work of arming the Volunteers. On that point, this is to be said, that whereas, in my conscientious judgment, an armed revolt at present would be wrong and unpatriotic and criminal, it is quite a different case with regard to the provision and retention of our arms. I have not the slightest doubt on the point that we are morally and in every way justified in keeping by all necessary force such arms as we have got or can get. I hold myself entitled to resist to death any attempt to deprive me of any arms or ammunition or other military articles that I have or can protect for myself or for the Irish Volunteers. If in such resistance any man meets his death through my act or counsel or command, I shall have no guilt on my conscience.

We have to remember that what we call our country is not a poetical abstraction, as some of us, perhaps all of us, in the exercise of our highly developed capacity for figurative thought, are sometimes apt to imagine – with the help of our patriotic literature. There is no such person as

Caitlín Ní Uallacháin or Roisín Dubh or the Sean-bhean Bhocht, who is calling upon us to serve her. What we call our country is the Irish nation, which is a concrete and visible reality. Now we believe that we think rightly on national matters, and if possibly we do not all agree on every point we believe that the consensus we hold among us is right as far as it goes. We are all agreed that, in worldly matters, our country's good has first claim on us, and can claim the greatest sacrifices from us. We feel it to be our duty to realise this and to act on this principle. Very well, if so, it is also our duty to so act that our country itself, i.e. the Irish nation, shall learn, so far as may be secured, to think in the same way and be ready to act on the same principle. In other words, if we are right nationally, it is our duty to get our country on our side, and not to be content with the vanity of thinking ourselves to be right and other Irish people to be wrong. As a matter of patriotic principle, we should never tire of endeavouring to get our country on our side.

In a much more narrow sense, as a matter of ordinary military policy, it is imperative that we, who are engaged in national military organisation, should most earnestly endeavour to get our country on our side. In the event of actual fighting, it is a military factor of the highest importance to be able to fight in a friendly country.

Now it is universal testimony – I can quote unionists and Redmondites as well as our own least sanguine and most sanguine friends for it – that the country is steadily coming over to our side. Are we entitled to stop that process, is it wise or excusable for us to stop it? It is really only beginning. The government itself is daily helping to create a deep and solid conviction that we are right. The unionists, even in Ulster, are damping off. The new taxation may be confidently expected to make them discontented.

That applies also to all the rest. I do not know at this moment whether the time and circumstances will yet justify distinct revolutionary action, but on this I am certain, that the only



Eoin MacNeill, founder of the Irish Volunteers, was against the idea of a Rising in the belief that it would be a failure.

possible basis for successful revolutionary action is deep and widespread popular discontent. We have only to look around us in the streets to realise that no such condition exists in Ireland. A few of us, a small proportion, who think about the evils of English government in Ireland, are always discontented. We should be downright fools if we were to measure many others by the standard of our own thoughts.

I wish it then to be clearly understood that under present conditions I am definitely opposed to any proposal that may come forward involving insurrection. I have no doubt at all that my consent to any such proposal at this time and under these circumstances would make me false to my country, besides involving me in the guilt of murder. No reproach from any quarter will have the least effect on me as regards this decision. I will oppose any such proposal with all the force I can, actively and not passively. I will not give way or resign or shirk any trouble in opposing it.

If any feasible proposal is brought forward to increase the arming of the Volunteers, I will support it – and those who are impatient of inaction should find scope enough for their activity in that direction.

Questions

- (1) What was the aim of the Irish Volunteers?
- (2) 'But it must be remembered that the Irish Volunteers, if they are a military force, are not a militarist force'. What did MacNeill mean by this statement?
- (3) What 'substantial gain' had been made by the Irish Volunteers and what was its importance?
- (4) Why, according to MacNeill, had the government not suppressed the Irish Volunteers?
- (5) What, in MacNeill's opinion, was the state of readiness of the Volunteers at that time?
- (6) In what situation, according to MacNeill, would the Volunteers be justified in using physical force?
- (7) Why did MacNeill think it was necessary to get the country on the side of the Volunteers?
- (8) Why did MacNeill think Ireland was not ready for revolutionary action?
- (9) 'I am definitely opposed to any proposal that may come forward involving insurrection . . . I will oppose any such proposal with all the force I can, actively and not passively. I will not give way or resign or shirk any trouble in opposing it'.
 - (a) Why was MacNeill opposed to any proposal involving insurrection?
 - (b) At whom, do you think, were these remarks directed?

A CITIZEN'S ACCOUNT OF THE 1916 RISING

Mrs. Augustine Henry was a wealthy lady who lived at 5 Sandford Terrace, Ranelagh. Her diary spans the period from October 1915 to June 1916. As well as her own personal account, it also contains many photographs and cuttings from newspapers of the day. The following extract vividly described conditions in Dublin at the time of the Rising.

Extract from Mrs. Augustine Henry's Diary

Tuesday, April 25th 1916

No post by the mail and vague and alarming rumours of a Sinn Féin rising in Dublin. We got the mail train at 5.20pm and met Mr. Forbes in it. He knew very little but said the Post Office and Stephen's Green is in the hands of the Sinn Féiners and that they have shot the station master at Westland Row . . . It is quite true and everyone was unprepared . . . there is only enough military to keep it localized. The Sinn Féiners have the GPO and are barricaded inside. All wires have been cut and we are without communications to England and the rest of the country. They have the line from Kingstown to Westland Row and they have Kingsbridge Station, Jacob's Factory, Guinness' Brewery and the quays and the Four Courts. Annie went all over the town yesterday and saw a flag flying from the top of the GPO, the republican colours red, white, and green and on it the words 'German and American Allies Help' . . .

O'Connell Bridge after the Rising.



UNIT 1 ~ THE RISING



DOCUMENT —1C—

*Extract from Mrs
Augustine Henry's
Diary Oct 1915 –
June 1916*

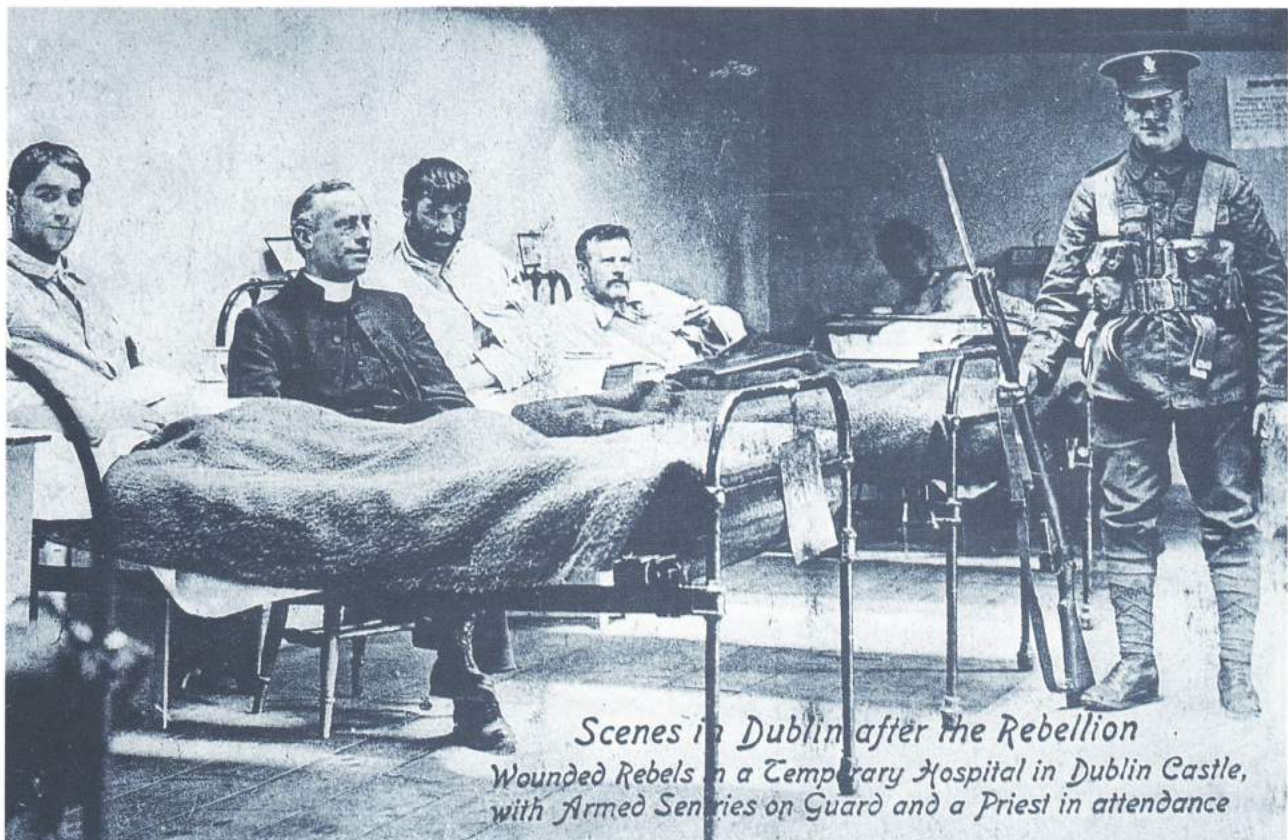
Wednesday, April 26th

The firing continues; they have the gas plant and the power station of the Tramway company so no trams are running . . . It is perfectly quiet here but cyclists bring along all sorts of rumours . . . The military are occupying the Shelbourne . . . they have cleared Stephen's Green; the Sinn Féiners have retreated into the College of Surgeons . . . Dr. Winter was coming home by tram through Stephen's Green when he saw them digging busily in the Green . . . The next tram was stopped and seized for a barricade; we saw it lying derelict and two overturned carts and a dead horse. The carter wouldn't stop and was shot dead. They took motor cars and anything that tried to cross the Green and gave a receipt for everything, including 19 gallons of milk from a milkman: the receipt was dated '2nd day of the Republic of Ireland' . . . All shops are barricaded and closed. Some windows were broken in Nassau Street but they say the looting in Sackville Street and the city is terrible and Noblett's sweet-shop has been ransacked.

A young man came in belonging to the motor garage at the top of Dawson Street . . . He was in Stephen's Green itself today; there were 3 dead men just inside the gates, he said the 'trenches' were pathetic, just little scooped hollows and bits of bushes stuck in front, no cover at all. Countess Marckievicz, in men's uniform, with a cigarette in her mouth and a pistol in either hand was holding up traffic. She shot a policeman dead.

Thursday, April 27th

This morning there was a great rush for provisions. By 12 o'clock many shops in Ranelagh had been cleared out and were closed. Neither loaves nor butter to be had . . . Columns of smoke rose last night from the city . . . There is a repeated report that a German boat has been caught off the



*Scenes in Dublin after the Rebellion
Wounded Rebels in a Temporary Hospital in Dublin Castle,
with Armed Sentries on Guard and a Priest in attendance*

Kerry coast with Sir Roger Casement and German officers on board. But we are utterly cut off from *all* communication, and all sorts of wild rumours and stories are in circulation . . . The machine guns have never ceased since 7. The fire is awful and the rattling guns . . .

Friday, April 28th

The firing continued all day . . . Military have been pouring in from Kingstown in one unbroken line. Every day feels like a week.

Saturday, April 29th

Firing went on all night with occasional big booms . . . [Mrs. Henry goes on to give a detailed account of how she spent her day locating and bringing dressings to a temporary Red Cross Hospital in Merrion Square. She had great difficulty getting home.]

Sunday, April 30th

The firing went on till 2am, probably all night . . . and big guns sounded from the direction of Ringsend.

Monday, 1st May

Firing is only spasmodic; the present rumour is that the Sinn Féiners have given in, all except Connolly's 'Citizen Army'. The military cordon is exceedingly strict . . . It is very hard to get food in the city but far worse on the north side.

Tuesday, May 2nd

The firing has stopped.

Wednesday, May 3rd

Sniping went on from 8pm till midnight somewhere in the vicinity . . . The Sinn Féiners have been most courageous, especially the unfortunate young boys who were led in all unknowing and went on through with it fighting desperately . . .

Thursday, May 4th

A tram is seen, great excitement . . .

Friday, May 5th

Trams are now running on all lines.

Questions

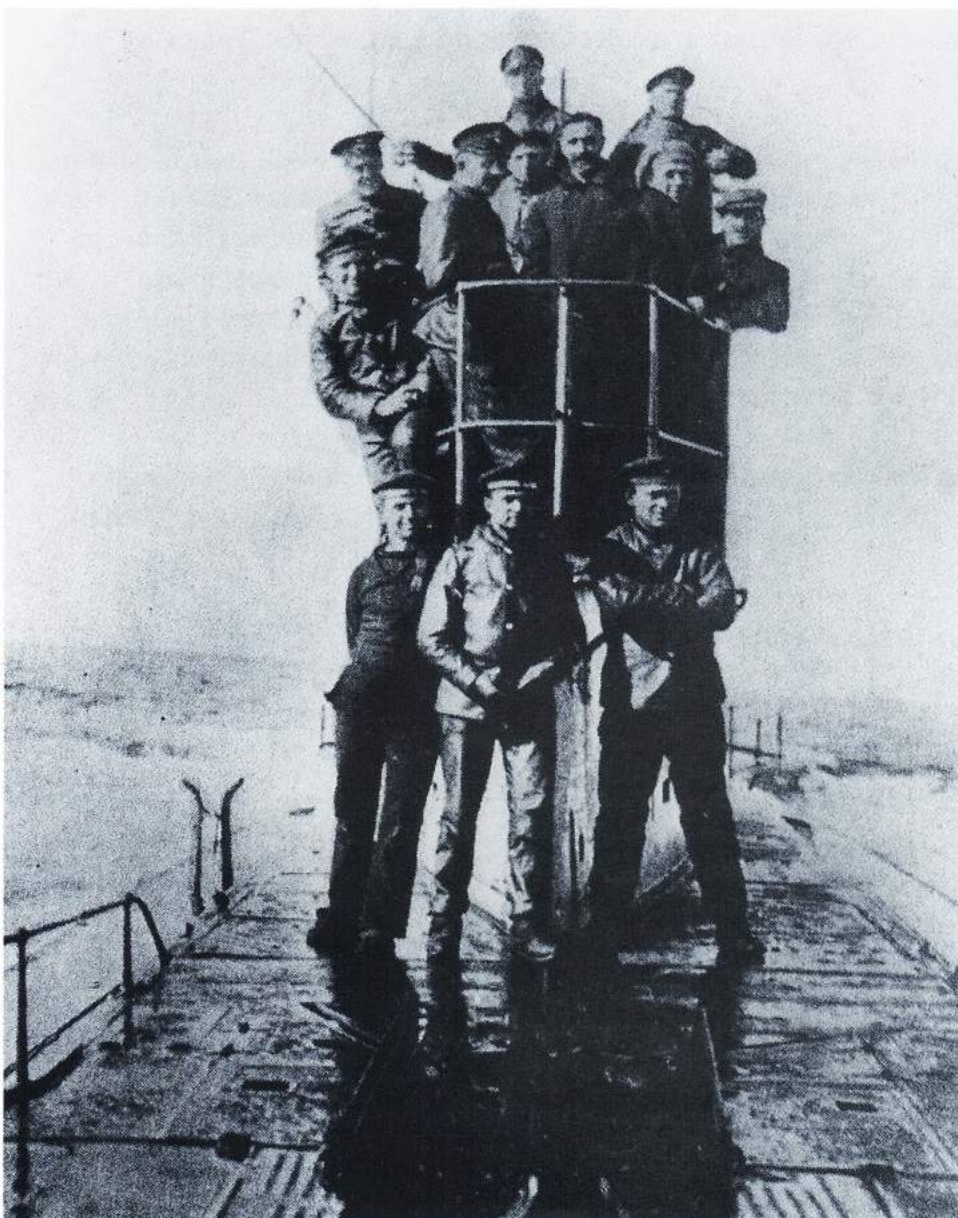
- (1) Although the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) organised the Easter Rising, who did Mrs. Henry blame for it?
- (2) What side, do you think, did Mrs. Henry support in the Rising? Give reasons for your answer.

- (3) Mrs. Henry mentions a number of places captured by the 'Sinn Féiners'. Was her information correct?
- (4) What did Dr. Winter see happening at Stephen's Green?
- (5) Why, do you think, did the 'Sinn Féiners' give receipts for everything they commandeered?
- (6) What happened to the shops in the centre of the city?
- (7) How did the Rising affect the ordinary people of Dublin?
- (8) Was the rumour that Mrs. Henry heard about Sir Roger Casement and the German boat correct?
- (9) What was Mrs. Henry's opinion of the Sinn Féiners?



ROGER CASEMENT AND THE 1916 RISING

Roger Casement (1864-1916) went to Berlin in 1914 as a member of the Irish Volunteers to negotiate for arms for the planned Irish rebellion. He wrote a detailed account in his diary of his mission in Germany. This extract gives us a unique perspective on the German approach to the planned rising. It also presents another, perhaps more objective, estimate on the chances of success for such a rising. Lastly, but by no means least, we get an insight into the 'human' side of this controversial patriot.



Roger Casement (top centre, surrounded by German sailors of the *U-19* submarine), returned to Ireland on Good Friday 1916, determined to cancel the Rising, if possible. He almost drowned coming ashore and was arrested on the beach by the RIC.

UNIT 1 ~ THE RISING



DOCUMENT -1D-

*'A Last Page',
Extract from
the diary of
Roger Casement,
17 March 1917.*

A Last Page
Irish Brigade (1915)
Irische Brigade

St. Patrick's Day, 17th March 1916:

I write this beginning of what I feel is a last chapter on St. Patrick's Day in Berlin this year of war 1916. Last year on Patrick's Day, I was also in Berlin, ill in bed, in the house of the Baroness Von Nordceufflycht.

Since then, hope has gone from me, for I realized then already that those I trusted here are little to be trusted and that their only interest in me lay in exploiting me and the Irish cause in their own supposed interests.

In three weeks from today, I shall probably be at sea on the maddest and most ill-planned enterprise that the history of Irish revolutionary efforts offers. But it is not of my choosing or my planning, or undertaken with my approval. I go because honour calls me to go, and because to stop it now (even if I could stop it) would involve others and perhaps bring greater grief. Moreover by going with the tiny band, 12 men probably, that is to sail on 8th April I *may* save them – and perhaps Ireland too from a dreadful fate. To stay here in safety while others go, would do no good to Ireland and would leave me a prey to eternal regret.

Thus while I strongly disapprove what is being attempted and so mistakenly attempted, with a foregone assurance of failure, I *must* lend it my countenance and accompany the forlorn hope.

And now to make a little daylight for the hereafter . . .

Questions

- (1) What opinion did Casement have of the German authorities?
- (2) What was Casement's attitude to the impending Rising?
- (3) Why did Casement decide to return to Ireland?
- (4) Casement was arrested at dawn on Good Friday 1916, having landed at Banna Strand in Co. Kerry from a German U-boat. The authorities believed him to be a prominent leader of the Rising and so he was tried and convicted of high treason and subsequently hanged in Pentonville Prison on 3 August that year. Were the authorities correct in the importance they placed on Casement's role in the Rising? Base your answer on the extract quoted above from Casement's diary.

A BRITISH SOLDIER'S ACCOUNT OF THE 1916 RISING

On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, there were only 2,500 British troops based in Dublin. Many of these were on leave for the bank holiday and there were only 100 men at the ready in each of the four main military barracks (Marlborough, Richmond, Royal and Portobello) when the Rising began. The first reinforcements to arrive were from the Curragh. Further troops were sent from Templemore and Belfast, and artillery from Athlone. Reinforcements were also sent from England, including the Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment) who arrived on Tuesday night.

Many of them were raw recruits who had received little more than six weeks' training. On Wednesday morning, they set out in two columns: the first headed for the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham, via Donnybrook, and got through without difficulty; the second column was ordered to Trinity College, via Ballsbridge and Merrion Square, and were ambushed by 17 men from De Valera's outposts at the bottom of Haddington Road and Mount Street Bridge. These soldiers suffered by far the highest casualties on the British side during the Rising, with 230 men being either killed or wounded.

Private J. Jameson was one of the Sherwood Foresters in this second column and the following extract is from his account of 'Fighting the Sinn Fieners or Rebels' (the spellings and punctuation are as he wrote it):

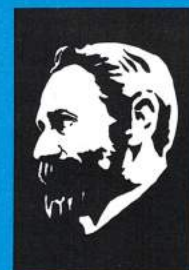
My Experience Whilst in Ireland by PTE. J. Jameson, 2635

April 25th 1916

Left Watford at (11.30 morn) for a place which we did not know, but had an idea it was Liverpool and it came true arrived in Liverpool Dock station at 7.30, went straight on the boat (S.S. Patriotic) set sail at 9.30 for Kingston harbour (arrived April 26th there at 3.45) stayed and made a meal on the harbour side, at 10.30 we got the order to charge magazines, from there marched to Dublin which is about 6 miles away, and a very hot day, carrying F.P.B.A [Full Pack Battle Attire] where we halted outside a agricultural show, made another meal, the people were very good to us, gave us cigs, something to eat and drink. the order fall in was passed down the line and we advanced towards Northumberland Rd and Mount St. bridge in extended order, snipers having a shot or two, when in Northumberland Rd we fell in a death trap a charge was made and it was there that we had the most casualties . . . (163) first night, heavy Street fighting took place shots coming in 4 directions went in a school for an hour, were we called to Barricade with Pete Moss, at about Midnight . . .

UNIT 1

THE RISING



DOCUMENT
—1 E—

*Extract from
'My Experience
whilst in Ireland'
by Private
J. Jameson of
The Sherwood
Foresters*



April 27th

Left the school at about 7 and Marched back to the Agricultural Show, had a bit of snack and a quite nap while at 1 pm then the fall in sounded and we marched through the Streets to a place (unknown). but whilst marching down Rialto St. some one opened fire on us, and we stayed there for 3 hrs or more heavy firing taking place, and a stampede, the horses got frighten and racing down the Road, 2 horses had to be shot in the legs for safty, the Timber waggons were not much the worst for a bump or two. The most cowardly trick, that I saw done was a doz men, with a little girl, about 7 or 8 years old, the girl was in between them, but that was only a bluff for us not to fire well we got an order to fire and they deliberatley put the little girl in the front of them it was a painfull sight, she got one in the leg, one of the men got killed and the other died of wunds and they recognised them as the same two men that refuzed to go back of Balls Bridge, the little girl as far as I know recovered from there we went to Dublin Barracks for the night tired and weary we unloaded in the Barracks Square . . .

April 28th

Left Barracks at 7.30 for station where we entrained for a place unknown, we found ourselves in West of Ireland a place named Lough Rea billeted in a picture house were they had straw on the floor for us and the RIC cheered us . . .

[The Dublin Barracks referred to in Jameson's account was probably the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham. The station he refers to was Kingsbridge (now Heuston) Station.]



British soldiers approach the city cautiously. At Mount Street, they came under heavy sniper fire from De Valera's garrison at Boland's Mills and they suffered heavy casualties, with over 100 dead.

Questions

- (1) Where were the Sherwood Foresters when the Easter Rising started?
- (2) What is Kingstown called today?
- (3) Where was the Agricultural Show taking place?
- (4) What type of reception did the soldiers receive from the people of Dublin?
- (5) Where did the Sherwood Foresters have most casualties?

- (6) Where did Jameson and his comrades go the next morning?
- (7) Where were they ambushed for the second time?
- (8) What was 'the most cowardly trick' Jameson saw done?

FURTHER READING

An excellent account of the 1916 Rising is given by G. A. Hayes-McCoy in 'A Military History of the Rising', contained in the book *The Making of 1916*, edited by Kevin B. Nowlan. The fighting at Mount Street Bridge is described on pages 286-90.



*Sinn Fein Rebellion, Dublin
A Rebel Prisoner being
marched over O'Connell Bridge*

Those who took part in the Rising were interned, most of them in Frongoch POW in Wales.

RESISTANCE AT THE GPO

Patrick Pearse (1879-1916) was Commandant General of the Army of the Irish Republic and President of the Provisional Government declared in 1916. He issued the following War Bulletin at 9.30am on 28 April 1916 from the GPO, the heart of the Rising. In it we feel the growing sense of failure experienced by the insurgents as the bombardment went on.

War Bulletin

The forces of the IRISH REPUBLIC, which was proclaimed in DUBLIN on Easter Monday, 24th April, have been in possession of the central part of the capital since 12 noon on that day. Up to yesterday afternoon HEADQUARTERS was in touch with all the main outlying positions, and despite furious and almost continuous assaults by the British forces, all those positions were then still being held and the Commandants in charge were confident of their ability to hold them for a long time. During the course of yesterday afternoon and evening, the enemy succeeded in cutting our communications with our other positions in the city, and HEADQUARTERS is today isolated. The enemy has burned down whole blocks of houses, apparently with the object of giving themselves a clear field for the play of artillery and field guns against us. We have been bombarded during the evening and night by shrapnel and machine gun fire, but without material damage to our position, which is of great strength. We are busy completing arrangements for the final defence of HEADQUARTERS and are determined to hold it while the building lasts.

I desire now, lest I may not have an opportunity later, to pay homage to the gallantry of the soldiers of Irish Freedom, who have during the past four days been writing with fire and steel the most glorious chapter in the history of Ireland. Justice can never be done to their heroism, to their discipline, to their gay and unconquerable spirit in the midst of peril and death. Let me who have led them into this speak, in my own and in my fellow commanders' names and in the name of Ireland present and to come, their praise, and ask those who come after them to remember them. Four days they have fought and toiled almost without cessation, almost without sleep, and in the intervals of fighting they have sung songs of the freedom of Ireland. No man has complained, no man has asked 'Why'? Each individual has spent himself, happy to pour out his strength for Ireland and for Freedom. If they do not win this fight, they will at least have deserved to win it. But win it they will, although they may win it in death. Already they have won a great thing. They have released DUBLIN from many shames, and made her name splendid among the names of cities.

UNIT 1

THE RISING



DOCUMENT

—1 F—

*War Bulletin from
GPO, 28 April,
1916 and
Surrender Orders
from Pearse to
De Valera.*

The elegant interior of the GPO before the Rising contrasts strongly with the devastation wrought by the bombardment by HMS *Helga*, moored at the Custom House dock. The GPO was rebuilt in the 1920s, but a further major restoration job was necessary in 1991.



The GPO clock which was stopped during the Rising at 2.25.

If I were to mention names of individuals my list would be a long one. I will name only that of Commandant General James Connolly, Commanding the Dublin Division. He lies wounded, but is still the guiding brain of our resistance.

If we accomplish no more I am satisfied. I am satisfied we have saved Ireland's honour. I am satisfied that we should have accomplished more, that we should have accomplished the task of enthroning, as well as proclaiming, the Irish Republic as a sovereign State, had our arrangements for a simultaneous rising of the whole country, with a combined plan as sound as the Dublin plan has proved to be, been allowed to go through on Easter Sunday. Of the fatal countermanding order which prevented those plans from being carried out I shall not speak further. Both Eoin MacNeill and we have acted in the best interests of Ireland, as they appear to us. For my part, as to anything I have done in this, I am not afraid to face either the judgement of God or the judgement of posterity.

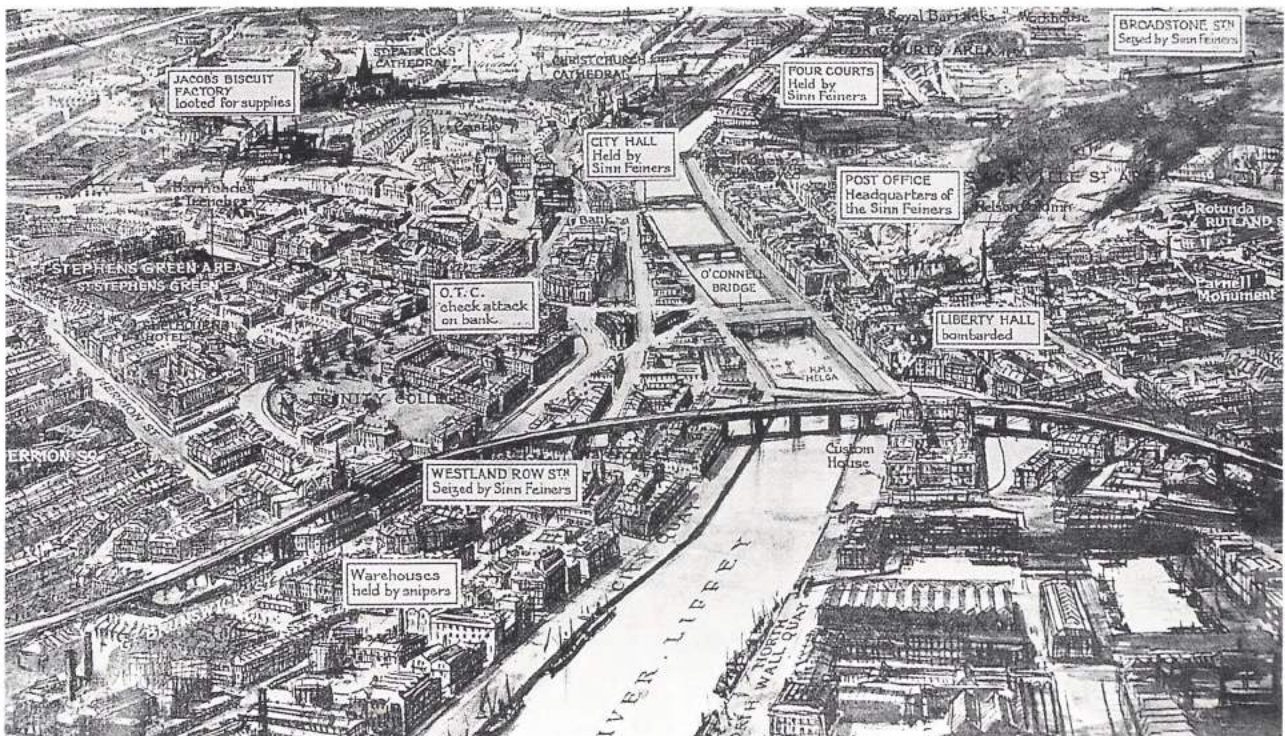
P. H. Pearse
Commandant General.
Commanding in Chief the Army of the Irish Republic
and President of the Provisional Government

**Surrender Order from Pearse to De Valera
and Instruction by General Lowe to De Valera**
(typed by the British on official paper)

Eamon De Valera,

In order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin citizens, and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers now surrounded and completely 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 country will order their commands to lay down arms.

P. H. Pearse.
29th April 1916,
3.45pm, Dublin



Dublin's city centre, showing the defensive positions taken by the insurgents during the Easter Rising.



Patrick Pearse (*right*) surrendered formally to General Lowe on 29 April 1916. Faced with the GPO HQ in flames, and in an effort to stop civilian casualties, he sought terms but was offered only an unconditional surrender.

Questions

WAR BULLETIN

- (1) What evidence was there that Britain was intent on quashing the Rising quickly?
- (2) Who did Pearse consider the 'guiding brain of our resistance'?
- (3) Did Pearse hint at any reason for the lack of success of the Rising throughout the country?
- (4) What did Pearse mean by 'the judgement of posterity'?
- (5) Both Pearse and Connolly believed in the idea of the 'blood sacrifice' (i.e. by dying for the Cause, they would become martyrs and so inspire others). Where in the War Bulletin is there a reference to this idea?

SURRENDER ORDER TO DE VALERA

- (1) What reasons did Pearse give for agreeing to an unconditional surrender?
- (2) Compare this Surrender Order with Pearse's earlier War Bulletin. What had happened between 28 and 29 April to change circumstances? Support your answer by referring to one or both documents.

THE TRIAL OF COUNTESS MARKIEVICZ

Constance Georgina Markievicz (1868-1927) was a member of the Gore-Booth family of Lissadell House in Co. Sligo. She was married to the Polish artist, Count Casimir Markievicz. Flamboyant and eccentric, she became involved in radical politics and was a well-known figure in the Dublin of her day. She had a keen interest in women's rights and played a prominent part in helping to relieve distress among the poor of Dublin during the workers' Great Lock-Out of 1913. It was during the Lock-Out that the Irish Citizen Army was established, with the Countess Markievicz as a founding member and officer. She fought in the College of Surgeons during the 1916 Rising, second-in-command to Michael Mallin. Following the surrender, she was imprisoned in Kilmainham and, like Pearse and the other leaders, she was later brought to Richmond Barracks, Inchicore, to face trial.

The leaders of the Rising were executed in Kilmainham Gaol in early May 1916. The other prisoners who had taken part in the Rising, including Constance Markievicz, were transferred to various gaols in England.

The first document is an extract from the court proceedings in the trial of the Countess Markievicz. She was found guilty and sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment because she was a woman. The second document was included in the papers of her trial; it appears to be a petition appealing to the government to grant her the same privileges as other Irish prisoners.



Countess Markievicz was second-in-command at the College of Surgeons during the Rising, having previously taken over St. Stephen's Green and dug trenches before realising this tactical blunder.

UNIT 2

~

THE
AFTERMATH



DOCUMENT
—2A—

*The Court Martial
of Countess
Markievicz from
Col. Maurice
Moore's papers.*

Court Martial of Countess Markievicz

PROSECUTION

1st Witness – Walter McKay duly sworn states:

My name is Walter McKay and I live in University Club, Stephen's Green, and am employed as a page boy. I was 17 years old last September. I remember last Easter Monday, April 24th, and between 1 and 2 o'clock that day I was standing at the club door. From there I could see Stephen's Green and I saw a few rebels dressed in green uniform. They were pulling the civilians out of the Green and as they were doing this the accused drove up in a motor car, blew her whistle and leaned out of the car. She gave orders to a Sinn Féin [sic] after he had shut the gate of Stephen's Park. She then drove up towards the Shelbourne Hotel - I saw her again about 1.15pm. She was behind one of the monuments in the Green; she had a pistol in her hand which she pointed towards the Club and fired.

I ran upstairs and saw where the bullet struck. After firing she walked up towards the Shelbourne Hotel, dressed in knickers and puttees. I was in the Club the remainder of the week and on Tuesday night there was firing from the Green.

Cross-examined by the accused

I was at the Meath Industrial School, Blackrock. I never saw the accused on the Green before the occasion referred to. I saw the accused blow a whistle, just one blast. I did not hear the order but I saw her say something to the man who then went away.

The witness withdraws.



One of the barricades erected by insurgents under the command of Countess Markievicz at the Harcourt Street entrance to Stephen's Green.

2nd Witness – Captain Henry de Courcy Wheeler, Reserve Officer attached to General Lowe's staff, duly sworn states:

I remember Sunday last, April 30. I was in the Castle yard that day. From there I proceeded to the College of Surgeons. I met the accused at the side door of the College of Surgeons in York Street. Commandant Michael Mallin of the rebels was with her. The meeting took place under a flag of truce. Subsequently the rebels who were in the College of Surgeons marched out and surrendered. The accused was one of the number. She was armed with a pistol and ammunition in a Sam Browne belt. She handed her arms to me. I offered to drive her in a motor car to the Castle; she refused and said she preferred to march with the men as she was second-in-command. About 120 rebels surrendered at the same time as the accused.

The accused declines to cross-examine the witness. The witness withdraws. Prosecution closed. The accused declines to call witnesses.

The accused in her defence states:

I went out to fight for Ireland's freedom and it doesn't matter what happens to me. I did what I thought was right and I stand by it.

Statement ends.



**C.T. Blackader
Brig. General
Signed this 4th day of May 1916
C.T. Blackader
President of the Court Martial**

Countess Markievicz in Gaol

Constance de Markievicz is the only one of the Irish Rebel convict prisoners who is not to receive the benefit of the most important of the late Home Secretary's concessions . . . She is not to have the chief and most valuable privilege of association and conversation at stated intervals with other Irish prisoners, not because of any faulty conduct on her part, but because she is a woman . . .

Isolation is the worst part of the punishment of prison life and since last May this prisoner has had more of it than any of the others as she has been debarred from even a chance word with her fellows, there being no other Irish prisoners in the same building as herself. The company she has been restricted to ever since her arrest has been that of the dregs of the population. She has had no one to speak to except prostitutes who have been convicted for murder or violence, and the atmosphere and conversation in which she has lived all this time has been 'the atmosphere and conversation of a brothel'. Add to this the fact of the terrible experience she went through in May when she was shut up in Kilmainham waiting for her sentences. She lay awake all night, night after night, till dawn when each morning some of her friends were shot under her window. It is perhaps hard for those who have not been through these things to understand, but the fact that two volleys were often necessary to kill them seems to have added a crowning touch of agony to the situation. However strong a person's spirit may be, it is surely impossible that such experiences should not tell terribly on the nerves especially when followed by seven months loneliness and separation, not only from friends and sympathizers but from ordinary human companionship.

Questions

COURT MARTIAL OF COUNTESS MARKIEVICZ

- (1) Who was commanding the insurgents in the College of Surgeons during the 1916 Rising?
- (2) What rank did the Countess Markievicz hold?
- (3) How many insurgents surrendered in the College of Surgeons?
- (4) What are (a) puttees and (b) Sam Browne belt?
- (5) What was the significance of Walter McKay's evidence?
- (6) Draw a map showing the buildings held by the insurgents during the 1916 Rising.
(See *An Atlas of Irish History* by Ruth Dudley-Edwards and *The Making of 1916*, edited by Kevin B. Nowlan.)

COUNTESS MARKIEVICZ IN GAOL

- (1) Why did Countess Markievicz not have the same privileges as the other Irish prisoners?
- (2) What privileges did the other Irish prisoners enjoy?
- (3) What company was she restricted to in prison?
- (4) What terrible experience did she go through in Kilmainham Gaol?

EAMONN CEANNT'S LAST LETTER

Éamonn Ceannt (1881-1916) was a founding member of the Irish Volunteers and on the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). He commanded the South Dublin Union during the Easter Rising of 1916. Shot in the yard of Kilmainham Gaol on 7 May, he wrote the following letter in the few hours remaining to him before his execution. The words bring us face to face with the anger, regret, hope and confusion that occupied him before his death at sunrise.

Cell 88, Kilmainham Gaol
7 May 1916

I leave for the guidance of other Irish Revolutionaries who may tread the path which I have trod, this advice, never to treat with the enemy, never to surrender at his mercy, but to fight to a finish. I see nothing gained but grave disaster caused by the surrender which has marked the end of the Irish Insurrection of 1916 - so far at least as Dublin is concerned. The enemy has not cherished one generous thought for those who, with little hope, with poor equipment and weak in numbers, withstood his forces for one glorious week. Ireland has shown she is a nation.

This generation can claim to have raised sons as brave as any that went before. And in the years to come, Ireland will honour those who risked all for her honour at Easter in 1916. I bear no ill-will against those whom I have fought. I have found the common soldiers and the higher officers human and companionable, even the English who were actually in the fight against us. Thank God, soldiering for Ireland has opened my heart and made me see poor humanity where I expected to see only scorn and reproach. I have met the man who escaped from me by a ruse under the Red Cross. But I do not regret having withheld my fire. He gave me cakes!

I wish to record the magnificent gallantry and fearless calm determination of the men who fought with me. All, all, were simply splendid. Even I knew no fear nor panic nor shrank from no risk, even as I shrink now from the death which faces me at daybreak. I hope to see God's face even for a moment in the morning. His will be done.

All here are very kind. My poor wife saw me yesterday and bore up - so my warder told me - even after she left my presence. Poor Áine, poor Rónán. God is their only shield now that I am removed. And God is a better shield than I. I have just seen Áine, Nell, Richard and Nick, and bade them a conditional good-bye. Even now they have hope!

Éamonn Ceannt

UNIT 2 ~ THE AFTERMATH



DOCUMENT -2B-

*Eamonn Ceannt's
last letter,
7 May 1916.*



Eamonn Ceannt, commander of the South Dublin Union (Work House), was executed on 8 May 1916 in Kilmainham Gaol. The flag captured from this outpost was to give rise to Maxwell's sardonic comment in Document 2C.

Questions

- (1) Compare the attitudes of Ceannt and Pearse to 'unconditional surrender'.
- (2) What was Ceannt's attitude towards the English soldiers?
- (3) What human face can we detect from this letter?
- (4) What did Ceannt say of his fellow-insurgents during the fighting?

MAXWELL AND THE REBEL FLAG

It is ironic that Kilmainham is the site of both the Royal Hospital, established as the centre for aged and infirm British soldiers, and of Kilmainham Gaol, the place where many Irish nationalists were imprisoned over the years and the leaders of the 1916 Rising spent their last hours before execution.

The following document illustrates the British authorities' view of the Easter Rising – as a 'stab-in-the-back' by the Irish for the British forces fighting the Great War, a fact which accounted for the hasty crushing of the Rising itself. The letter, dated 24 May 1916, is from the Commandant Secretary at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, to the Colonel-in-Charge at the Victoria Barracks, Belfast.

Dear Colonel,

I have been going to write to you for some time in connection with the detachment of three officers and 68 men you so kindly sent to help us to watch over the Royal Hospital during the recent trouble in Dublin.

I cannot speak too highly of the three young officers who from the minute they arrived here till the time they left (about 10 days) were continually at their post all hours night and day.

The Company Sergeant, Major and Compy. Qr. [Quartermaster] Mr. Sergt. Knowles were a great help to me, the latter especially as it was almost impossible for my Qr. Mr. Sergeant to do all the work that was thrown upon him.

No. 2517 Sergt. W. Austin brought a flag in from the South Dublin Union and Sir John Maxwell said it was to be hung up in the Great Hall next to the Instrument of Torture for Rebels. This will be done in due course.

The flag was an ordinary window blind with a harp painted in green. The pike to which the flag was attached was quite new and looks as if the rebels meant business with it.

The N.C.O.s and men were simply splendid and although without a coat or blanket for some days, never a grumble came from one of them.

The Detachment could not have been more perfect had it been made to order.

*Yours sincerely,
(Sgt.) John Steele*

UNIT 2

~
THE
AFTERMATH



DOCUMENT
—2C—

*Letter from
Commandant
Secretary, Royal
Hospital,
Kilmainham to the
Colonel-in-Charge,
National Archives.*



General Maxwell, surrounded by his officers, posed in front of the captured rebel flag, which is significantly hung upside down.

Questions

- (1) General Sir John Maxwell was Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Ireland at the time of the Rising. Why, do you think, did Maxwell want the rebel flag to be displayed next to the Instrument of Torture?
- (2) Describe the rebel flag and comment on Sgt. Steele's observation that the pike to which it was attached looked 'as if the rebels meant business with it'.
- (3) The Rising was stamped out in one week and, although martial law was continued, fewer British soldiers were now required in Ireland. Can you suggest a reason for the promptness with which the British suppressed the Rising?

MAXWELL AND THE IRISH CHURCH

On the 6 May 1916, General Sir John Maxwell, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Ireland, wrote to the Most Reverend Dr. O'Dwyer, Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick. Maxwell requested the Bishop to remove two priests from their parishes because he considered their presence 'to be a dangerous menace to the peace and safety of the realm'. The Bishop's secretary replied to Maxwell, pointing out that the action 'would be a very severe punishment which the bishop has no right to inflict on these priests except on a definite charge supported by evidence'. He went on to ask Maxwell to specify grounds for his request.

The first document below is General Maxwell's second letter to Bishop O'Dwyer, detailing evidence against the priests. This is followed by the Bishop's reply, which is indicative of the change of opinion that had occurred in the country following the executions of the leaders of the 1916 Rising. (This correspondence between the two men was published in *The Irish Times* on 31 May 1916.)

Maxwell's evidence against the priests

Headquarters, Irish Command
Park Gate, Dublin
12th May 1916

My Dear Lord Bishop,

I beg to acknowledge the letter of May 9th from your lordship's Secretary. Father ___ has been reported as, on 14th November 1915, speaking in his church at ___ against conscription. He is said to have attended a lecture by P. H. Pearse on the 'Irish Volunteers of '82' and as blessing the colours of the Irish Volunteers at ___ on 2nd January 1916, also speaking at a meeting that took place at ___ on 17th March 1916. Father ___ is said to have been active, with a certain E. Blythe, organising Irish Volunteers. In November 1915, he got printed a large number of leaflets appealing to young men of the Gaelic Athletic Association to join the Irish Volunteers. He is said to be President of the Irish Volunteers at ___ and ___. He is said to have been present at the Irish Volunteer meeting at ___ when a certain John MacDermott delivered inflammatory and seditious speeches on the 17th March 1916.

When I wrote to your lordship on the 6th, I hoped that you would have been able to take steps to prevent priests from mixing up in organisations that are a danger to the Realm. If these reports be true, it should not be necessary for me to make definite charges, supported by evidence, against these priests who, I imagine, will not deny their participation in the Irish Volunteer movement which has led to such deplorable events all over Ireland. Therefore, it should not be difficult for your lordship, under such disciplinary power as you possess, to prevent, at any rate, priests from mixing up with and inciting their flock to join an organisation such as the Irish Volunteers have proven themselves to be.

*I beg to remain, my dear Lord Bishop,
Yours very truly,
J. G. Maxwell*

UNIT 2

~
THE
AFTERMATH



DOCUMENT

2D

*Correspondence
between General
Maxwell and the
Bishop of Limerick.*

The Bishop's reply

Ashford, Charleville
17th May 1916

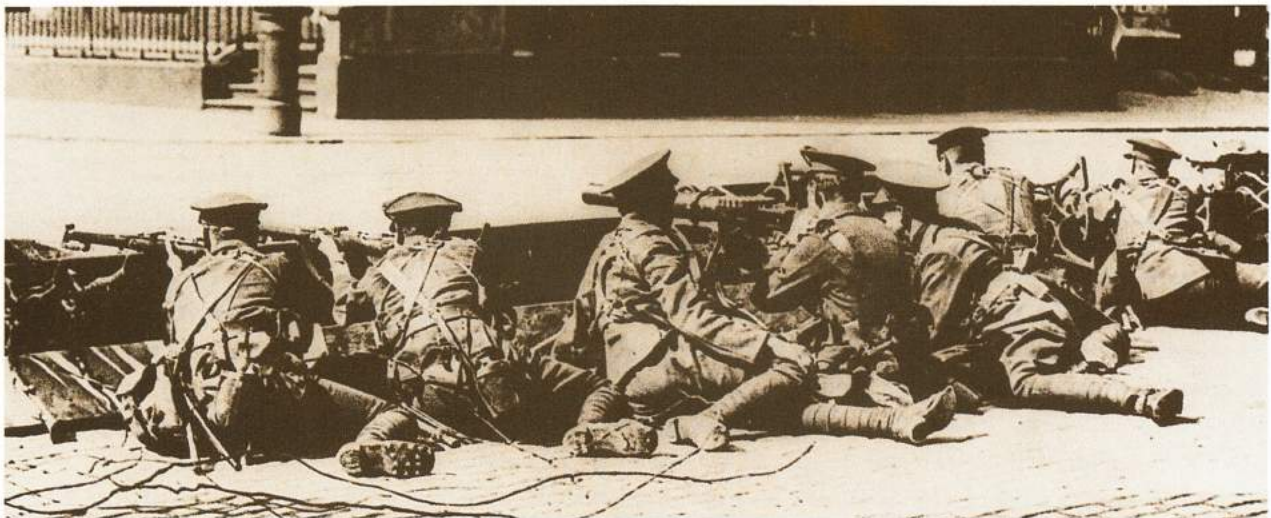
Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 12th inst., which has been forwarded to me here. I have read carefully your allegations against Rev. ___ and Rev. ___, but do not see in them any justification for disciplinary action on my part. They are both excellent priests who hold strong national views, but I do not know that they have violated any law, civil or ecclesiastical. In your letter of 6th inst., you appeal to me to help you in the furtherance of your work as military dictator of Ireland. Even if action of that kind was not outside my province, the events of the past few weeks would make it impossible for me to have any part in proceedings which I regard as wantonly cruel and oppressive.

You remember the Jameson Raid, when a number of buccaneers invaded a friendly State and fought the forces of the lawful government. If ever men deserved the supreme punishment it was they. But officially and unofficially, the influence of the British Government was used to save them, and it succeeded. You took care that no plea for mercy should interpose on behalf of the poor young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin. The first information which we got of their fate was the announcement that they had been shot in cold blood. Personally I regard your action with horror, and I believe that it has outraged the conscience of the country. Then the deporting by hundreds, and even thousands, of poor fellows without a trial of any kind seems to be an abuse of power, as fatuous as it is arbitrary, and altogether your régime has been one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of the misgovernment of this country.

*I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Edward Thomas, Bishop of Limerick*

[The Jameson Raid that the Bishop referred to was a raid in 1895, led by Sir Leander Starr Jameson from Rhodesia into the Transvaal to support a rising in Johannesburg. The raiders were captured and handed over to the British Government for punishment. Jameson was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment, but only served a year due to ill-health.]



A British army barricade after the Rising.



General Maxwell in his finery. He was the British Commander-in-Chief during Easter Week and its aftermath, and responsible for the executions of the leaders of the Rising – a policy which was to bring about a change in the people's perception of the insurgents. Yeats' famous poem, *Easter 1916*, documents this change in public opinion.

Questions

MAXWELL'S EVIDENCE AGAINST THE PRIESTS

- (1) List the charges made by General Maxwell against the priests.
- (2) Find out more about E. Blythe and John MacDermott (Seán MacDiarmada).

THE BISHOP'S REPLY

- (1) What reason did Bishop O'Dwyer give General Maxwell for not taking disciplinary action against the priests?
- (2) What was the Bishop's opinion of General Maxwell's work 'as military dictator of Ireland'?
- (3) What was the Bishop's opinion of:
 - (a) the execution of the leaders of the Rising?
 - (b) the deportation of others who took part in the Rising?



Prisoners being brought to Kilmainham Gaol.

JOHN DILLON ON THE AFTERMATH OF THE RISING

The Easter Rising was immediately condemned by the Irish Parliamentary Party, led by John Redmond. He regarded the revolt as a stab in the back for England and he denounced the leaders of the Rising as traitors.

John Dillon, a leading member of the Party, had been trapped with his family in their house in North Great George's Street, not far from the General Post Office, during the Rising. On 30 April 1916, in a letter to Redmond he stated: '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.'

After the news of the first executions, Redmond warned against undue severity in the suppression of the Rising. However, it was left to John Dillon in a speech to the House of Commons on the 11 May 1916 to unequivocally denounce the executions and the continuance of martial law and to warn the government of the consequences. The following extracts are from *The Irish Times* of 12 May 1916 which reported on Dillon's speech to the House of Commons:

Executions in Ireland Mr. Dillon's Violent Speech

... Mr. Dillon moved:

'That in the interests of peace and good government in Ireland, it is vitally important that the Government should make immediately a full statement of their intentions as to the continuance of executions in that country carried out as a result of secret military trials, and as to the continuance of martial law, military rule, and the searches and wholesale arrests now going on in various districts of the country.'



Although John Dillon in his speeches to the House of Commons condemned the act of the Rising, he praised the heroism of its participants and warned that a policy of executions would doom the Home Rule movement.

UNIT 2

THE
AFTERMATH



DOCUMENT
—2E—

*John Dillon's
speech to the House
of Commons,
reported in the
Irish Times,
12 May 1916.*

[*The report continued:* Dillon asked whether it was intended to stop the executions and tried to ascertain how many executions had actually taken place. He also asked whether any prisoners had been shot without trial. He then referred to the shooting of Mr. Skeffington and others in Portobello Barracks and stated that 'All Dublin was ringing with the news of the shooting of the people, but the Government knew nothing about it. Surely this act threw a lurid light on military methods in Dublin . . .']

The methods which were being pursued by Sir John Maxwell were maddening the Irish people, and were arousing a spirit of disaffection throughout the country. A river of blood was being made to flow between the two races. Lord Midleton, one of the most vigorous Unionists in



Return of the heroes. At Christmas 1916, the internees of the Rising were given an amnesty and returned to rapturous receptions at Kingstown Pier, Westland Row Railway Station and the North Wall. As Yeats had predicted, 'All is changed, changed utterly. A terrible beauty is born'.

the House of Lords, said this was the first time in the history of Ireland where a rebellion had taken place where the majority of the people were on the side of the English Government.

Martial Law

Those who were responsible for the government of Ireland at the present moment were washing out the life work of the Nationalist Party in a sea of blood. *The Irish Times*, the leading organ of the Unionist Party in Ireland, welcomed the proclamation of martial law, and said for the first time Dublin was enjoying security of life and property, and hailed with satisfaction the substitution of military government for the government of Dublin Castle and the House of Commons. If that was the sort of thing they were up against in Ireland, the Government had better get 100,000 men to garrison the country. What kind of appearance would they make in the Peace Conference as the champions of small nationalities with Ireland under a military despotism? [*Nationalist cheers.*]

The British Government treated Ireland as if it were a sort of back-yard of the country in which the people could be trampled in the dust. He [Dillon] was informed that hundreds of people who were arrested were given half an hour in which to decide whether they would give information about their leaders. If they refused, they were put up against a wall and shot without any form of trial. If you were not so dense, you could have had them fighting for you. [*Nationalist cheers, and Unionist cries of 'Who stopped them?' and 'You did'.*] That is an infamous falsehood. I and my friends around me have been doing our best to get them into your ranks. They require no Compulsory Service Bill, and if you had passed it for them it would have taken 150,000 men and three months' hard fighting to have dealt with the rebellion. It is not a Military Service Bill you want in Ireland, but it is to find the way to the hearts of the Irish people, and when you do that you will find you have got a supply of the best troops in the world. [*Cheers.*] No rebellion, continued Mr. Dillon, in modern history had been put down with so much blood and savagery, and why could they not treat Ireland as General Botha treated South Africa? [*Cheers.*]

Numbers of these insurgents had brothers in the trenches. They were victims of misguided enthusiasm and bad leadership. For two days he was in their power, and according to his information, there were very few acts of savagery and murder on either side. In regard to the main body of the insurgents, admitting they were wrong, their conduct as fighting men was beyond reproach. They fought a good clean fight, and he believed there were at no time under arms in Dublin more than 3,000 insurgents. The population was on the side of the soldiers, and the insurgents were disappointed, having confidently calculated on a rising of the people in their support. Thousands of people in Dublin who ten days ago were bitterly opposed to the Sinn Féin movement were now becoming infuriated against the Government on account of these bloody executions.

Mr. Dillon, in reply to some Unionist interruptions, said it would be a damned good thing for you if some of your soldiers put up as good a fight as these men put up in Dublin. It was 3,000 against 20,000, with machine guns and artillery.

A Unionist: You are evidently sorry they did not succeed. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. Dillon: That is an abominable lie.

Questions

- (1) Did *The Irish Times* agree with Dillon's views? Give reasons for your answer.
- (2) 'The methods which were being pursued by Sir John Maxwell were maddening the Irish people'. What methods were being used by Maxwell?
- (3) What is martial law?
- (4) 'A river of blood was being made to flow between the two races'. What did Dillon mean by this statement?
- (5) What did Dillon mean when he said that the government was 'washing out the life work of the Nationalist Party in a sea of blood'?
- (6) What was the Compulsory Service Bill?
- (7) What, according to Dillon, would have happened if the Compulsory Service Bill had been passed?
- (8) How, according to Dillon, had the British government treated Ireland?
- (9) What was Dillon's opinion of the insurgents?
- (10) What, according to Dillon, was the population's opinion of the Rising?
- (11) Complete the following sentences:

1. John Dillon was complaining about

(a) _____

(b) _____

2. John Dillon thought the insurgents were

(a) _____

(b) _____

3. John Dillon was a member of _____

4. *The Irish Times* supported the _____



Eamon De Valera, commander of the garrison at Boland's Mills, surrendered at Broadstone Railway Station on 30 April 1916. He was sentenced to be executed, but because of the question of his American nationality, this was commuted to life imprisonment.