

An t-Ógláċ

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THE NATIONAL ARMY.

THE Volunteer Soldier of Ireland is not a soldier by profession. Soldiering is not his trade. He is a national soldier. He took up arms against England, who for generations had withheld our independence from us, and denied to Irishmen all the rights of citizenship. It is in a great measure due to the efforts of the Volunteers that English tyranny has now fallen, and soon will have disappeared from the land, perhaps for ever.

The first stage in the work is now over, and the Volunteer soldier of Ireland has to prove that he understands the meaning of liberty, that he will be its protector, and that nothing will ever induce him to act towards the people other than as a soldier of liberty. Our Army is the people's Army and will remain the people's Army. If there is ever to be created in Ireland a new Gaelic civilization, soldier and citizen must join together in that work. Our Army must never stifle one true national instinct or repress one real national tendency, as the machine-made armies of other countries do. The spirit of the Army must be the spirit of the people. We must never forget these things.

Let us look back to that day in November, 1913, when the Volunteer Army of Ireland was founded, and let us see what was the purpose and the outlook of those who assisted in its foundation. Its founders established the Irish Volunteers as a national Army organised from the people, and united in sacred alliance with the people. The comparatively small force of Volunteers of 1914 has since grown into one of the famous armies of liberty of history. It has just emerged from a

liberation war, and its name is respected by all good Irishmen and Irishwomen.

The Irish Republican Army is not like other armies. It is not as the French, or American, or English army. It is not a machine where the outlook of the individual soldier is altogether crushed. Our Army is knit together by common purpose, and it is less military in spirit than other armies are because it works nearer to the people. The Irish Army is nearer in character to the American Army of the War of Independence, the French Army of 1793. The fundamental difference between our Army and other European armies is brought out even in the system of warfare which we waged against England. As the spirit of our Army was distinctive, so also was the nature of our system of warfare.

In the European war, for instance, the entire population fell into either class, belligerents or non-belligerents. The war was carried on in an area almost entirely evacuated by the civil population, and the Army worked independently of the people.

But the liberation war of 1916-21 in Ireland was waged from the midst of the people. The people took their place in the battle-front. Our soldiers slept in their houses, fed from their tables, fought under their eyes. The people of Ireland were our shield and our first line of defence. It was fitting, therefore, that there should have been so slight a distinction between the people and the Volunteers, for the war we waged against England was a national war. It was fought for the people, in their defence and in defence of their liberties.

Every shot fired, every life lost, has been for these liberties. They are as sacred as the life of the nation.

on earth can be. The rights of a people are sacred even if there never was a drop of blood shed for them ; but they are doubly sacred in Ireland where countless human lives have been sacrificed in their vindication.

We must respect these liberties. If we, the Irish Volunteers, violate them, the Irish Volunteer—the proudest title an Irishman can bear to-day—will in future time be cursed and our names become a byword.

MILITARY TYRANNY.

It is a national necessity that all Irishmen and Irishwomen should know what is the exact policy of the Executive set up by the Minority Convention held on Sunday, 26th March. We have no doubt that there are many Volunteers who would no more associate themselves with the programme of that illegal Executive than they would associate with the enemy—if only they were aware of what the real programme of that illegal Executive was. There were proposals made at that Convention which no man who has a care for liberty would ever have entertained ; proposals which, are almost identical with those recently advanced by McCready and Tudor.

THE REAL ISSUE.

None of us, who have known the Volunteers, and worked and fought with them, would ever have believed that there could come from our midst a group of men prepared to destroy the liberties of the people. A year ago this would have seemed incredible. Yet, this is what has happened. Following the Minority Convention of 26th March, a section of Volunteers have proceeded to suppress the rights of the people and tread the same path as the English did. These men have used false words and raised false issues to bring true Irish soldiers with them. We are confident that there are but few Volunteers who would deliberately deny the people's rights, and we are equally confident that as soon as Irish Volunteers know the real facts, they will step aside and stand by the people. It is the duty of every Volunteer to take thought on these matters, to have his conscience clear, for no matter what the future brings, liberty is immortal, and attempts like these are certain to end in failure and disgrace.

A NEW DICTATORSHIP.

The programme of the Executive set up by the Minority Convention on 26th March, is a Military Dictatorship. This Military Dictatorship has been planned for some months. In an interview given to the Press by Mr. O'Connor, 23rd March, he talked about overturning the Government of Ireland—that must have meant the overturning of Dail Eireann, which is the Government elected by the votes of the Irish people. At another point of the interview Mr. O'Connor in reply to the following question : “ Are we to take it that if the Army Executive refuses to consent to the Government set up by the people, we will have a Military Dictatorship ? ” “ You can call it what you like,” said Mr. O'Connor. The entire trend of Mr. O'Connor’s statements in that interview was, that no matter what the majority of the people of Ireland decided, that he and his associates would ignore their will and enforce their own wishes.

THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Again, when the Minister of Defence proposed to move the resolution given below, at a Convention, Mr. O'Connor and his associates refused to accept that resolution. It reads as follows :—

“(1) Agreeing to appoint by election from among serving Officers a Commission to frame and place before a subsequent Convention, to be held after the general election, proposals for associating the I.R.A. with whatever Irish Government was then in authority ; and,

“(2) Disclaiming any intention of setting up a Military Government as opposed to any Government elected by the people.”

The refusal by Mr. O'Connor and his associates to accept the above resolution can but have one meaning, that they proposed to establish a Military Dictatorship.

AN ACT OF NATIONAL APOSTASY.

The English Government in Ireland was a Military Dictatorship, and in proposing to re-establish a Military Dictatorship, Mr. O'Connor is doing what the English have been doing for hundreds of years, that is to say, suppressing Irish liberty. Whatever shadow of excuse there

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SUPPRESSING IRISH LIBERTY



can be for an English Dictatorship there is none at all for one established by Irishmen. The greatest and most unforgiveable act of national apostasy that one can conceive would be for a group of Irishmen to act as tyrants towards their own people.

At the Minority Convention held on 26th March the proposals made were in keeping with the policy of Mr. O'Connor and his associates as above outlined. We give a summary of these proceedings in the firm belief that no good Volunteer will ever give it any support.

THE CONVENTION.

Early in the proceedings an Executive of sixteen was appointed, and a resolution was put forward to the effect that matters of immediate concern for that body would include "Declaration of Dictatorship."

The Dictatorship, it was mentioned, would overthrow the four Governments in Ireland opposed to the Republic, viz.:—Dail Eireann, Provisional Government, British Government, and Northern Government. One delegate did not consider the dissolution of the Governments practical, as dissolution of the Dail, or Provisional Government would mean Civil War, which would play into Britain's hands, while interference with the Northern or British Governments would mean certain war with England.

DICTATORSHIP BY INSTALMENTS.

A Cork delegate thought the Dictatorship should be introduced gradually. He favoured suppression of the Press **at once**, and the stopping of elections.

One of the Dublin delegates opposed the Dictatorship as it would result in Civil War against the people, and the effect on world opinion would not be good. But a Donegal delegate held that the only factors against them would be public opinion and civilians, **who did not matter very much**. Money would be had for the taking, and the national press could be held by commandeering existing machinery, or using the sledge.

Ultimately, the Dictatorship resolution was referred to the Executive as a recommendation.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

Reports from the South and West during the past week, depict a condition of affairs which every true soldier of liberty must deplore. Already a state of things has been reached in which Irishmen have been found to turn their arms against those with whom they once stood as comrades in the heroic fight for national freedom. When one recalls the many splendid sacrifices made by Irish soldiers during the war; the fine spirit of comradeship and loyalty that animated the Irish Volunteers, the reports of incidents in which Irishmen have been concerned in the shooting of officers and men of the Irish Republican Army, make sorry reading indeed.

* * *

On Monday night last when passing from the Railway Hotel, Galway, to the Station, Capt. Sean Hurley was accosted by a party of unofficial forces, who demanded that he should hand over keys, contrary to the orders of a superior officer. On his refusal to do so, Capt. Hurley was first shot through the leg. Then, to secure the revolver he had drawn in self-defence, one of the armed party deliberately shot Capt. Hurley through the right forearm.

That this attempt on the life of a brave and chivalrous Irish soldier should have been made by fellow Irishmen is the most regrettable aspect of an affair, which has evoked expressions of strong condemnation, not only from the citizens of Galway, but from all liberty-loving people throughout the country.

* * *

In other parts of Ireland unsuccessful attempts have been made to intimidate officers and men who adhere to their oath to Dail Eireann, and to the Army control established by the National Government. While engaged re-organising the Volunteers loyal to G.H.Q. in Cork No. 4 Brigade Area, Vice-Comdt. Lyons was seized by unofficial forces, badly beaten, and then taken a prisoner to Kanturk Barracks. At the time of his arrest, Vice-Comdt. Lyons was alone and unarmed. As a protest against his illegal detention by men with whom he fought during the war, Vice-Comdt. Lyons has gone on hunger strike. Several other cases have been reported in which Irish soldiers have been deprived of their liberty by armed bands, for no other reason than that they are loyal to the military control established by the Government of the country. Four officers at Fermoy, and Comdt. Ring at Westport, have all been obliged to resort to hunger-striking—the drastic expedient formerly used against the British tyrants—to secure their release.

Despotic action of this kind by unofficial forces has not been confined to individuals. In Cork and Wicklow it went still further, when parties of armed men sought to impose their will—at the point of the gun—upon whole detachments of Irish Volunteers proceeding to Dublin for training. Over 100 Volunteers, drawn from Cork No. 4 Brigade area, were held up at Mallow station and taken from the train by armed force. The party included men who fought with distinction in flying columns throughout Cork and Kerry. Yet it was sought in the name of liberty to deny those soldiers of freedom the right to think and act for themselves. Tactics of this kind always defeat their purpose, and Volunteers who endured many hardships and risked their lives in the war against a foreign tyranny, are not likely to submit to a domestic tyranny, from whatever quarter it may emanate.

A PLAIN DUTY.

Early in our fight with England, many a Volunteer gave considerable thought to the question of what his duty should be. When it became clear to him that it was his national duty to take his place in the fight, he did so. Things were not simple then and many Volunteers found it difficult to decide what was the right course to take.

Things are still more complex now, and many Volunteers find it more difficult than ever to decide for themselves what is the right course. But whatever the difficulties may be, it is as necessary now as it was at any time in the last six years for each Volunteer to look into his own mind and to give thought to what his duty should be. But one thing is certain, the Volunteer will not be mistaken if he stands for the people, for the rights of the people. The war was waged for these rights, and he will have behind him the best minds and the bravest men that Ireland produced in this generation.

Patrick Pearse, the greatest political mind, and one of the greatest soldiers that Ireland has produced, was always clear that the Volunteers were a national army; and in his eyes the people of Ireland were always the supreme authority. No man will be much mistaken if he follows Patrick Pearse. In the pages of *Irish Freedom*, he says:—

"It is a terrible responsibility to be cast upon a man, that of bidding the cannon speak and the grapeshot pour. But in this Volunteer

movement, as I understand it, the people are to be master; and it will be for the people to say when, and against whom the Volunteers shall draw the sword and point the rifle. Now, my reading of Irish history is that, however the leaders may have failed, the instinct of the people has always been unerring. The Volunteers themselves, the people themselves, must keep control of this movement. Any man or group of men, that seek to establish an ascendancy should be dealt with summarily. Such traitors to the Volunteer spirit would deserve to be shot, but it will be sufficient if they be shot OUT."

STAFF APPOINTMENTS.

THE following promotions and changes in the Staff of the Quarter-Master General are notified:—

Staff Capt. J. Quinn to be Asst. Q.M.G., with rank of Brigadier on the Staff; Staff Capt. J. Dunne to be Deputy Asst. Q.M.G., with the rank of Batt. Comdt. on the Staff; Staff Capt. J. Guilfoyle to be D. A. Q.M.G., with rank of Batt. Comdt. on the Staff; Staff Capt. F. Carney to be Officer I/C. Supplies Branch, with rank of Batt. Vice-Comdt. on the Staff; Staff Capt. M. Ryan to be Officer I/C. Accounts and Records, with rank of Batt. Vice-Comdt. on the Staff; Staff Capt. W. Murphy to be Officer I/C. Transport Branch, with rank of Batt. Vice-Comdt. on the Staff.

1st Lt. P. MacMahon to be Asst. Officer I/C. Supplies, with rank of Capt.; 1st Lt. G. Hampton to be Officer I/C. Supplies "A," with rank of Capt.; 1st Lt. H. Byrne to be Officer I/C. Supplies "B," with rank of Capt.; 1st Lt. T. Fitzgerald to be Officer I/C. Supplies "C," with rank of Capt.; 1st Lt. J. McCaffrey to be Inspector and Organiser of Canteens, with rank of Capt.; 1st Lt. B. Houlihan to be Inspector and Organiser of Cook-houses and Messes, with rank of Capt.; 2nd Lt. D. Byrne to be Asst. Officer I/C. Supplies "C," with rank of 1st Lt.

Sergt. P. Geraghty to be Officer I/C. Supplies "C," 2, with rank of 2nd Lt.; 2nd Lt. P. Caldwell to be Officer I/C. Supplies "C," 7; 2nd Lt. W. Fegan to be Officer I/C. Transport A; 1st Lt. D. Colgan to be Officer I/C. A. and R. A.; J. Nolan to be Officer I/C. A. and R. A. 1; J. Lynch to be Q. M. Sergt. I/C. of Supplies A. 1; C. O'Reilly to be Q. M. Sergt. in charge of Supplies A. 2; B. Fitzgerald to be Q. M. Sergt. I/C. of Supplies A. 3.

OTHER RANKS.

P. Larkin to be Assistant to Capt. G. Hampton, Supplies "A," with rank of Quartermaster Sergt.; Ben Barrett to be attached to Accounts and Records Branch, in charge of "C" Section, with rank of Captain; 1st Lt. A. Thompson to act as Assistant to Staff Vice-Comdt. M. Ryan; 2nd Lt. J. Gilhooley to act as Assistant Barrack Quartermaster; M. Byrne to be attached to Supplies "C," with rank of Quartermaster Sergt.; 1st Lt. Dunne to be in charge of Transport "A" 3.

NOTE.—In details of appointment of Comdt. P. McCrae, as Transport Officer of 2nd Eastern Division, given in last issue, it was stated in error that Comdt. McCrae joined the Irish Republican Army in 1916. Comdt. McCrae belonged to the Irish Army. COPYRIGHT MILITARY ARCHIVES