

## Centenary Update

**Brother BURNS,**

**As we prepare for Thanksgiving lets remember those who participated in the Easter Rising. These brave men and women created the foundation for the Ireland we know today. Many gave their lives.**

**Below you will find part 8 of the Road to the Rebellion provided to us by Brother McCormack as well as the first 7 segments. Please share these with your Brothers and use the material for the Irish history segment of your division meetings.**

**On behalf of President Moore and the entire National Board we wish you and your families a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving.**

**God Bless,**

**Jim McKay  
National Vice President**

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### **Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 8)**

**from The Road to Rebellion by Mike McCormack**

On Easter Sunday, after sending out new mobilization notices from the Hibernian Hall to local Volunteer companies, Pearse ordered the Louth Volunteeres to demolish a section of the Portleix railway to prevent troops from reaching Dublin. They also raided the Wolfhill RIC Barracks becoming the first

to fire shots in the Rising. Meanwhile, 1000 copies of the Proclamation were printed in the basement of Liberty Hall as the Countess painted the words *Irish Republic* on a green flag that would fly over the GPO the following day next to the tricolor raised by Argentine-born Volunteer Eamon Bulfin. Bulfin had attended Pearse's school at St. Enda's and his sister would later marry Nobel Laureate Sean MacBride.

As Easter Monday dawned, a smaller than normal group of **Irish Volunteers, Citizen Army, Cumann na mBan and Fianna hEireann** gathered at Liberty Hall. John J. Scollen, knew by the cancellation notice in Sunday=s paper that some- thing was afoot so he ordered his **Hibernian Rifles** to gather at the Hibernian Hall as well. Posts were assigned to each leader: the Four Courts to Ned Daly; Jacob=s Factory to Tom MacDonagh; Boland=s Mill to Eamon deValera; the South Dublin Union to Eamonn Ceannt; St. Stephen=s Green to Michael Mallin and Countess Markievicz; and the Mendicity Institute to Sean Heuston. They were to capture surrounding buildings as necessary and follow the battle plan laid out by Joseph Plunkett to prevent British troops from reaching the General Post Office (GPO) Headquarters. They hoped to hold out long enough for the world to pressure Britain to free Ireland since the excuse for WW1 was to free small nations.

At noon on Easter Monday they marched into the streets of Dublin and onto the pages of Irish History. One of the men asked Connolly, *Is the Citizen Army in the lead* and Connolly replied, *there is no longer a Citizen Army or Irish Volunteers, only the Army of the Irish Republic!* For the first time since the invasion of Canada 49 years earlier, the **Irish Republican Army** was back in the field. The insurrection was to start with a bang as the Magazine Fort, a Phoenix Park storehouse of British munitions, was to be blown, but the men sent to blow it couldn't get into the locked storeroom so they blew the fort but the storeroom did not explode. At noon, Pearse, with Clarke and Connolly at his side, read the Proclamation of the Irish Republic to startled passers-by. There were a few cheers, but for the most part the people were simply astonished. Inside the GPO, men were filling mail bags with scraps and blocking the windows. They also used figures from the Wax Museum on Henry Street and thought it ironic that King George, Queen Mary and Lord Kitchner would stop incoming British bullets.

That afternoon The O=Rahilly, long opposed to a rising, drove up in his classic De Dion Bouton automobile loaded with rifles. To those surprised to see him he said, *I=ve helped to wind this clock, I=ve come to hear it strike!* Sadly, neither he nor his expensive auto would survive the rising. His car would be buried with the rubble from the Rising at the railway end of Croke Park B the GAA athletic field B and covered over. Later immortalized as Hill 16 it became perhaps one of the most famous sports terraces in the world. The four British Barracks: Marlborough, Richmond, Royal and Portobello were

caught napping with only 100 soldiers on duty in each. The first British incursion into Dublin took place Monday afternoon as a group of mounted Lancers rode up O=Connell Street to clear the GPO; they were scattered by firing from the Post Office roof. The first thing the IRA did was to cut the telephone wires to prevent the British from calling for aid, but a Castle telephone exchange was secure and soon troops from Athlone, Templmore, Belfast and the Curragh were on their way.

In order to get word out to the world, Joseph Plunkett sent a party of 7 men to the Wireless School of Telegraphy which had been shut down. They managed to repair a 1.5 Kilowatt transmitter and Dave Bourke, an experienced Marconi operator, began transmitting in Morse Code the message >*Irish Republic declared in Dublin . . . Irish troops have captured the City and are in full possession . . . the whole country is rising*=. Since early telegraphic communications were station to station, Marshal MacLuhan, philosopher of communication, considers this diffused message to be the world's first radio broadcast! One of the 7 men was the Dublin-born, Protestant patriot Arthur Shields, later an American movie star who would appear as the Protestant minister in the Quiet Man with his brother Barry Fitzgerald. John J. Scollan sent a message to Connolly that the Hibernian Rifles were ready to assist. Connolly replied saying he was glad of the assistance and at later sent orders to the Hibernian Rifles to proceed to the G.P.O. They were put under the command of The O=Rahilly who ordered the group to break and barricade all the windows on the upper floors. One member P.J. Walsh was stationed at the telegraph station on the second floor since he had a good knowledge of Morse Code and was able to pose as a government agent sending out queries about the rising to the government station in an effort to obtain information. He received a few items of information which he reported to Plunket and Pearse. Connolly detailed Scollan to check reports of British troops in the area while other Hibernian Riflemen helped to construct barricades in the streets. On Easter Monday evening in the GPO, Pearse commissioned Jack Stanley proprietor of the Gaelic press to issue an official bulletin. Stanley seized O=Keefe=s Printworks on Halston Street and printed >**Irish War News**=, a four-page news sheet on Tuesday morning which had **ASTOP PRESS!**@ on the back page announcing the establishment of an Irish Republic. Although the Proclamation of the Irish Republic does not name the Hibernian Rifles as participants in the rising, >*Irish War News*= lists them as part of the >*Dublin Division of the Army of the Republic*=. The surprising tranquility of the first day of the Irish Republic passed with little confrontation, but that was about to end. On Tuesday morning, British General Lowe arrived with orders to put the rebellion down in any way possible.

*Next month B The Battle Intensifies*

## Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 7)

### Excerpted from The Road to Rebellion by Mike McCormack

Many pacifists still put their hopes in Home Rule and John Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) as an answer to Irish rights though they would still remain under the Crown. In June 1914, Redmond got control of the Volunteers by adding 25 new members to the governing body. Meanwhile, as Ulster and Irish Volunteer forces grew, PM Asquith tried to compromise between John Redmond and Edward Carson over Home Rule, offering partition as a solution. Nationalists were outraged that the Bill they had fought for would not be implemented as passed. In August, Britain declared war on Germany and Asquith took advantage of the situation to stall the implementation of Home Rule until after the war.

As the war dragged on, Asquith asked Redmond to offer the Irish Volunteers as recruits in a new British Army 16<sup>th</sup> Division. Believing it would support Home Rule, on 20 September Redmond publicly urged all Volunteers to enlist in the British Army; his action split the Volunteers. 150,000 Volunteers went with him into a new **National Volunteer Force** leaving about 12,000 men with the original Irish Volunteers – men who would rather fight against the Brits than for them! Redmond's force eventually dwindled away as many joined the British Army and marched off to war and off the pages of Irish history. Britain's notoriously anti-Irish Secretary of War, Lord Kitchner, used the 16<sup>th</sup> Division as cannon fodder at the Somme, Passchendaele and Ypres where they suffered more casualties than any other British Force. In fairness, those who joined believed that they were doing so for a better Ireland, but they were almost totally wiped out by Kitchner's deliberately callous assignments. In England it became obvious that the war would not be as brief as anticipated and Conservatives in Parliament attacked Asquith's policies. In May 1915, he was forced into a coalition government with anti-Home Rule Conservatives.

Tom Clarke stepped up plans for a rising appointing a Military Council consisting of MacDiarmada, Pearse, McDonagh, Ceannt and Plunkett. In June, Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa died in New York and Clarke cabled, *Send his body home at once!* A massive funeral, attended by thousands, heard Pearse's prophesy in one of the most famous eulogies in history, *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!* At the same time, James Connolly was becoming more belligerent, training his Citizen Army for street fighting. Clarke felt that something had to be done to avoid a premature strike by the Citizen Army which would upset IRB plans. On January 19, the IRB brought Connolly into a meeting that lasted 3 days. The Countess, thinking that the British had kidnaped him, almost started a rising without him. The IRB briefed Connolly on their plans for a rising and he was given a seat on the Military Council. He

gladly promised the support of the Citizen Army whose training he accelerated upon his return.

With the delay of Home Rule, possible partition, the Curragh Mutiny and the blatant bigotry against the 16<sup>th</sup> Division, it seemed as if Irish self-rule hopes had once more been shattered. Anger seethed among the militants who knew what had to be done! On April 8, mobilization orders were published for an Easter Sunday Field Day, complete with practice maneuvers, to be attended by all members of the Irish Volunteers in full uniform with *arms and a full supply of ammunition carried*. On the Monday before Easter, the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, authored by Pearse and Connolly, was signed by six of the leaders (Plunkett signed later). On April 12, a report reached Chief Secretary Birell urging action. Birell wrote on it, *is it practical to undertake disarmament and if so, under what limits?* Eugene Smyth smuggled a document out of Dublin Castle marked SECRET ORDERS calling for the arrests of Irish Volunteer, Gaelic League and Sinn Fein leaders upon Birell's order. Plunkett 'sexed it up' to make the action appear imminent and on Wednesday of Holy Week (April 19), Alderman Thomas Kelly read it to the Dublin Corporation. The Castle denied the document, but the Volunteers believed it. On Holy Thursday, Clarke showed the document to MacNeill, who had promised to support armed action in the right circumstance, and he agreed to lead the Volunteers in a rising on Sunday.

On Good Friday morning, Sir Roger Casement landed at Banna Strand in Co. Kerry from a German sub. He had arrived in advance of the expected arms shipment to convince MacNeill to cancel the rising since the shipment was less than promised. What he didn't know was that it was the IRB, not MacNeill, who were planning the rising. He was captured and the shipment was intercepted by the British who Devoy believed had been warned by the U.S. government. In fact, U.S Agents had earlier raided the German Embassy. On Holy Saturday, MacNeill learned of the failed shipment and realized that the Rising had been planned all the while Clarke had been seeking his approval. He denounced the Castle Document as a fraud, called off the Easter Sunday maneuvers and published a cancellation in the Sunday newspapers. At 8:00 AM on Easter Sunday morning, the Military Council met to debate the action to be taken. After much deliberation, they decided to ignore the cancellation and rise the following day – Easter Monday. It was a bank holiday and most military would be out of the city at the Grand National races at Fairymount in Co. Meath. That night, the Pearse brothers and MacDonagh met at the AOH Hall on North Frederick Street and sent out couriers with new mobilization orders. They hoped that when the news got out, the rest of Ireland would rise, even though they would likely not reach Dublin in time to save them. They believed that, like themselves, the Gaelic Revival had inspired enough pride in their fellow Irish that they would join them in a fight for independence and they were willing to test that belief at the risk of their lives.

*Next Month – The Rising Begins*

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## **Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 6)**

**from The Road to Rebellion by Mike McCormack**

Tom Clarke, anticipating a war between England and Germany, returned to Ireland to organize another rebellion. John Devoy recommended him to the Supreme Council of the IRB which had grown inactive. The BBC website on the IRB notes: *the key figure in purging its aging leadership was Thomas Clarke, a veteran republican. He succeeded in bringing a new purpose and vitality to the organization, so that it was able to exploit opportunities for insurrection when they arose.* With his wife, Kathleen, they assisted in directing the pride inspired by the Gaelic Revival into a focused sense of militant nationalism. Clarke left his Manorville, Long Island, NY home in December 1907 and opened a tobacco shop at 55 Amiens Street in Dublin. As a paroled, he had to take a silent role in nationalist affairs or face re-arrest under the Offenses Against the Realm Act so he silently re-organized the IRB through men like Bulmer Hobson and Sean MacDiarmada.

By the General Election of December 1910, Liberals and Conservatives in the House of Commons were evenly matched, but Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party held the balance of power. They supported Asquith's Liberals in return for another Home Rule Bill and the **Parliament Act**, which curtailed the veto power of the House of Lords. The Parliament Act stated that if a bill passed Commons twice, Lords could no longer veto it, they could only delay it for two years. The Parliament Act passed in August 1911 and in 1912 the third Home Rule Bill became the second to pass Commons. It would become law in 1914! Starting on 28 September, 1912 nearly 500,000 unionists signed a **Solemn League and Covenant** pledging to defy Home Rule by all means possible. The Covenant was authored and organized by Unionist MPs Edward Carson and James Craig. By January

1913, 232 Unionist Clubs across Ulster coalesced into the paramilitary **Ulster Volunteer Force** (UVF) sworn to fight Home Rule.

In October 1913, Hobson and Michael ‘The’ O’Rahilly convinced Gaelic League Secretary and UCD Professor, Eoin MacNeill, to write an article in the influential League journal, **An Claidheamh Soluis** (Sword of Light), encouraging the formation of an **Irish Volunteer Force** to defend the implementation of Home Rule, just as the Unionists had done to oppose it. On 1 November, The O’Rahilly took over as editor of the paper and in the very next issue, MacNeill’s article *The North Began* and an article by Pearse entitled *The Coming Revolution* appeared. In his article Pearse stated: *To every generation its deed. The deed of the generation that has now reached middle life was the Gaelic League – the beginning of the Irish Revolution. Let our generation not shirk its deed, which is to accomplish that revolution.*

Clarke’s IRB had already begun drilling IRB men with the Dublin GAA led by Harry Boland. With MacNeill agreeing to take part, The O’Rahilly and Hobson arranged a meeting at Wynn’s Hotel in Abbey Street, Dublin, on 11 November, 1913 to discuss a formal organization with members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, the United Irish League, the AOH, the GAA, the Foresters, the IRB and others. At the same time, James Connolly was establishing his **Irish Citizen Army** in the aftermath of the lock out. They had similar aims, but no connection with the planned Irish Volunteers.

The **Irish Volunteer** organization was launched on 25 November 1913 to safeguard the implementation of Home Rule as a legislated right of Irishmen. Their first public meeting and enrolment rally was held at the Rotunda in Dublin. Five thousand enlistment blanks were distributed by IRB men each wearing a small silken bow, the center of which was white, with one side green and the other orange – colors introduced by Young Ireland and which the Fenians had adopted as a national banner. The hall was filled to its 4,000 person capacity, with another 3,000 on the grounds outside. Speakers included MacNeill, Pearse and young Michael Davitt, son of the Land League founder. The O’Rahilly was made

Treasurer and Director of Arms and began to organize the arming of the Volunteers. In February they launched a 16-page weekly newspaper entitled **The Irish Volunteer** as membership began to grow across the country.

In March, 1914, Officers at the main British Barracks in the Curragh, Co. Kildare pledged to resign rather than fight the Ulster Volunteers and enforce Home Rule. The government did nothing about the mutiny, prompting thousands more recruits to join the Irish Volunteers. On 2 April 1914, Agnes O'Farrelly and a group of ladies founded **Cumann na mBan** (Council of Women) as a Ladies Auxiliary to the Volunteers to *advance the cause of Irish liberty and assist in arming and equipping Irish men for the defense of Ireland*. Ireland was becoming a tinder box and open conflict between the two Volunteer groups seemed imminent. On the night of April 24, the UVF smuggled 25,000 rifles and 3 million rounds of ammunition into Larne in Co. Antrim and to Bangor and Donaghadee in Co. Down. They had amplified the UVF's fire-power while backing up their challenge against Home Rule. In July, Erskine Childers with his wife Molly and Mary Spring Rice smuggled 1,000 German rifles into Howth Harbor and distributed them to waiting Irish Volunteers. Another small arms shipment was smuggled into Kilcoole a week later by Sir Thomas Myles. Compared to the UVF, only a small number of the Volunteers were armed, even though they also had a variety of personal weapons and Lee Enfields which had been stolen from military and police barracks around the country. There were even pikes, daggers, bayonets and some bombs made from lengths of pipe, milk tins and jam jars. Though certainly insufficient to take on the British Army, the over-confidant Irish Volunteers felt ready.

*Next Month – The Die is Cast*

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## Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 5)

Condensed from **The Road to Rebellion** by Mike McCormack

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa had grown up during the Great Hunger which took his father's life, separated him from his family and left him with an undying hatred of the Crown and its politicians; it inspired the course he followed for the rest of his life. He buried himself in nationalist-oriented material in *the Nation* and *the United Irishman* newspapers, and believed all Ireland's problems were due to the control exercised by landlords. Why couldn't his people see this and stand up for their rights as Irishmen in their own country? He was determined to convince them of their right to independence, but when he learned that they were largely unaware of past oppressions, he realized that they had to learn their history before they could be convinced to assert their right to independence. That defined his mission! In 1856, he formed a society to educate his people to their heritage and direct them toward the liberation of Ireland by force of arms. He called it the **Phoenix National and Literary Society**. It became so popular that it inspired, and became the forerunner of, many similar societies that made up the **Gaelic Revival**, for once self-esteem took hold among the Irish, there was no stopping it. It was the societies of the Gaelic Revival that excited the Irish to a new sense of pride and a desire for independence through the study of their history.

In May 1858, James Stephens, co-founder of the new 2-month old **Irish Republican Brotherhood**, visited Rossa and was so impressed by his work that he swore him into the IRB and the Phoenix Society merged with the IRB and the Fenian Brotherhood. In 1882, they published the **Gaelic Journal** to carry the nationalist message across the country. There followed a series of societies like the **Gaelic Athletic Association** (1884) to revive Irish sports and cultural competitions, the **Irish Literary Society** (1892) to study patriotic writings, and the **Gaelic League** (1893) to promote the language. Nationalist newspapers like the **United Irishman** appeared in 1898 and by 1900 a woman's society, **Inghinidhe na hEireann** (Daughters of Erin), was actively involved in promoting the nationalist message. In 1900, the movement became political as **Cumann na nGaedheal** (Society of the Irish) was formed as a political party and in 1903 the **National Council** debuted to increase nationalist representation on local councils. In 1905, the Dungannon

Clubs were formed as reading rooms hosting nationalist lectures.

By 1907, the Gaelic Revival had successfully provided the second leaf of the Shamrock of Insurrection – Inspiration. It was now time for the third leaf and that came when John Devoy contacted Arthur Griffith in Ireland and provided Motivation. He offered to fund a rising, but only by one unified force. Griffith in his newspaper **The United Irishmen** urged the many nationalist groups in Ireland to unify and establish that force. As a result, **Cumman na Gael** merged with the **Dungannon Clubs** and the **National Council** to form the **Sinn Fein League** as a nationalist political party.

In 1908, the AOH in America added the office of National Historian to their hierarchy to educate their members to the historic dimension of Ireland's struggle. From Ireland, Bulmer Hobson wrote, *The AOH and the United Irish League are now whipping up their members and getting them all to join.* Meanwhile, Devoy's compatriot, Tom Clarke, returned to Ireland in December 1907 to rejuvenate the dormant IRB as a military force. Tom Clarke, after 15 years in prison, went to America and worked with fellow Fenian John Devoy on the **Gaelic American** newspaper. The IRB in Ireland had grown inactive after the failed 1867 Rising, but Clarke and Devoy were among those who kept the dream of independence alive. To them, the Gaelic Revival had created many nationalist-oriented groups and now was the time to mobilize them! Among those groups was **Fianna hEireann**, a boy scout movement founded in 1909 who went into the Dublin hills to learn marksmanship, drill and train in military skills. Their value would become evident years later when senior members joined the soon-to-be-formed Irish Volunteers and used their training to turn volunteer recruits into disciplined soldiers.

Upon his return, Clarke expanded IRB recruitment through young men like Denis McCullough, Bulmer Hobson and Seán MacDiarmada – the trio who had founded the Dungannon Clubs. MacDiarmada was also a member of the AOH and he brought the Hibernian Rifles of the American Alliance into the movement. Recruitment was easy for although the Gaelic Revival brought the Irish to an increased awareness of past glories, the

dichotomy with their existing situation fostered increased resentment adding to their frustration. Tenants were still second class citizens and the laboring classes were underpaid and forced to the slums of urban centers like Dublin, Cork and Waterford which were filthy, overcrowded, disease-ridden and teeming with malnourished children much like the Five Points in New York 50 years earlier.

Their only hope was the promise of **Home Rule**, an independent Irish Parliament, held out as a carrot-on-a-stick by the British to keep the Irish from becoming more militant. It promised the Irish more self-government, though still answerable to the Crown; but, it would remove the self-centered, landlord-dominated Westminster Parliament from day-to-day oversight of the Irish economy. However, in January 1913, hundreds of Loyalist Clubs in the north coalesced into the **Ulster Volunteer Force** vowing to fight the imposition of Home Rule for the rights it gave to Catholics. On 11 November, a meeting of the IRB, AOH, GAA, IPP and others agreed to organize a force to defend Home Rule implementation. It would become a main component of the coming rising and it was waiting in the wings. We will examine that component next month.

*Next month – The Irish Volunteers*

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## Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 4)

**from The Road to Rebellion by Mike McCormack**

As the American-Irish and their Irish-American sons and daughters coalesced into a wage-earning community of Diaporadoes in support of Irish freedom, the rise of nationalist sympathy had already begun in Ireland with the formation of patriotic groups emboldened by the Gaelic Revival. Significantly, despite the subordinate status of women in the British empire, Irish women began to take a substantial role in national affairs as members of the **Irish Literary Society** (1892) and the **Gaelic League** (1893). On Easter Sunday 1900, 15 women met in the **Celtic Literary Society** clubrooms to present a blackthorn stick to Arthur Griffith for defending the outspoken

patriot, Maud Gonne, from a maligning editorial. The meeting turned to planning a ‘*Patriotic Children's Treat*’ to reward children who would boycott the children’s picnic in Phoenix Park planned to celebrate Queen Victoria’s April visit. More than 50 women enlisted on the committee which funded and sponsored a historic event with 30,000 children parading to an alternate picnic punctuated by anti-British speeches. James Connolly called it ‘*the first political parade of the coming generation. It was a great sight to see the little rebels taking possession of the city, a sight more promising for the future of the country than any we can remember!*’ The funds left over were used to start **Inghinidhe na hEireann** (in-EEN-ie na HAIR-inn) or Daughters of Erin – with Maud as President, to encourage all things Irish and boycott all things British. Their feelings were expressed in their newspaper **Bean na h’Éireann** (woman of Ireland) edited by Helena Molony and advocating militancy, separatism and feminism. They also produced patriotic plays as part of a **National Theater Society** which had been founded by Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats in 1898.

On 25 November 1913, the **Irish Volunteers** were formed at Dublin’s Rotunda to work for Irish independence. A few months later a group of women met in Wynn’s Hotel, Dublin, to discuss forming an organization of women to work in conjunction with the Volunteers. On April 2, 1914, **Cumann na mBan** (Council of Women) was launched in the Pillar Room of the Mansion House. Branches were formed throughout the country and were directed by a Provisional Committee. The first group, named the **Ard Chraobh** (High Branch), held their meetings in Brunswick Street. They absorbed Inghinidhe and announced to detractors that they were not the handmaidens nor camp followers of the Volunteers – *we are their allies!* Their constitution stated they were to *advance the cause of Irish liberty, to organize Irishwomen in the furtherance of this object, to assist in arming and equipping a body of Irish men for the defense of Ireland and to form a fund for these purposes to be called 'The Defense of Ireland Fund.* The fund helped purchase the arms smuggled into Howth Harbor which members aided in hiding. Its recruits were white-collar workers, professional and working-class women. In September 1914, the Irish Volunteers split over John Redmond’s appeal for its members to enlist in the British Army. The majority of Cumann na mBan members supported the 2,000 men who rejected this call and who retained the original name, the Irish Volunteers.

On 24 April 1916, when the Military Council of the IRB launched the Easter Rising, it brought Cumann na mBan, along with the Irish Volunteers, Irish Citizen Army, Hibernian Rifles and Fianna

Eireann into the 'Army of the Irish Republic'. Patrick Pearse was appointed overall Commandant-General and James Connolly Commandant of the Dublin Battalion. On the day of the Rising, Cumann na mBan members entered the General Post Office on O'Connell Street with their male compatriots. Winifred Carney arrived armed with both a Webley revolver and a typewriter. By nightfall, women insurgents were in all the rebel strongholds throughout the city except Boland's Mill and the South Dublin Union under Éamon de Valera and Eamonn Ceannt. The women worked as Red Cross nurses, couriers, procured rations, gathered intelligence on scouting expeditions, carried despatches and transferred arms and munitions between arms dumps across the city and insurgent strongholds. Constance Markievicz, armed with a pistol, shot a policeman as they took control of St Stephen's Green. Later, along with other female fighters, she carried out sniper attacks on British troops in the city center. She suggested that they bomb the Shelbourne Hotel, but before they could, British troops entered the building by the Kildare street door. At dawn the British opened fire from the hotel on the Green forcing the Irish to retreat. Markievicz, Mary Hyland and Lily Kempson were part of a force of twelve who raided Trinity College and found fifty rifles; but by that time the Green garrison had retreated to the smaller, but stronger, College of Surgeons. Helena Moloney was among the soldiers who attacked Dublin Castle, where she worked with the wounded. A number of Cumann na mBan members died in the Rising.

At the time of surrender, Pearse insisted that the women leave the GPO saying, *when the history of this fight will be written, the foremost page in the annals should be given to the women of Dublin who had taken their place in the fight for the establishment of the republic*. He told them that their presence had inspired the men, *whose heroism, wonderful though it was, paled before the devotion and duty of the women of Cumann na mBan* and he prayed God would give them the strength to *carry on the fight*. Reluctantly they left except for Julia Grennan who cared for Joe Plunkett, Winifred Carney who tended the wounded James Connolly and Elizabeth O'Farrell who would accompany Pearse to his surrender and carry his cease fire order to the outlying posts. More than 70 women were arrested after the Rising and many of them were imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail; all but 12 had been released by 8 May 1916. The 12 remaining were released by July, 1917. Their release was not the end of their service, for they were to be a significant force in the coming War of Independence.

***Next month: The Gaelic Revival***

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## Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 3)

from **The Road to Rebellion** by Mike McCormack

In 1911, near 26,000 families lived in Dublin's inner-city tenements; 20,000 in former apartments divided into one room flats. They died in great numbers from cholera, typhus, influenza and TB. Requests for improvements to unsanitary conditions were ignored by the Dublin Corporation since 16 of its members owned tenements in the slums and actively prevented enforcement of regulations against their properties. Other counties were just as bad as low wages forced workers to the cheap life in the slums to which those fortunate enough to have jobs returned, after putting in 17-hour days.

Early attempts at organizing labor unions had been made by James Connolly in 1896, but with limited success since workers were so intimidated by management. In 1903, Connolly accepted an invitation to work with the American labor movement and emigrated, ending up in Troy, NY. Then in 1908, along came Big Jim Larkin. He began to harvest the seeds Connolly had sewn, organizing all workers, Protestant and Catholic, regardless of trade, into one large **Irish Transport and General Workers Union** (ITGWU). Meanwhile, in America, Connolly was involved in the International Workers of the World promoting the idea of one union for all workers allowing the use of sympathy strikes to empower action. He published a newspaper aimed at the Irish in America's labor market and included articles on events in Ireland. Noting Larkin's struggle, he soon realized that Ireland was where his heart had always been and he returned in 1910. He settled in Belfast to help Larkin organize his union along the lines of the IWW. In a year's time, Connolly moved his family to Dublin and, with Larkin and William O'Brien, helped to organize the **Irish Trade Union Congress** and **Labor Party**. They were able to secure wage increases for some workers, but the idea of one giant union was beginning to worry employers. By

1913, 30,000 workers had signed up making the General Worker's union Ireland's largest.

Enter William Martin Murphy – an example of how an Irish Catholic could succeed by working within the system of the oppressor. He owned the Dublin Tramway System as well as the largest newspaper, department store and hotel. He claimed that he was not against craft unions, but opposed Larkin's idea where workers would control everything, even the government. The union's success was from sympathy strikes because when all workers belonged to one union, it was easy to get strikers to walk off related jobs. In 1912, more than 400 nervous employers responded to Murphy's call to form the **Dublin Employers' Federation Ltd.** (DEF) to break Larkin's Union by refusing to recognize the ITGWU. Murphy demanded that his workers reapply for their jobs and a condition of acceptance was a pledge to shun the union. This act of challenging the worker's right to organize provoked the greatest labor struggle in the history of western Europe. Larkin and Connolly saw this as a death threat to their union and knew that they had to act! They called a walkout by Murphy's tram workers on 26 August 1913 – the first day of the Dublin horse show! The workers walked off the job and Murphy fired them all! He brought in scab labor protected by the **Dublin Metropolitan Police** (DMP).

A strike is a weapon to gain concessions, but this strike sought no concessions, it was a matter of self-defense. Clashes between workers and police-protected scabs broke out in various places during which police baton-charged the workers. A warrant was issued for Larkin's arrest claiming he incited the riots. Larkin promised to address his followers the next day from the balcony of Murphy's hotel. On 31 August, police surrounded the hotel and allowed no one to enter except one elderly clergyman. It was Larkin! Disguised by the great patriot and Abbey Theater actress, Helena Molony, Larkin appeared on the balcony, pulled off a fake beard and addressed the huge crowd to wild cheers. Police forced their way up to the balcony and arrested Larkin. Then they baton-charged the crowd, killing two and injuring hundreds. Larkin called for sympathy strikes against all parts of Murphy's DEF and the merchants fired all members of Larkin's union and replaced them with scabs and unemployed workers from England! This preposterous act became known as the **Great**

**Dublin Lockout.** By 29 September, more than 25,000 workers were locked out of their jobs. With the help of Countess Markievicz, Larkin set up food kitchens at union headquarters in Liberty Hall to feed the striking workers families and the AOH in America sent more than a \$1,000. (\$25,000. today) to striking members of the AOH American Alliance.

Then, Connolly met Jack White, a disaffected former British Army officer, who proposed the creation of a worker's militia to protect picket lines from assaults by the DMP and gangs in the pay of the employers. The notion of a Citizen Army, drilled by White, was enthusiastically accepted as White stated, *to put manners on the police*. In 1913, the Countess helped White form the **Irish Citizen Army** which would become a far more significant force than either of them ever planned. The Citizen Army drilled and trained at Liberty Hall and even purchased uniforms and arms to alert the DMP that they could no longer attack workers with impunity. However, despite the assistance provided to the union, as winter winds began to blast the tenements, it was evident that they could not sustain the fight and starving workers began to drift back to work on the employers' terms. In January 1914, Larkin conceded, *we are beaten*. But they had achieved something more significant. They opposed Murphy's attempt to destroy the union and in that they succeeded. Plus they had created a fighting force in the Citizen Army that would soon join with the IRB, Irish Volunteers, Hibernian Rifles, Cumann na mBan and Fianna Eireann to become the Irish Republican Army and strike for Ireland's freedom on Easter Monday, 1916.

*Next month – Cumann na mBan*

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## Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 2)

from **The Road to Rebellion** by Mike McCormack

As the American Irish and their Irish-American sons and daughters coalesced into a wage-

earning community of Diaporadoes, organizations like the **Ancient Order of Hibernians** were formed in 1836 from early Ribbon societies to defend Catholic values. They also nursed a dream of an independent Ireland and maintained links with their Ribbon mentors. In the 1850s, several Ribbon groups in Ireland adopted the AOH name and facing extreme anti-Catholic bias, became effectively a green version of the **Orange Order**. While still supporting Irish freedom, they became more religious-oriented than the militant Irish republican groups around them. However, in America many Hibernians maintained dual membership in the **Fenian Society** which had sprung from the AOH **Emmet Monument Society**. These organizations remained allies as the American AOH raised funds and political awareness to support Irish independence and the Fenian successor, **Clan na Gael**, supported a military approach in union with the **Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB)**. The AOH also created a military sub-committee called the **Hibernian Rifles** to drill and train and serve as a protective honor guard for AOH functions.

The AOH in Ireland eventually became a political force supporting the **Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP)** and Home Rule (a peaceful attempt at limited self-government under the Crown) while the AOH in America grew as a benevolent, but more nationalist society. Administrative and conceptual differences emerged and in 1886 the Order split between the AOH **Board of Erin (BOE)** and the AOH in America. A number of divisions in Ireland, more militant than the BOE leadership, confirmed affiliation with the American AOH calling themselves the AOH **American Alliance (AA)**. Around 1907 a split occurred between the BOE and AA over registration as a Friendly Society of the British Empire. The BOE continued to support Redmond's IPP while the AA and the AOH in America remained allied with Clan Na Gael and the IRB indicating that the split was clearly between physical force and constitutional nationalists. The American AOH was also regarded as being less sectarian as it had opened membership to more than native-born Irish so that Irish-American sons could join and limited honorary membership was offered to benefactors. John J. Walsh of the Irish Volunteers in Cork commented on the two Hibernian groups in Ireland saying, *They were in opposition on many matters, but the AA*

*was the more national.*

AA National Director John Joseph Scollan, noting that the American AOH provided for a military sub-committee, organized a Hibernian Rifles company in each Irish division. He wrote, *I started a unit in each division and succeeded in getting about 20 men to join in each. These were all highly selected men. At this time the total number of members of the divisions (in Dublin) were 80, 100 and 150, approximately.* The first recruiting ads appeared in James Connolly's newspaper **The Worker** on 22 November 1913. It stated that membership was open to *all Catholic Irishmen of good character* however, Scollan claimed that the Hibernian Rifles was non-sectarian and that its constitution *did not bar anyone from joining. It was a semi-public organization open to all religions.* The AA national board was supposed to be in command of the Hibernian Rifles but Scollan, as Commandant, directed and controlled the force which consisted of a ranking system of riflemen, captain, vice commandant and commandant. Each company selected its own officers. J.J. Walsh was made Vice Commandant and other officers were Captains Breslin, Garret and Sean Millroy. Sympathetic Irish ex-British soldiers provided instruction in foot drill and military training in the Hibernian Hall at 28 North Frederick St.

Recruitment was from AA Divisions and ads in their newspaper **The Hibernian** which was published weekly from June 1915 until April 1916 with a national circulation of about 2,500 copies. The Hibernian also serialized a 'Roll of Honor' listing those who had been killed, wounded, imprisoned, deported or served with exclusion orders for republican activity. The paper also carried notices for the Irish Volunteers. The **Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC)** and **Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP)** kept intelligence files on members of the Order and the DMP applied to the attorney general to have the paper suppressed since it was not registered in accordance with Newspapers Libel and Registration act of 1881.

With the rise of the unionist **Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)**, Scollan detected *a feeling abroad that something of a counteraction should take place and this resulted in recruiting*

*for our units becoming much easier.* By late 1913 the Hibernian Rifle units had been established in Armagh, Belfast, Castlebar, Cork, Dingle and Dundalk, each with a membership of 30 or 35 from existing AA Division. During the 1913 lockout the Hibernian Rifles sided with the striking workers as many members belonged to Connolly and Larkins's union. Even those AA who were not part of the Union raised money for the strikers. The BOE and Catholic bishops both actively condemned the strike and supported the employers. Scollan applied to the AOH in America to support the strikers and received more than a \$1,000. (\$25,000. today). This money was used to augment the strike pay of Hibernian Rifles members of the union ensuring strong ties with Connolly's Citizen Army.

After Redmond split the Volunteers by offering them to the British Army to fight in WWI, the Irish Volunteers were free from the influence of the IPP and the BOE Hibernians. As a result the Hibernian Rifles and Citizen Army developed a new attitude toward the IRB-dominated Irish Volunteers and all three groups were united in anti-recruiting activity, attending parades and public meetings organized by Connolly, the IRB and the Irish Volunteers.

Initially the Hibernian Rifles had no arms, but after the formation of the UVF, Scollan wrote to the AOH in America seeking arms. He recorded, *They did not supply any and we received a supply of American Military text books.* However, in 1914, with money from America, they soon found a source of arms. Scollan wrote, *There was a division of Enniskillen Fusiliers based in Dollymount and from them we were able to purchase about one hundred rifles.* Notoriously underpaid British soldiers gladly sold their arms as they would be issued new ones. The Brits would see those rifles again during the Easter Rising – in the arms of Hibernians and aimed at them.

*Next month: The Citizen Army*

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## **Eirí Amach na Cásca (Part 1)**

**from The Road to Rebellion by Mike McCormack**

John F Kennedy said in a 1962 speech that *Those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable* which is why we believe that *it's not the rebel that creates the violence, but the violence that creates the rebel*. Early Americans knew that and the American Revolution was the result. The patriots of 1916 also knew that and the Easter Rising was the result. But that rising was different from all others in Irish history.

The desire for independence has always been at the core of the Irish heart, but to understand what made 1916 unique, there are three things to consider and coincidentally, three had always been a special number for the Irish. As far back as the ancient time, the Shamrock was sacred to the Druids because it illustrated why things natural came in threes like sea, earth and sky, and things human like birth, life and death. Saint Patrick even validated that number in the Trinity. Even Irish proverbs came in threes like the three things to be most wary of: the horn of a bull, the bark of a dog and the word of an Englishman! It is significant, therefore, that the Easter Rising would not have happened were it not for three factors; like the three leaves of the Shamrock of Insurrection, you might say.

The first leaf was the political and economic pendulum that swung back and forth from hope to hostility for an entire century from 1816 to 1916. In **1816** the peace of a shared prosperity, created by the Napoleonic War economy, ended and by **1820** post-war selfishness on the part of Parliament provoked the **Rockite Rebellion** which was brutally put down. Then in **1823** a peaceful attempt by Daniel O'Connell's **Catholic Association** renewed hopes of self-reliance. But, by **1830** it was back to violence as Parliament incited a **Tithe War** which was again brutally put down. In **1840** peaceful promise was again tried in the **Repeal Association**, but from **1845** on, official neglect during the **Great Hunger** gave rise to violence again in **1848** when the **Irish Confederation** rose and was defeated. Then in **1852** another peaceful attempt was born in the **Irish Conservative**

**Party** but landlord opposition killed that effort by **1858** at which time the **Irish Republican Brotherhood** was born and that was violently subdued in a failed Rising in **1867**. In the **1880s**, another attempt at peaceful accord was made by Charles Stewart Parnell's **Irish Parliamentary Party**, but by **1891** Westminster-instigated schemes split his Party until Parnell died. Then in **1913**, a peaceful labor movement ended in the **Great Labor Lockout** and official violence against workers drove James Connolly to start the **Irish Citizen Army** to fight back. Then came **1914** and another peaceful promise with the passage of a Home Rule Bill. But that Bill was being undermined by Orange Order opposition, the Curragh Mutiny in which British military refused to enforce it and Parliamentary duplicity in attempting to change the Bill to partition Ireland. History was repeating itself. For 100 years, peaceful attempts had always been frustrated, driving the Irish to violence only to be put down after which a peaceful approach was tried again and the cycle was repeated, over and over. But they never gave up and the goal of every attempt – peaceful or violent, remained the same – self-determination. But that frustration was common to all previous risings. What made this time different was the second leaf of the Shamrock of Insurrection.

The second leaf was that behind the repeated frustration of promise and conflict, a dream was born with the **Gaelic Revival** – a national educational movement that revived a pride in their heritage through history. Indoctrinated by fireside tales in the days before television, few grew up without hearing the seanachie tell of past attempts at eliminating colonial oppression. Those tales were validated by teachers, fathers and grandfathers and a dream took shape with the formation of nationalist-oriented groups. There came Literary clubs like the **Ossianic Society**, the **Phoenix Literary Society** and the **Dungannon Clubs**. They formed societies like the **Gaelic League**, the **Gaelic Athletic Ass'n**, the **Hibernian Rifles** and **Irish Volunteers**; Ladies societies like **Inghinidhe na hEireann** and **Cumann na mBan** and youth clubs like **na Fianna hEireann**. And all the while Newspapers like the **Sword of Light**, the **United Irishman** and the **Irish Volunteer** promoted the nationalist gospel of self-determination. The Gaelic Revival stimulated the longing for liberation. Even Pearse recognized that when he said *the Irish revolution really began*

*when the seven Gaelic League members met in O'Connell Street. The germ of all future Irish history was in that back room.* But, if it was the Gaelic Revival that put the frustrated Irish on the Road to Rebellion, it was the Irish in America who paved that road for they were the third leaf of the shamrock of insurrection!

The motivation to action came from the Irish who were forced to flee their homeland, but who never fled their heritage. Britain had forced into exile angry Irish rebels like John Devoy, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and Tom Clarke. They had also forced into emigration millions of Ireland's sons and daughters fleeing hunger and eviction during the Artificial Famine. These displaced Irish formed a desperate Diaspora that I call the **Diasperadoes**. Americanized-Irish like Devoy, Rossa and Clarke joined with Irish-American sons of exiles, like Judge Daniel Cohalan and others, to influence existing organizations like the AOH to form such committees as the **Emmet Monument Association** and they created new societies like the **Napper Tandy Clubs, Clan na Gael, Friends of Irish Freedom** and more. They organized fund-raisers among the Diasperadoes who had overcome American prejudice to become a community of wage-earners – a community whose memories of the Great Hunger created a mentality that supported retribution. And they provided the weapon that would enable the Irish to topple the crown.

*Next month – The Hibernian Rifles*

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