

THE IMPACT OF THE 1916 RISING

Among the Nations

EDITOR

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Rory Sweetman surveys the Rising from the outer reaches of the British empire where the Irish communities of New Zealand and Australia were caught off-guard and were, at first, ill-equipped to rationalize what had occurred. However, those who had advocated an extension to Ireland of the legislative rights enjoyed by the empire's 'white settler dominions' quickly recovered from the shocking news. Persons of more militant inclinations, not least Bishop James Liston of Auckland, subsequently faced imprisonment for their open identification with the revolutionaries.

The potentially decisive influence of President Woodrow Wilson on Irish nationhood is assessed by Bernadette Whelan. Nuances surrounding the issue of American diplomatic intervention are detailed by Whelan, not least decisions with a bearing on US neutrality, 'small nations' and the tentative alliance with London. The rejection of Irish delegations to the Paris peace talks in 1919 is more explicable in this broader context.

Paris also features in Ian McKeane's essay on reactions to the Rising in a country where the First World War was being waged. McKeane charts how the French view of Ireland's 'days of blood' was coloured by their military pact with the British and suspicions that their German enemy was deeply implicated.

Priscilla Metscher argues that Connolly's role in 1916 should be assessed in terms of the agenda of international socialism when under great strain from the war. Certainly, Connolly's writings and world view evince a strong sense of connection to the European Left and the policies, theories and tactics that promoted the advancement of the workers.

The other iconic and controversial figurehead of 1916, Patrick Pearse, is presented in a new light by Róisín Ní Ghairbhí. Pearse, it is argued, was far more cognizant of the ancient culture and revolutionary traditions of Ireland than hitherto entertained. Ní Ghairbhí contends that aspects of Pearse's early political formation have either been suppressed or ignored by commentators wishing to present him as a conflicted, estranged maverick.

Peter Berresford Ellis examines popular concepts of 1916 which he believes cannot be sustained by modern scholarship. He takes issue with the esoteric notion of 'blood sacrifice' as an alleged motivational force underpinning 1916 and rejects criticism of Connolly as military strategist.

Brian P. Murphy also finds fault with the research methodology employed by several historians of the revolutionary period. In a robust essay Murphy identifies examples of selective quotation of documents, curious silences and problematic assertions which undermine the integrity of the published works.

Matt Treacy rejects the theory that the republican movement exploited the fiftieth anniversary of 1916 to build towards an armed campaign. Treacy details the internal discussions within republican circles in the mid-1960s and his findings suggest that 1966 cannot be viewed as the catalyst for the violence which broke out in 1969.

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The Limerick Volunteers and 1916

John O'Callaghan

The Irish Volunteers in Limerick were, on paper at least, one of the strongest units in the country. However, like the Volunteers in most counties, they had minimal impact on the events of Easter week 1916. This article assesses the development of the Limerick Volunteers in the national context and highlights certain problems that may have been unique to Limerick. The evolution of the Limerick Volunteers from their formation in 1913 until the Rising of 1916 is examined within the framework of Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) stratagem. There is an element of comparative analysis between conditions in Limerick and those in areas where the Volunteers did take action during the Rising.

Patrick Pearse's final manifesto of Easter week 1916 asserted that the military council of the IRB had planned a general mobilization and simultaneous rising of Irish Volunteer companies throughout the country. Yet the Volunteers of just four counties – Dublin, Wexford, Galway and Louth – rose in arms during Easter week. Only fragmentary documentary evidence exists of detailed plans for a nationwide rising; most of this relates to the landing and distribution of arms from Germany. Instructions were couched in vague, generalized terms about 'holding lines'. The report of the Royal Commission on the Rising commented admiringly on the military planning and implementation of the Dublin insurrection.¹

Here again, however, the evidence is incomplete, much of it having gone to the grave with the executed rebels. It seems plausible that the Rising, as it occurred on Easter Monday, was a modified version of what had been planned for Sunday, that the rebel forces were smaller than envisaged and that this affected the pattern and nature of the military action. In any case, there is a strong impression that, as is the case for many historians, the provincial rebellion was something of an afterthought for the military council. The insistence in the original instructions to all provincial commandants that no action should be taken before 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday, when Dublin would already be in action, shows that not only was Dublin of primary concern to the leaders but that the

initiative had been taken out of the hands of local officers. The Rising was planned and instigated by the IRB as distinct from the Volunteers. The plans of the military council were based on the assumption that the IRB would be able to commit the whole Volunteer organization to a rising, including the chief of staff, Eoin MacNeill.

MacNeill saw the role of the Volunteers as strictly defensive, unless the government attempted to enforce conscription or disarm the Volunteers. Tom Clarke and Seán MacDiarmada defeated the conservative elements within the IRB in 1910–11 and took control of the supreme council. The Royal Commission on the Rising found that Clarke and fellow Fenian veteran John Daly of Limerick were at the centre of the 'inner circle by which the plans for insurrection were no doubt matured'.² The triumvirate of Daly, Clarke and MacDiarmada were one of the main catalysts of the Rising, and the Daly household was the hub of significant seditious activity. Clarke and MacDiarmada believed that the betrayal of plans by spies and informers had contributed heavily to the failure of previous revolutionary efforts.³ With this in mind, they set out to plan an insurrection, the details of which would be known to only a select few. In the Volunteers they had their instrument of rebellion; in the Great War they had their opportunity. All the members of the military council, with the exception of Clarke, who deliberately stayed in the background, were on the central executive of the Volunteers. Pearse, director of organization, Plunkett, director of military operations, and Ceannt (from August 1915), director of communications, were on the general council. However, the 2,000 IRB men around the country did not know that they were to follow only the instructions of this clique at the critical moment. In the end, the almost absolute secrecy maintained by an elite cabal who were relying on the unquestioning obedience of a nationwide revolutionary organization that they kept in ignorance undermined their objective of staging a nationwide rebellion everywhere except in Dublin, where they were in a position to directly control events. In fact, the military council encountered greater direct opposition to their plans from within the ranks of the Volunteers than they did from the British authorities.⁴

In 1911 the Limerick city IRB was reorganized under the guise of the Wolfe Tone Club debating society. As well as debating, the society purchased six .22 rifles and trained in their use.⁵ On 14 November 1913, eleven days before the Irish Volunteers were publicly inaugurated, Fr John Fitzgerald, chairman of the West Limerick United Irish League (UIL) executive, had urged the creation of a volunteer force to resist Carson and the 'weak-kneed Liberals' and threatened bloodshed if home rule was not enacted. In December however, local MP Thomas Lundon told the east Limerick UIL executive that a volunteer army was unnecessary and urged restraint in committing to the movement until the party

leaders gave direction.⁶ His comments reflected the reservations of nationalists about the significance of the Volunteers and their potential to undermine Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP). Given the strength of opposition to the IPP in Limerick, these fears were well justified. In January 1914 the county inspector reported that John Daly 'and his followers are the principals in this movement as a large section of the Nationalists believe there is no necessity for it at the moment'.⁷

In December, just as Bulmer Hobson had engineered the national foundation of the Volunteers for the IRB the previous month, local members of the IRB made arrangements to establish a corps of Volunteers in Limerick city. Mayor Philip O'Donovan presided at a public meeting in the Athenaeum Hall, Cecil Street, on 25 January, and stated that should the movement 'be in any way hostile to the cause so ably advocated by Mr. Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party he would not officially support it'. However, the IRB, in the guise of the Wolfe Tone Club, and through acting as representatives of trade unions, were able to dominate the original provisional committee of the city Volunteers. As well as mirroring the IRB infiltration of the national Volunteer executive, this verified the county inspector's January analysis of the role of Daly and the composition of the city Volunteers, as did comments made by Patrick Pearse. Pearse and Roger Casement addressed the Athenaeum meeting and reported favourably to Tom Clarke on the response of those present.⁸ Pearse told Daly that he had pitched his speech

... in a key intended to find a response in the Home Rule heart as well as in the Nationalist heart, more properly so called. I believe that the rank and file of the Home Rulers are ready, if properly handled, to go as far as you have gone and I hope to go. Here again the Volunteer movement seems to be the one thing that will bring them into line with us.⁹

This is a prime example of what Desmond Ryan referred to as Pearse's 'extraordinary outlook on insurrection in which he believed so strongly that he persuaded himself that everyone must at heart agree with him'.¹⁰

As in the rest of the country, the Volunteer organization grew rapidly throughout Limerick. The inspector-general pointed out that 'each county will soon have a trained army far outnumbering the police, and those who control the Volunteers will be in a position to dictate to what extent the law of the land may be carried into effect'.¹¹

With the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, the question of who controlled the Volunteers developed along lines amenable to the purposes of the IRB. In the meantime, the Curragh incident in April, the Larne gun-running in May, and the Howth gun-running in July acted as spurs for Volunteer membership. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC)

recorded the strength of the Volunteers in Limerick before the September split as being 8,235 members in eighty-two branches.¹² David Fitzpatrick calculated that there were fifty-eight members of the Volunteers per thousand of population in Limerick at this time. The comparative figure for Clare was forty-nine.¹³

The strength of the City regiment in September was approximately 1,250 men. When the regiment split over Redmond's war policy, which called on Volunteers to join the British army, 250 men initially remained with the original organization, a higher proportion than in the rest of the country.¹⁴ On 4 October, 208 men attended the first meeting of those who followed Eoin MacNeill. The same number attended on 11 October but from that point on the average turnout was around 100.¹⁵ Some 1,000 Volunteers declared for Redmond. However, this figure disguises the fact that Redmond's endorsement of the war was not greeted with enthusiasm in Limerick. Attendances at drilling had declined substantially after the outbreak of war in August. The county inspector reported that this was partly due to a lack of competent instructors but that the principal factor was that Volunteers believed that they would be required to join the army if they continued to parade.¹⁶ The National Volunteers showed no immediate desire to join the army, according to the inspector general, and a number of farmers' sons emigrated because of a rumour that the Militia Ballot Act was about to be enforced.¹⁷

Ernest Blythe was occasionally successful in encouraging National Volunteers to secede, particularly where he had the support of the Catholic clergy, and in recruiting farmers' sons of military age, who believed that membership of the Irish Volunteers would protect them from conscription.¹⁸ Liam Manahan, commandant of the Galtee battalion, assessed the split as ultimately beneficial for the Irish Volunteers. He argued that the elimination of destabilizing and demoralizing political rivalries provided the Irish Volunteers with a new unity of purpose and made them a more cohesive military unit.¹⁹ It was certainly the case that the Irish Volunteers now had a more definite goal, that Redmond's influence had been removed, and that this suited the IRB. However, the continuing presence of IRB agents within the Volunteers meant that divisions remained, particularly among the leadership. These divisions were most profoundly manifested in the intrigues and uncertainties of Easter 1916.

The custodians of the weapons which the city Volunteers had acquired before the split followed MacNeill. The threat of the minority element was therefore disproportionately potent. The National Volunteers, despite their greater numbers, had only a fraction of the rifles per capita that the Irish Volunteers had, and 'not much' ammunition.²⁰ Colonel Moore, the military leader of the National Volunteers, found it

almost impossible to procure rifles from manufacturers who were concentrating on supplying the army. At some stage in the first half of 1915 Colonel Moore had gone to Limerick with proposals for reconciliation between the rival Volunteer forces but the 'local extremists' would not entertain him. MacNeill, for his part, would not countenance adopting the insurrectionary methods advocated by subordinate leaders in Limerick as the basis for reconciliation.²¹ In December efforts by the rector of Mungret College, Fr Cahill, SJ, to effect reconciliation came to nothing because the National Volunteers refused to compromise on any grounds.²²

By early 1916 the National Volunteer movement in Limerick existed only in name. The Irish Volunteers, meanwhile, were increasing in strength. There were 689 members in seventeen branches in February and 872 members in twenty-two branches in June, according to the police. They greatly improved their organization and efficiency.²³ This was due in large part to the work of Robert Monteith in the city and east Limerick, and the efforts of Blythe in west Limerick. The Limerick Volunteers were well regarded by their colleagues nationally. In the summer of 1914 the *Sinn Féin* newspaper described the Limerick city corps as 'the best drilled in Ireland'.²⁴ In February 1915 Pearse wrote: '*Is dóigh le'n a lán gurab é cath Luimnighe an cath is treise dá bhfuil againn. Tá fir maithe in a gceannais, fir nach bhfuil a sárugad in Éireann, ar dílseacht, nár ar calmacht, nár ar stuaim.*' ('There are many who think the Limerick battalion is the best we have. There are good men in command, men whose loyalty, courage and determination are not surpassed in Ireland').²⁵

Early in 1915 an inspector from headquarters identified the Limerick regiment as the most efficient in the provinces and as leading Dublin in some respects. A year later, thanks to the competence of its leaders, Limerick was still the best-organized urban area outside Dublin.²⁶ The circumstances in Dublin, however, were radically different to those in the rest of the country. Communications were better, it was easier to concentrate forces there and the Dublin brigade was better drilled and armed. In addition, Dublin officers were more closely informed of the intentions of the military council and, consequently, were better prepared for the Rising. In August 1915 Monteith left Limerick and made his way to Germany to act as drill instructor to Casement's prospective Irish brigade. Monteith was a serious loss to the Limerick Volunteers. Liam Manahan believed that had Monteith remained in Limerick the Volunteer leadership would have been more disciplined and mature by the time of the Rising.²⁷ Coupled with the departure of Monteith, the imprisonment and deportation of Blythe was a serious blow to the Limerick Volunteers on an organizational and operational level. Liam Mellows had fallen foul of the Defence of the Realm Act along with

Blythe. His return to Galway before the Rising gave the Volunteers there a significant boost.

On 23 May 1915, Whit Sunday, Volunteer companies from Dublin, Cork and Tipperary joined their Limerick colleagues to parade through the city. Between 1,100 and 1,200 of what the Redmondite *Limerick Leader* labelled as 'pro-German' Volunteers marched. The police estimated that 700 of the Volunteers were armed, and were accompanied by 220 Fianna members.²⁸ The marchers encountered organized, persistent, and extensive barracking and physical challenges, particularly at the hands of the women of the Irishtown district, many of whom had menfolk serving in the British army. One of the leading republicans in Limerick, Madge Daly, among others, claimed that a representative of the Ancient Order of Hibernians had come from the headquarters of that organization in Dublin to foment opposition to the Volunteer parade and left money in all the public houses in the poorer quarters of the city, such as the Irishtown, where the separation allowance families lived.²⁹ Michael Hartney stated that the violence was the work of 'an organised gang of hooligans, all members of the National Volunteers'.³⁰ The Galbally Volunteers discharged shots into the air at one stage and fifty police and a number of priests were required to restore order.³¹ The only consolation the Volunteers could possibly have taken from the episode was that they had maintained discipline in the face of formidable provocation, yet the following week Pearse wrote, rather sanguinely, to Madge Daly: 'I hope our visit has helped the Limerick Company. We all felt that the great bulk of the people in the city were sympathetic and that the hostile element was small, though noisy. Personally, I found the whole experience useful.'³²

The hostile reactions to the Volunteers in Limerick on Whit Sunday and in Newcastlewest on St Patrick's Day, 1916, when they were pelted with rotten eggs, were not isolated incidents. A meeting of the Limerick County Board of the Volunteers on 24 April 1915 made special arrangements for the upcoming Whit Sunday parade. All Limerick units were asked to support the newly formed Irish Volunteers Insurance Society, *An Cumann Cosanta*, 'which insures Irish Volunteers against victimisation, the possibility of which we have learned through experience'.³³ James Gubbins concurred with the police that the persecution that Irish Volunteers were most likely to face because of their political activities was loss of employment:

Many who attended the inaugural parade did not stay the course. This was not surprising, some were teachers or Civil Servants, whose livelihood would have been jeopardised, had they continued in the movement. Employers at the time wielded a most potent weapon ... the weapon of economic pressure, or to use a cruder phrase, the threat of

starvation, and there were some who did not hesitate to use it. One member of the Committee, a married man with a family, was confronted with the blunt choice, 'The Volunteers or your job'. Who could blame him for choosing his job?³⁴

Michael Hartney observed that while recruits 'were of the better type, sober, respectable young men', it was, nevertheless, 'tantamount to leaving a job to join, because the employers, in the main, were bitterly opposed to the Irish Volunteers'.³⁵ The Crowley family of Ballylanders were heavily involved in the Volunteers. The local post office was on their premises and Tadg was sub-postmaster. In March 1915 Tadg received a 'warning letter' from the government in relation to his Volunteer activities. A post office inspector warned the Crowleys that if they did not resign from the Volunteers they would have to give up the post office. On the advice of Michael Colivet, the most senior Irish Volunteer in Limerick, they adopted a less public role in the Volunteers.³⁶ Alphonsus O'Halloran believed that such economic considerations were a crucial factor in the decrease in Volunteer numbers in the city from over 200 at the first couple of meetings after the split in October 1914 to an average of 100 thereafter. Liam Forde confirmed that 'employees of a considerable number of business concerns were told that they must desist parading with the "Sinn Féin" section of the Volunteers or lose their employment. Consequently, the recorded average attendance at parades fell to about one hundred.'³⁷

In January 1916 Redmond won a significant victory in securing Ireland's exclusion from conscription when it was imposed on Britain. In February the *Leader* declared that 'the heart of Limerick remains thoroughly sound and inflexible in its fealty to the leadership of Mr. Redmond'.³⁸ On 25 January Stephen Quin, a unionist, was elected mayor in the hope that his family connections and personal friendship with the lord lieutenant would allow him to attract industry, in the shape of munitions factories, to Limerick.³⁹ Councillor Dalton proposed a resolution that the new mayor should not act in a manner 'that might be likely to lower the national dignity of our city'. In an unambiguous indication of a significant shift in the political equilibrium of Limerick Corporation since August 1914, when only two members opposed Redmond's call for Irishmen to join the British army, nine out of thirty-seven members of the corporation, who, to use Councillor Matthew Griffin's expression, considered Quin a unionist 'flunkey', supported Dalton's resolution.⁴⁰

In the wake of the split in the Volunteers Michael Colivet was elected as officer commanding (OC) Limerick city battalion. George Clancy, head-centre of the IRB in Limerick, and James Ledden, another Fenian veteran, became vice-commandant and honorary colonel respectively. Colivet was not sworn into the IRB until December 1915, by which stage

orders cancelling manoeuvres for outlying units but decided to take the city battalion on its usual march to Killonan in an effort to maintain the pretence of normality.

On Sunday afternoon Colivet received a coded message from Fitzgibbon in Dublin that the Rising was off. Forde returned at midnight with a message from Pearse that everything was postponed for the present but to await further orders. Gubbins returned on Monday with a message from MacDiarmada that the Rising would still go ahead and to resist arrest. Patrick Whelan returned from a second mission to Tralee on Monday morning with the news that Monteith had counselled against action. Agnes Daly brought a dispatch from Pearse to Colivet in Killonan at 2 p.m.: The Dublin brigade was going into action at noon and Colivet should carry out his orders of the previous Tuesday. Circumstances had changed drastically, however, and the orders no longer seemed relevant to the officers present.

On Tuesday, 25 April, Colivet convened a meeting of senior officers at which, by a majority of ten to six, it was decided that nothing more could be done. On Friday, 5 May, after it was learned that the British were set to raid for arms, the Limerick Volunteers, through Colivet, and with Bishop O'Dwyer acting as a facilitator, surrendered their guns to Mayor Quin, who passed them on to Sir Anthony Weldon, commander of the British forces in Limerick. Limerick Volunteers surrendered a total of 253 rifles, 105 shotguns, twenty-eight revolvers, twenty-six sword bayonets, three swords and 13,228 rounds of various types of ammunition.⁵² Monteith claimed that the Volunteers actually retained their working rifles and revolvers and substituted unserviceable weapons for them. Madge Daly and James Gubbins claimed that most of the men destroyed their weapons before surrendering them.⁵³ Whether or not surrendered weapons were destroyed is something of a moot point, however, because they were no longer in Volunteer hands.

The issue of the surrender of arms was crucial for two reasons. Firstly, it created dissension in the ranks. Secondly, the retained arms remained available for use at a later stage. If the surrender of arms was partly an attempt to pre-empt arrests and deportations it was largely successful in this regard, although Colivet reported to the Volunteer executive that 'contrary to common report, no engagement whatsoever was given, or sought, that there would be immunity from subsequent arrest'.⁵⁴ Most of the fifty people who were arrested in Limerick after the Rising were released after a few days.⁵⁵ The relatively benign reaction of Colonel Weldon, who was an 'Irishman and a Home Ruler' according to James Gubbins, meant that the Volunteer organization in Limerick remained basically intact after the Rising.⁵⁶ In fact, the police became aware of almost immediate efforts on the part of the 'Sinn Féin revolutionary

movement' in Limerick to sustain and build subversive momentum at underground meetings and through the Irish National Aid League and Irish Volunteers Dependents' Fund.⁵⁷

The point has also been made that had the authorities not generally refrained from aggressive action when they found themselves in situations such as that which developed at Glenquin on Easter Sunday, when RIC men armed with carbines shadowed the Volunteers, it might have provoked guerrilla fighting in the provinces before the Dublin Rising was defeated.⁵⁸ Police and military correspondence reveals a great deal of uncertainty among the authorities about how to react to the Volunteer renaissance so soon after the apparently terminal defeat of Easter week. However, a report written by Colonel Weldon on 18 January 1917 seems to indicate that, sometime earlier in the month, Colivet had assured him that there would be no further drilling. Weldon, under the impression that Colivet did not approve of the resumption of Volunteer activities and that he would try to curtail drilling, recommended a restrained course of tolerance. County-Inspector Yates, on the other hand, pressed for Madge Daly to be court-martialled for allowing her premises to be used by the Volunteers.⁵⁹

Uncertainty reigned in south Limerick. Commandant Liam Manahan received MacNeill's order cancelling the 'manoeuvres' planned for Easter Sunday shortly before noon that morning from The O'Rahilly. He paraded in Galbally nonetheless (Manahan had had interviews with Tomás MacDonagh in Dublin during the previous weeks and knew that MacNeill was not fully aware of the gravity of the situation) and did not dismiss his men until 6 p.m. that evening by which time MacNeill's order had been repeated to him no less than five times from Charleville, Limerick and Tipperary. It was not until the early hours of Tuesday morning that vague information arrived that fighting had started in Dublin. He received no further orders but notified the companies of the Galtee battalion to remain on stand-by. On Wednesday Batt Laffan, among the most senior Volunteers in Limerick city, sent word that there was no likelihood of any action taking place in the city because of the reinforced military presence there. At 10 p.m. on Wednesday Seán Treacy of Tipperary brought verbal confirmation that there was fighting in Dublin and urged Manahan to take action against the local RIC barracks. Manahan ordered immediate mobilization but the battalion's dispatch riders had been dismissed and Captain Tom Murphy of Ballylanders had used all his riders to mobilize his own company. This meant that it was after midnight on Wednesday when Manahan's orders for remobilization were received by Galbally, Mitchelstown, Anglesboro, Kilfinane and Ardpatrick.

By 6 a.m. on Thursday morning only Ballylanders and Galbally had fully mobilized and were in a position to implement Manahan's plan. The

plans for an insurrection were well advanced.⁴¹ Colivet was OC of the Limerick brigade at Easter 1916. As was the case with MacNeill and the national leadership of the Volunteers, then, the senior officer in Limerick, if he was as radical, was certainly not as well informed as some of his junior staff. Charlie Wall was not sworn into the IRB until Tuesday 16 April. He was then appointed OC west Limerick battalion and informed of plans for the Rising.⁴² In March 1915 Edward Daly, Thomas MacDonagh, Éamon de Valera and Éamonn Ceannt were appointed to command the four Dublin city battalions. Pearse, Plunkett, Hobson and O'Rahilly were appointed commandants on the headquarters staff. De Valera joined the IRB soon after but neither he nor long-term member Hobson were in the confidence of the inner circle. O'Rahilly did not join the IRB. Thomas Ashe, as OC of the 5th battalion of the Dublin brigade, was also working on plans for the Rising since early 1915.

On 15 November 1915 Terence MacSwiney lectured to the Limerick Volunteers on 'the spirit of Mitchel's teachings and its application today'. He chose this subject because he believed that 'too many of them [the Volunteers] expect to be alive after the business is all over, and I hope to show that Mitchel teaches something else'.⁴³ In December the police learned from an informant that 'prominent extremists and Irish Volunteers recently met at Limerick to discuss the proposal to strike a blow for Irish Independence'. They were apparently awaiting the opportunity which they believed the conscription scare would afford them in the form of popular support.⁴⁴ Clarke and MacDiarmada spent Christmas 1915 at Daly's and it may well have been during this visit that Easter Sunday was decided on as the date of the Rising. In his last public speech, delivered to the west Limerick Volunteers at Newcastlewest on St Patrick's Day 1916, Seán MacDiarmada repeatedly referred to the need for sacrifice and resistance. He urged them to vow that 'the hillsides of Ireland would be dyed with their blood before they gave up any arms'.⁴⁵

The Irish Volunteer units in Limerick in 1916 were comprised of the Limerick city, west Limerick and Galtee battalions and a battalion in the Doon-Castleconnell area. These four battalions, together with four more in Clare led by Captain Michael Brennan, constituted the newly formed Limerick command under Michael Colivet. A full-strength battalion should have 500 soldiers. None of these eight battalions ever mustered much more than 200 men. The city battalion was the best armed yet not every city Volunteer had access to a rifle.⁴⁶ Between 150 and 400 west Limerick Volunteers, for instance, many of whom had no firearms, assembled at Glenquin castle on Easter Sunday under the command of Charlie Wall. The last instruction that they received was MacNeill's countermanding order at 3 p.m. before disbanding around 8 p.m.⁴⁷ Again, between 150 and 400 Volunteers from Ahane, Doon, Cappamore, Killonan, Caherconlish

and Killaloe mobilized in Castleconnell but were dismissed.⁴⁸ The British forces in the city alone consisted of 800 infantry, a battery of artillery, and 100 constabulary. By Easter Monday afternoon 2,000 infantry with two batteries of artillery had taken complete charge of the city, holding all the roads and bridges. The local RIC judged that only the prompt arrival of the military had averted violence in the city.⁴⁹ Inspector-General Chamberlain formed the opinion that if Casement had not been arrested and the arms had landed, the Volunteers in every county would have risen.⁵⁰

Until the Tuesday before Easter, Colivet was working from ambiguous instructions to take Limerick and hold the line of the Shannon in the event of a rising. It was only then that he learned of the expected arms landing in Kerry (the military council had known since the end of 1915 and Austin Stack, in charge of operations in Kerry, had been informed in February). His plans to hold the north shore of the river and retire into Clare if necessary were now obsolete. He met Pearse in Dublin on Wednesday and was tasked with taking delivery of the German arms at Abbeyfeale and forwarding the surplus to Galway while also attacking police and military barracks and disabling telegraph, telephone and rail communications. This was to be initiated before the arrival of the German arms in Abbeyfeale, in order to create a diversion which would ensure their safe passage. Colivet was also under the impression that a German expeditionary force was expected. When he had taken control of Limerick he was to relieve Dublin. In relative terms, a numerically weak, poorly equipped, inexperienced, embryonic army was being asked to go on the offensive against well-armed, experienced opponents in strong defensive positions.

Contrary to Terence MacSwiney's expectations, and to MacDiarmada's hopes, there was no violence in Limerick at Easter 1916.⁵¹ Patrick Whelan returned from Tralee with news of the capture of the *Aud* and the arrest of Casement and of Stack on Saturday. This prompted Colivet to send James Gubbins and Liam Forde to Dublin to ask for instructions and to suggest that the Rising should be postponed. Gubbins stated that after meeting MacDiarmada he sent a coded telegram to Limerick that the Rising was on, but Colivet does not appear to have received it. When Colivet had not heard anything by Saturday evening, he provisionally cancelled all operations planned in the Limerick command for Sunday. This nullified the impact of MacNeill's countermanding order to such an extent that it was already something of a dead letter when The O'Rahilly arrived with it on Sunday morning. The real significance of the countermanding order in the Limerick context lay in the fact that it was Colivet's first inkling of the divisions in headquarters. He was clearly not in the confidence of the military council. Thus, the IRB infiltration scheme was not fully effective. Colivet reiterated his

late arrival of his orders had made it impossible for the other companies to mobilize and procure arms. Word had also come from Cork that there was no possibility of military action there. Manahan then decided to demobilize and await definite orders but the next news was of the surrender in Dublin on the following Sunday. According to Manahan, it was on the advice of officers from the city and without his knowledge that Volunteers under his command relinquished their arms to the British late in the week following the surrender in Dublin. Seán Meade of Ballylanders company and Edmond O'Brien of Galbally company confirmed that the order to surrender arms came from Colivet rather than Manahan.⁶⁰ On the second Sunday after Easter the RIC warned Manahan that if the Ardpatrick company, who still retained their weapons, did not hand them over they would be arrested and deported. Manahan gave the Ardpatrick men the choice of giving up their arms. Some Volunteers took this option.⁶¹

IRB man Donal O'Hannigan took command of the Louth Volunteers at the start of April. O'Hannigan answered to Pearse and did not demobilize in response to MacNeill's countermanding order. He left Dundalk with 160 men on Sunday morning but only twenty-eight remained mobilized on Monday evening. Twelve RIC men surrendered to them in Lurgan Green and they arrested a number of British officers. They commandeered several cars and carts, wounding one incontinent farmer in the process, and captured another ten policemen at Castlebellingham and a Lieutenant Dunville of the Grenadier Guards. In a subsequent scuffle Dunville was wounded and Constable Magee fatally shot. O'Hannigan attempted to rendezvous with the Fingal battalion on Sunday but Thomas Ashe had surrendered.

Liam Mellows, who had been deported with Ernest Blythe in March, only resumed his command in Galway on Easter Monday night after returning from England in disguise. He was another IRB agent on the Volunteer executive but not in the confidence of the military council. After the disorder of Sunday 1,000 men mobilized around the county in response to Pearse's remobilization order on Monday, and between 500 and 600 bivouacked with Mellows. They were poorly armed and their orders to hold the line of the Shannon were based around the receipt of 3,000 German rifles.⁶² After unsuccessful raids on police barracks in Oranmore, Craughwell and Gort on Tuesday morning Mellows moved to Athenry. Following skirmishes with the RIC he moved south to Moyode castle on Thursday. The departure of 200 Volunteers from the camp on Friday prompted Mellows to move towards Clare with the intention of making contact with the Limerick Volunteers. The Galway insurgents eventually disbanded in the early hours of Saturday.

As elsewhere, there was much confusion in Wexford until Vice-Commandant Paul Galligan arrived with orders from Connolly on

Wednesday night to cut rail networks. There was no move against the rail lines but 100 Enniscorthy Volunteers took possession of that town in the early hours of Thursday morning. They did not perceive themselves to be sufficiently well armed to attack the RIC barracks. A smaller force set out for Dublin but retreated on meeting troops in Ferns. Enniscorthy held out until Monday, 1 May, when they got confirmation of the surrender from Pearse. There were no serious casualties in Galway or Wexford. The most innovative Volunteer exploit of Easter week was that of the 5th (Fingal) battalion of the Dublin brigade in north Dublin and Meath under Thomas Ashe and Richard Mulcahy. It was also the action that most closely prefigured the guerrilla tactics and barracks attacks of the 1919-21 campaign. Some 120 men mobilized on Sunday but dispersed that night. Approximately half that number reassembled on Monday. Though poorly armed, they were mobile, as all had bicycles. Their *modus operandi* was offensive rather than defensive. On Tuesday they lost twenty men to the GPO but on Wednesday the RIC in Swords and Donabate surrendered with minimal resistance. On Thursday they found Garristown RIC barracks largely abandoned. As they negotiated the surrender of Ashbourne barracks on Friday a police column of fifty-five men in seventeen cars came upon them. After five hours of fighting, two Volunteers had been killed and five wounded. Eight RIC men were dead and fifteen wounded. The motorized column and the barracks surrendered to Ashe. The Fingal battalion surrendered, under orders from Pearse, on Sunday, 30 April.⁶³

The Volunteers in Louth, Wexford, Galway and north Dublin, then, certainly occupied the opposition forces in their localities to various extents but had little or no direct impact on events in Dublin. They showed that the failure of the arms landing, conflicting orders and isolation from other active units were not insuperable impediments to action. Conversely, no countermanding order was necessary to cause inaction in Ulster. Pearse and Connolly had planned for the Belfast Volunteers to march across Ulster without engaging in action and to rendezvous with the Tyrone Volunteers on the way to Galway. The Tyrone men, however, simply refused to leave their own county and the plan disintegrated. Denis McCullough would not commit the Belfast Volunteers to action without the support of the Tyrone men, and that was the end of the Rising in Ulster.⁶⁴

In early 1917 the executive of the Volunteers authorized an inquiry into the action of the Limerick units (as well as Cork and Kerry) during Easter week. Having investigated the dispatches alleged to have been received by Limerick from Dublin and Kerry, they submitted their findings in March 1918:

at all and those they did receive were so conflicting that we are satisfied no blame whatsoever rests on the officers and men of Limerick. With regard to the surrender of arms, it is to be deprecated that at any time arms should be given up by a body of men without a fight.⁶⁵

While the report acknowledged that the loss of the arms ship coupled with conflicting and contradictory orders had contributed to the fiasco in Limerick, and that no blame could be attached to the battalions or their OCs, it also looked unfavourably on the surrender of arms. Colivet wanted a direct verdict as to whether or not the surrender of arms was justifiable in the prevailing circumstances, but none was forthcoming. Kathleen Clarke cast doubts on the competence, if not the commitment, of the Limerick leadership. She was highly critical of the indecisiveness of Colivet and Clancy. Clarke's sister, Madge Daly, believed that the Limerick officers did not possess the necessary military experience or acumen to deal capably with the situation that confronted them and claimed that the more influential older men overruled the younger men who were most keen for action.⁶⁶ Daly's claim seems to be substantiated by the record of voting. The six members of the local leadership who wanted to commence hostilities on 25 April but were outvoted by ten of their colleagues were Captains Liam Forde, Michael Brennan and James McInerney, Lieutenant John Lane, Section-Commander John McSweeney (who was IRB centre for a circle in the city) and Seán Ó Muirthuile, who was attached to the Limerick city regiment at the time. Michael Hartney also cast doubt on the willingness of the local leadership to fight, suggesting that they were more concerned with politics than revolution.⁶⁷

It should also be pointed out that approximately 140 out of the 200 or so city Volunteers turned out at Easter. This was a comparatively high ratio and it is likely that all would have had rifles at their disposal. Some were on duty elsewhere: Forde and Gubbins were in Dublin, Whelan was in Tralee, James McInerney had been assigned to Newcastlewest to oversee operations there, and John Grant, riding a motorcycle, was acting as liaison officer between the various units in Limerick. Not more than 100 Volunteers, however, and perhaps as few as eighty, spent Easter Sunday night at Killonan.⁶⁸ This somewhat mediocre response from the rank and file may have been partly attributable to Colivet's cancellation order of Saturday evening and MacNeill's countermanding order but it may also have been reflective of the leadership provided by senior local officers. The theory that the prevalence of revolutionary violence in the 1917-23 period was solely a function of the presence or absence of strong-willed individual leadership has been challenged by the statistical analyses of David Fitzpatrick, Peter Hart and Erhard Rumpf and A.C. Hepburn.⁶⁹ However, Easter week 1916 was a significantly different enterprise to the extended campaigns of the Tan and

Civil Wars. To a large extent, the provincial Rising turned on what local commanders knew of the military council's plans. Yet the Galway Volunteers, from an almost identical state of affairs, produced a very different result to Limerick. Whatever about providing inspirational leadership, Colivet certainly did not improvise in the imaginative manner that Mellows did in Galway or Ashe and Mulcahy did with the Fingal battalion.

The first accounts of the Rising to emerge in the Limerick local press concentrated on the German link and civilian casualties. On 27 April the *Limerick Chronicle* reported the attempted arms landing in its 'The War' column under the heading 'German Descent on Irish Coast'. The importance of the German connection was exaggerated at the time. On 4 May the *Chronicle* claimed that the rebels had fired indiscriminately at traffic and on 5 May the *Leader* described the number of casualties as 'appalling'. Initial public reaction seems to have been one of curiosity as to the causes of the rebellion combined with indignation. The climate in Limerick was very much one of staunch support for the IPP. The *Leader* claimed that the country was 'unquestionably behind the Irish leader' and identified a choice for nationalists between 'futile revolution and disaster' or 'constitutionalism and success'. Its editorial of 10 May did, however, warn against the tension being exacerbated by vindictiveness on the part of the military authorities. On more than one occasion, the executive of the city National Volunteers recorded its 'implicit confidence' in Redmond's leadership.⁷⁰

The prior of the Franciscan order in Limerick was a brother of John Dillon and, according to Madge Daly, 'a fanatical pro-Britisher'. One Franciscan preached a sermon denouncing the Volunteers and condemning the Rising as a sin.⁷¹ The county inspector commented that the insurrection was 'generally denounced as an insane act ... done by those getting German money and that these people had to show something for what they got' but he did note an undercurrent of sympathy with the rebels. The inspector-general identified that sympathy as being most pronounced in Limerick, Cork, Kerry, Clare and Galway.⁷² Limerick County Council, while renewing its confidence in Redmond, expressed 'regret that the military authorities should have acted so severely' and appealed to the government to deal leniently with 'our misguided fellow countrymen'. The council also congratulated Bishop O'Dwyer on his response to

... the solicitation of General Maxwell when he endeavoured to get his Lordship on his side at a time when he was engaged in directing that heroic Irishmen be shot down after surrender and further directing that the arrest and deportation of thousands of Irishmen and Irish women without charge or trial not to speak of the effort to victimise two patriotic clergymen in his Lordship's diocese.⁷³

O'Dwyer's defiance of General Maxwell, who wanted the bishop to take disciplinary action against two priests for their nationalist activities, and his glorification of the rebels coincided with and closely reflected, if not directed, a drastic transformation in the tenor of public opinion on the Rising. He was one of the first prominent figures to publicly voice what was to become the popular attitude to the rebels and the executions. While most of the IPP (with the exception of John Dillon), newspapers and Catholic hierarchy condemned the rebels, O'Dwyer praised the 'purity and nobility of their motives ... and splendour of their courage' and condemned the executions and the 'history of the mismanagement' of Ireland by Britain.⁷⁴ On 6 June Prime Minister Asquith told his cabinet that O'Dwyer's letter to Maxwell was one of five factors that had contributed to the reverse in opinion on the Rising and raised anti-British fervour.⁷⁵ The Limerick RIC shared this opinion:

The consequence of the rebellion and the subsequent executions have been an increase of disloyalty and disaffection and a more bitter feeling against England and the British Government than has ever before been experienced. The R.C. Bishop and some of the clergy have to some extent voiced the feelings of the people in this respect.⁷⁶

The failure of the Limerick Volunteers to realize their military potential in 1916 was to have significant implications for the organization of revolutionary forces in the county in subsequent years. Post-1916 the IRA in the city was split into two adversarial factions, as was the IRA in the Galtee battalion area. The divisions in what was to become the east Limerick brigade revolved around efforts by the IRB to secure its dominance by undermining Liam Manahan, who opposed its influence. The situation in the city was more complex. Alphonsus O'Halloran described how, in May 1917, the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club in the Irishtown district decided to form a Volunteer company from its own members and applied to the authorities of the battalion for a drill instructor. When this request was refused on the basis that a company already existed in the area the Casement Club resolved to form a unit independent of the 1st battalion. Other new companies soon organized in the area and linked up together under the designation of the 2nd battalion. It was a source of tension that some of those who became prominent in the new battalion were former Redmondite National Volunteers and had been bitter adversaries of the 1st battalion since the 1914 split. O'Halloran was skirting around the real issue, however. James Gubbins reasoned simply that 'The trouble started because no fighting took place in 1916.'⁷⁷

Some members of the 1st battalion were dissatisfied because no action had been taken during Easter week, and Lieutenant Arthur

new unit. Liam Forde recalled that 'the officers of the 1st Battalion were severely criticized for not having joined in the fight'. David Dundon and his colleagues in the new battalion 'resented very much the fact that although trained and equipped prior to 1916 the 1st Battalion did not engage in the fight'. Michael Hartney, who transferred from the 1st to the 2nd battalion, emphasized the military rationale behind the development. He recalled that there was

a feeling in Limerick that the existing Volunteers would not fight, owing to the officers in charge being more interested in politics than revolution, and it was decided to start a second battalion ... The 1st Battalion did not function and some of them transferred to the 2nd Battalion.

Peadar McMahon, in conversation with Richard Mulcahy, recalled that when he arrived in Limerick:

There was a company that met but didn't drill, didn't read any military manuals, didn't talk about military matters at all and on one occasion when you [Richard Mulcahy] were in Limerick ... you gave them a description of the battle of Ashbourne and I thought that might get them going but it didn't ... Later on a few of us came together and started a second battalion in Limerick. Dunne was Commandant there and I was Vice Commandant. Colivet was in charge of the first battalion.

George Clancy was another member of the 1st battalion who did not favour activity according to McMahon, and the 1st battalion was only stirred to meet by the formation of the 2nd.⁷⁸ George Embush told Ernie O'Malley that 'Neddie Punch and a few men wanted to do something or other, but the others didn't want to do anything ... the raids for arms were undertaken by small groups. When things got too hot the First Battalion didn't work.' Michael Stack's understanding of events was that the surrender of arms after the Rising had caused a lot of resentment and that this was largely responsible for the creation of the new unit. When Michael Brennan returned from internment in January 1917 he found 'great bitterness against the local leaders, more for surrendering their arms than for not fighting'. According to Patrick Whelan, 'dissatisfied members of the existing battalion, on the inspiration of Ernest Blythe, Peadar McMahon, Seán Ó Muirthuile and other Volunteer organisers, were responsible for the split'. Madge Daly and Peadar Dunne, who was appointed OC 2nd battalion and later OC mid-Limerick brigade, were also involved. James Gubbins told Ernie O'Malley that 'the row was first started through the Daly sisters'.

The Dalys apparently 'did everything to stigmatise the officers of the local Bn. They had Ernest Blythe with them in that'. Blythe 'identified

himself with the Second Bn ... Blythe took an active part in the Limerick situation ... he was a satellite of the Dalys'. Thus, as O'Halloran emphasized, there were two independent Irish Volunteer battalions in Limerick city, 'each claiming to be in control, and though there was no real friction between them, relations were not good, since the spirit of co-operation was lacking'. Gubbins stated that 'the 2 BNs never worked side by side'. Brennan recalled 'quite a lot of bitterness between the two outfits and neither would march under the command of the other'. Richard O'Connell felt that 'no one took any notice of the 1st' because it was not active.⁷⁹ Éamon Dore of the 1st battalion also confirmed that the cleavage and the ill-feeling between the two contingents originated in the circumstances of the formation of each unit:

The 1st Battalion was the unit which existed from the Redmondite Split in 1914, while the 2nd was formed after 1916 and was mostly composed of men who, up to the Easter Week executions had been very hostile to our movement and had been followers of the political party of John Redmond. It was men such as those who afterwards formed the 2nd Battalion who were foremost in the assault upon the Dublin Brigade when the latter came to Limerick on a recruiting parade on Whit Sunday 1915. This fact was not forgotten by those who composed the 1st Battalion, and was the chief cause of the bad feeling between these units.⁸⁰

The two battalions did not fully reunite until March 1921.

Hart has made the case that the division between the two battalions was based on a social barrier rather than simply evolving from the circumstances of their respective origins. Hart has shown that IRA units were often formed around a particular workplace, but that any kind of stratification or segregation between companies was very rare.⁸¹ However, Hart identified the Limerick city IRA as an exception. That the Limerick Volunteers fell out after the Rising was not unusual, but the consequences were. The split was not merely personal or political, but social, according to Hart.⁸² The 208 MacNeillite Volunteers who paraded on 4 October 1914 included

... a typical cross-section of the inhabitants, such as could be found in any urban area. Tradesmen, clerks, shopkeepers, teachers, shop assistants and labourers were all represented ... Players and former players of the game contributed to the ranks of each of the four companies, in particular to A Company, where they provided more than half the personnel. At the start, three of the four companies had Rugby men as captains. The GAA representation was relatively weak.⁸³

The post-Rising 1st battalion, criticized for its inactivity at Easter 1916, 'was nearly confined to the rugby clubs in the city', according to James

Gubbins, while the 2nd battalion 'were more working men' according to George Embush.⁸⁴ The five companies which comprised the 2nd battalion were organized around a number of junior hurling teams that had formed after the Rising.⁸⁵ Peadar McMahon was of the opinion that

The 2nd Battalion were a different type of people – decent fellows but they were all working people. The 1st Battalion were all white collar workers ... that was one of the reasons the 1st Battalion didn't like them – the fact that they were all working men.⁸⁶

That elements of the working class in Limerick were hostile to the Irish Volunteers had been borne out on Whit Sunday 1915. Skilled workers and the lower middle class were in a dominant majority in the ranks of the Limerick Volunteers before 1917, just as they were in Cork. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers were even less well represented in Limerick than they were in Cork.⁸⁷ The rift between the 1st and 2nd battalions, then, had its genesis in the split of September 1914 and the inaction of Easter week, but it was also reflective of the increasing involvement of members of the working class in militant nationalism from 1917. The 2nd battalion was 'manned largely by young fellows who had not anything to do with Bn 1', according to Gubbins.⁸⁸ In this sense, the reorganization of the city IRA into two battalions seems to have been as much an extension of the republican movement as it was a fissure within the movement.

It is reasonable to argue that, even at the most generous of estimates, the Volunteer forces in Limerick, in terms of both numbers and arms, were far below what was required to carry out any version of Pearse's orders to the letter. Communications were poor. The loss of the *Aud* meant that the existing plans became redundant. Nonetheless, the Volunteers of Galway, Wexford, Louth and Fingal showed that it did not have to be possible to carry out orders to the letter in order to go into action. Their efforts remained localized, however, because they lacked support. The choice by Colivet and his colleagues not to go into action was rational, but out of tune with the spirit of the IRB's intentions. Colivet, however, was not completely familiar with the intentions of the IRB because of their subterfuge. All Volunteer officers, on the other hand, were acquainted with that organization's policy of not surrendering arms.

The decision to stage the Rising on Easter Monday, forced on the rebel leaders by MacNeill's countermanding order, meant that it was impractical to expect the country at large to rise to any significant extent. Not only were communications inadequate but the chain-of-command had been severely compromised. The orders distributed to selected officers on Monday could not counteract the effect of repeated eleventh-hour volte-face. The provincial Volunteers were unsure about which

orders to follow or what was happening in Dublin, and they did not have the arms they were told they would receive. It is unlikely that MacNeill's countermanding order alone stopped many Volunteers who wanted to fight from participating in the Rising. This was certainly the case in Dublin, and, in the context of Colivet's cancellation order of Saturday night, also applied to Limerick. MacNeill did not sink the *Aud* or corrupt the chain-of-command but his countermanding order did grievously undermine the already tenuous plans for a nationwide rebellion.

NOTES

1. *Report of the Royal Commission on the rebellion in Ireland. Minutes of evidence and appendix of documents*, H. C., 1916 (Cd. 8311), pp. 10, 39, 55. I wish to acknowledge funding received from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences.
2. *Report of the Royal Commission on the rebellion*, p. 1.
3. Indicative of the danger of infiltration by spies and informers was the fact that a friend of the Daly family was supplying information to the police. See Note 44 below.
4. For full explorations of these issues see Maureen Wall, 'The background to the Rising, from 1914 until the issue of the countermanding order on Easter Saturday 1916' and 'The plans and the countermand: The country and Dublin', as well as G.A. Hayes-McCoy, 'A Military History of the 1916 Rising', in Kevin B. Nowlan (ed.), *The Making of 1916* (Dublin, 1969); see also Kevin B. Nowlan, 'Tom Clarke, MacDermott and the IRB' and T. Desmond Williams, 'Eoin MacNeill and the Irish Volunteers', in F.X. Martin (ed.), *Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916* (London, 1967).
5. National Archives Ireland [herein NAI], Bureau of Military History (BMH), Witness Statement (WS) 1420, Patrick Whelan, pp. 1-2.
6. County Inspector (CI), Limerick, Monthly Report [herein MR], November and December 1913, Colonial Office (CO) 904/91.
7. CI, Limerick, MR, January 1914, CO 904/92.
8. *Limerick Chronicle*, 27 January 1914; Michael Brennan, *The War in Clare, 1911-21* (Dublin, 1980), p. 8; For more on the infiltration of the Limerick Volunteers by the IRB see NAI, BMH, WS 1710, Liam Forde, pp. 2-3; Tom Clarke to John Daly, 26 January 1914 (University of Limerick Special Collections [herein ULSC], Daly Papers [herein DP], Box 2, Folder 47); NAI, BMH, WS 1700, Alphonsus J. O'Halloran, pp. 1-4.
9. Pearse to Daly, 29 January 1914, in Louis le Roux's unpublished biography of John Daly, 'The life and letters of John Daly', Chapter 13, p. 4 (University of Limerick Special Collections, Daly Papers, Box 3, Folder 73). It was around this time that Pearse was sworn into the IRB.
10. Desmond Ryan, *The Rising: The Complete Story of Easter Week* (Dublin, 1949), p. 83.
11. CI, Limerick; Inspector-General [herein IG], MR, May 1914, CO 904/93.
12. CI, Limerick, MR, September 1914, CO 904/94.
13. David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-21: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Dublin, 1998), p. 133.
14. Somewhere in the region of 13,000 of the 180,000 Volunteers followed MacNeill. The figures cited by the various authorities often differ but the orders of scale are generally consistent. See Joe Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 22.
15. NAI, BMH, WS 1700, Alphonsus J. O'Halloran, p. 8; Madge Daly Memoirs (hereafter MDM), p. 50 (ULSC, DP, Box 3, Folder 77); Mannix Joyce, 'The story of Limerick and Kerry in 1916', *Capuchin Annual* (1966), p. 330.
16. CI, Limerick, August and December 1914, CO 904/95.
17. IG, MR, October 1914, CO 904/95.
18. CI, Limerick, MR, March 1916, CO 904/99.
19. Liam Manahan (ULSC, Liam Manahan Papers (hereafter LMP), Book 3, pp. 15-17).
20. CI, Limerick, MR, October-December 1914, CO 904/95; The chief secretary put 176 rifles in the hands of 437 Irish Volunteers but only 65 rifles in the hands of 7,081 National

- Volunteers as being in possession of 243 and 195 rifles respectively. Breandán MacGiolla Choille (ed.), *Intelligence Notes, 1913-16* (Dublin, 1966), pp. 80, 110-12, 178-9.
21. Precise of information received by the Crime Branch Special [herein CBS], June 1915, CO 904/97.
 22. CI, Limerick, MR, December 1915, CO 904/98.
 23. IG, MR, October 1915; CI, Limerick, MR, November 1915, CO 904/98; February-June 1916, CO 904/99-100; MacGiolla Choille (ed.), *Intelligence Notes*, pp. 149, 215, 222.
 24. Sinn Féin, 4 July 1914.
 25. Quoted in NAI, BMH, WS 765, James Gubbins, pp. 8-9.
 26. *Irish Volunteer*, 13 February 1915; 16 January 1916.
 27. Liam Manahan (ULSC, LMP, Book 3, pp. 18-20).
 28. IG, MR, May 1915; Precise of information received by the CBS, May 1915, CO 904/97; MacGiolla Choille (ed.), *Intelligence Notes*, p. 222.
 29. *National Volunteer*, 29 May 1915; *Limerick Leader*, 26 May 1915; *Irish Volunteer*, 29 May, 5 June 1915; MDM, pp. 87-9 (ULSC, DP, Box 3, Folder 77); NAI, BMH, WS 1700, Alphonsus J. O'Halloran, pp. 9-17; Joyce, 'The Story of Limerick and Kerry in 1916', pp. 333-5.
 30. NAI, BMH, WS 1415, Michael Hartney, p. 2.
 31. *Limerick Chronicle*, 25 May 1915; See also NAI, BMH, WS 456, Liam Manahan, pp. 3-4.
 32. Patrick Pearse to Madge Daly, 28 May 1915 (ULSC, DP, Box 1, Folder 29).
 33. *Irish Volunteer*, 15 May 1915.
 34. Precise of information received by the CBS, June 1915, CO 904/97; NAI, BMH, WS 765, James Gubbins, pp. 5, 9-10.
 35. NAI, BMH, WS 1415, Michael Hartney, p. 1.
 36. NAI, BMH, WS 737, Seán Meade, p. 2; *Report of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion*, p. 62.
 37. NAI, BMH, WS 1700, Alphonsus J. O'Halloran, p. 8; WS 1710, Liam Forde, pp. 3-4.
 38. *Limerick Leader*, 11 February 1916.
 39. Judith Crosbie, 'The Era of Radicalism: Limerick's Mayors during World War One', in David Lee (ed.), *Remembering Limerick: Historical Essays Celebrating the 800th Anniversary of Limerick's First Charter Granted in 1197* (Limerick, 1997).
 40. *Limerick Chronicle*, 25 January 1916.
 41. NAI, BMH, WS 1420, Patrick Whelan, pp. 4-5; WS 765, James Gubbins, pp. 6-8.
 42. NAI, BMH, WS 164, Charles Wall, pp. 1-2.
 43. Terence MacSwiney to Madge Daly, 23 October 1915 (ULSC, DP, Box 1, Folder 39); Terence MacSwiney to Madge Daly, 1 November 1915 in MDM, p. 83 (ULSC, DP, Box 3, Folder 77).
 44. IG, MR, December 1915, CO 904/98. This was presumably the same informant who, a year earlier, was able to tell Constable James J. O'Mahony of William Street barracks with whom John Daly was in correspondence as well as who he was regularly meeting with in Limerick. However, O'Mahony did write that he also had 'other sources' of information on the Dalys. County Inspector Gates also referred to O'Mahony garnering information from 'other sources'. The information provided by the informant in early 1915 does not seem to have been very revealing and he was 'afraid to be inquisitive fearing they might become suspicious, for he says they are aware that letters coming through the post are under observation'. Censorship of Daly's post from November 1914, including his correspondence with MacDermott and Tom and Kathleen Clarke, had been unproductive and at the end of January 1915, by which stage it had become obvious to the police that this circle operated an alternative system to the general post for sensitive correspondence, the censorship was ended. These reports on censorship and the Limerick informant were all marked 'Secret' and presented to the Crime Special Branch of Dublin Castle between November 1914 and February 1915. CO 904/164.
 45. *Weekly Observer*, 25 March 1916.
 46. Liam Manahan claimed that on St Patrick's Day 400 men of the Galtee battalion, in full uniform and nearly all armed with some kind of weapon, paraded in Ardpark. NAI, BMH, WS 456, Liam Manahan, pp. 7, 18. If 400 men were actually armed it is likely that many would have been carrying 1798-style pikes. The RIC reported that 300 Irish Volunteers, 140 of them armed, marched in Ardpark on St Patrick's Day. Some 208 Irish Volunteers reportedly marched in Newcastlewest, 155 of them armed. Police accounts of the city parades vary. Four hundred National Volunteers 'jeered' between 150 armed Irish Volunteers and fifty Fianna, and 240 Volunteers, 179 of them armed. 'Sinn Féin Movement', CO 904/23; CI, Limerick, MR, March 1916, CO 904/96. According to Undersecretary Matthew Nathan, on

- specifically 161 Lee-Enfield, Lee-Metford and other .303 magazine rifles, twenty-five Martin-Enfield and other .303 single loaders, twenty Mauser and Mannlicher rifles, two other unidentified rifles, 205 shotguns and fifty-four revolvers and pistols. See *Report of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion*, p. 123. By Nathan's figures only Kerry, Cork and Tyrone had more firearms than Limerick. He did not provide statistics for Dublin city.
47. Wall recalled the presence of 150 Volunteers. Michael Collins of Monagea company estimated 400. NAI, BMH, WS 164, Charles Wall, p. 2; WS 1301, Michael Collins, pp. 1–2.
 48. William McCarthy estimated 150. Seán Ó Ceallaigh estimated 400. NAI, BMH, WS 1453, William McCarthy, p. 2; WS 1476, Seán Ó Ceallaigh, p. 4.
 49. MacGiolla Choille (ed.), *Intelligence Notes*, p. 215.
 50. IG, MR, April 1916, CO 904/99.
 51. Galbally Volunteers did cut the telegraph wires in Ballylanders. NAI, BMH, WS 597, Edmond O'Brien, p. 12.
 52. CI, Limerick, MR, May 1916, CO 904/100.
 53. See Robert Monteith, *Casement's Last Adventure* (Dublin, 1953), p. 198; MDM, p. 147 (ULSC, DP, Box 3, Folder 77); NAI, BMH, James Gubbins, WS 765, p. 31.
 54. BMH, Contemporaneous Document 145, Michael Colivet.
 55. MacGiolla Choille (ed.), *Intelligence Notes*, pp. 240–1; CI, Limerick, MR, May 1916, CO 904/100; *Limerick Chronicle*, 11 May 1916.
 56. NAI, BMH, WS 765, James Gubbins, p. 30.
 57. IG, MR, August; CI, Limerick, MR, May–August 1916, CO 904/100.
 58. Wall, 'The Plans and the Countermand', p. 213.
 59. Report by Colonel Weldon, 18 January 1917 (National Archives UK, WO 35/94).
 60. NAI, BMH, WS 737, Seán Meade, p. 3; WS 597, Edmond O'Brien, p. 13.
 61. NAI, BMH, WS 456, Liam Manahan, pp. 8–17.
 62. The Galway rebels had twenty-five rifles, sixty revolvers, sixty pikes and 300 shotguns, according to Fergus Campbell, 'The Easter Rising in Galway', *History Ireland*, 14, 2 (2006), pp. 22–5. They were young Catholic males from small farm, labouring and artisan backgrounds. Most of them were members of a secret agrarian society that had been active in Galway since 1907 and had been sworn into the IRB. Few of them had benefited from land purchase legislation and they had economic as well as political motivations for fighting.
 63. Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916; the Irish Rebellion* (London, 2005), Chapter 8; Ryan, *The Rising*; Hayes-McCoy, 'A military history of the 1916 Rising', pp. 298–303; the *Capuchin Annual* of 1966 included accounts of Easter week 1916 in Ashbourne, Enniscorthy, Galway, Limerick, Kerry, Cork and Belfast, as well as Dublin; C. Desmond Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* (London, 1971), Chapter 5.
 64. Denis McCullough, 'The events in Belfast', *Capuchin Annual* (1966), pp. 381–4.
 65. Quoted in James A. Gubbins and A.J. O'Halloran, 'Limerick's projected role in Easter week 1916', in Jack MacCarthy (ed.), *Limericks Fighting Story from 1916 to the Truce with Britain* (Tralee, 1965), p. 39.
 66. Kathleen Clarke [Helen Litton (ed.)], *Revolutionary Woman: An Autobiography* (Dublin, 1991), pp. 71–3; MDM, pp. 113 and 145–6 (ULSC, DP, Box 3, Folder 77).
 67. NAI, BMH, WS 1415, Michael Hartney, p. 4.
 68. NAI, BMH, WS 765, James Gubbins, p. 25; WS 1700, Alphonsus J. O'Halloran, p. 22.
 69. For a breakdown of the myriad factors which determined the geography of Irish nationalism, republicanism and revolutionary activity see David Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism, 1910–21', *Past and Present*, 78 (1978), pp. 113–44; Peter Hart, 'The Geography of Revolutionary Violence in Ireland, 1917–23', *Past and Present*, 155 (1997), pp. 142–73; Erhard Rumpf and A.C. Hepburn, *Nationalism and Socialism in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Liverpool, 1977).
 70. *Limerick Leader*, 28 April, 1, 10, 12 May, 19 July 1916.
 71. MDM, p. 117A (ULSC, DP, Box 3, Folder 77).
 72. CI, Limerick, MR, April 1916, CO 904/99; IG, MR, July 1916, CO 904/100.
 73. Limerick City and County Archives (LCCA), LCC minutes, 6 May, 8 July 1916.
 74. *Limerick Leader*, 29 May 1916; *Limerick Chronicle*, 3 June 1916.
 75. Leon Ó Broin, *The Chief Secretary* (London, 1969), p. 189.
 76. MacGiolla Choille (ed.), *Intelligence Notes*, p. 215.
 77. James Gubbins' interview with Ernie O'Malley is in University College Dublin Archives (UCDA), Ernie O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/129.
 78. Conversation between Peadar McMahon and Richard Mulcahy, 15 May 1963 (UCDA, Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7b/181, pp. 7–8, 10).
 79. NAI, BMH, WS 1700, Alphonsus J. O'Halloran, pp. 25–6; WS 1710, Liam Forde, pp. 15–16; WS 1415, Michael Hartney, pp. 4–5; WS 525, Michael J. Stack, p. 1; WS 1420, Patrick Whelan, p. 14; WS 656, Richard O'Connell, pp. 5, 8, 9; Brennan, *The War in Clare*, pp. 21, 37; David Dundon, written statement, circa February 1926 (NLI, Ernie O'Malley Papers, Ms. 10,973/17).
 80. NAI, BMH, WS 515, Éamon Dore, p. 5.
 81. See Peter Hart, *The IRA at War, 1916–23* (Oxford, 2003), Chapter 5 – 'The social structure of the IRA', especially p. 120. See also Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin, 2004), p. 118.
 82. Hart was not the first to point to this apparent anomaly, however. During his interviews with his former colleagues in the late 1940s and early 1950s Ernie O'Malley 'noticed that there was a good deal of working men in the 2nd Bn and I think this was a kind of distinction between these 2 Bns'. See O'Malley's interview with James Gubbins (UCDA, EOMN, P17b/129, p. 58).
 83. NAI, BMH, WS 765, James Gubbins, pp. 4–5.
 84. James Gubbins (UCDA, EOMN, P17b/129, p. 57); George Embush (UCDA, EOMN, P17b/130, p. 18).
 85. NAI, BMH, WS 1710, Liam Forde, p. 15.
 86. Conversation between Peadar McMahon and Richard Mulcahy, 15 May 1963 (UCDA, Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7b/181, pp. 7–8).
 87. See Tom Toomey, 'The Rise of Militant Nationalism in Limerick city, 1912–17' (MA, University of Limerick, 2006), pp. 29–35, 38; Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 155–8.
 88. James Gubbins (UCDA, EOMN, P176/129, p. 56).