WE SHALL RISE AGAIN

Nora Connolly O'Brien

MOSQUITO PRESS
LONDON
1981

Mosquito Press,
27A Old Gloucester St., London WC1N 3XX, England.

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Mosquito Press at the above address,
price £1.95 plus post (50p in UK and Ireland);
hardback price £3.90 plus post (75p in UK and Ireland).

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Typeset by Bread 'n Roses, 30 Camden Rd., London NW1
Printed by Russell Press Ltd., Bertrand Russell House,
Forest Road, Nottingham NG7 4ET.

As I reached the door, my father called me back and I went back to the bed. He put his arms round me and pulled me down to him and hugged me, and whispered in my ear, "Don't be too disappointed, Nora. We shall rise again."

He did not want me to drop out of the fight. He knew it would go on after he was gone.

And then I had to go out. Those were the very last words that he said to me before I was taken away — "We shall rise again!"

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This book is not written to win your hearts, but to wring them, because we must all feel so serious and so concerned at this time, and so alive to everything that is happening in Ireland, if we are to win the present fight and make this the last time we have to beat Britain.

For many centuries we in Ireland have had an unbroken tradition of each generation having an armed uprising against Britain. In my generation we had an armed uprising in 1916 with the proclamation of the freedom of the Republic of Ireland. Then our flying columns beat the Black and Tans in 1921. This tradition has not been broken by the generation which is now fighting to free Britain's last toehold in Ireland — the six counties.

In this book I say a lot about prisons. So many people are now watching the prisoners and hunger strikers in the H-Blocks and Armagh Jail. My father spent time in jail, and once went on hunger strike. I have been in three prisons myself. My husband and I observed the first anniversary of our wedding in prison — he in one jail and me in another.

In prison, one is no longer treated as an individual but just as a number. But prisons affect everyone differently, because we are all individuals. If ever you read a book by someone who has been in jail, or talk to someone who has been in jail, you will always find that they have one or two jokes to tell you about it. The jokes often seem to be uppermost in their minds when they come out. It is an extraordinary thing that in all the books I have read by prisoners, many translated from other languages, it turned out that every single one of them had one or two funny things to say about what happened even in the midst of their suffering.

Anything that I say in this book is quite true, and it is history. The old have a job to do, to remind the young. And like the prisoners' books I have read, I like also to tell little stories and funny things as well, to give a bit of humanity to it. This can help to make you feel part of the struggle.

In this book, and in giving talks in Ireland and in the US and in Britain, I like to help to let the world know who is right and who is wrong. It is right to be fighting Britain in Ireland. Nothing that we do in fighting Britain is as horrible as what Britain is doing in Ireland. Britain has shown itself more horrible than any other country has done.

All my life I have followed what my father said. I was very close to my father, so that I understood what he said and what he did. He taught me not to be bitter, for bitterness clouds the brain, and afterwards you find you are sorry for what you have said. He said, "Don't blame the British workers for all that Ireland has had to suffer. Just blame the British government."

So I never let any bitterness cross me, and this book is just about the things that I have thought

about and what I was taught.

Just as he was about to be executed, my father was asked to say a prayer for the soldiers who were to shoot him. He said, "I say a prayer for all brave young men who do their duty."

Let us too do our duty. Let all our brave young people help to the limit of their strength to get Britain out of its last little toehold in Ireland, so that we shall have "an Ireland free and independent from the centre to the sea, and flying its own flag out over all the oceans." Young men and women and young boys and young girls, let them all do the same thing. Let them show that, as my father said, "England has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland."

I

THE ROAD TO THE UPRISING

Accompanying James Connolly on his trades union work. — Preparations for the uprising. — Bringing Liam Mellows back from Britain. — Preparations in the North. — Council convened. — Return to the North. — The uprising.

I often used to accompany my father on his work during the years before the uprising. He only once got me to make a speech. That was during the Belfast mill girls' strike of 1911. My father had just successfully organised a dockers' strike in Belfast, and was held in great regard by the working people there.

Later, I met one of the dockers who had been on strike, and when he heard I was James Connolly's daughter, he grabbed hold of my hand and held onto it as though he was holding onto something of James Connolly.

"We were kneeling in the gutters begging for work," he told me. "Now we can stand up and look any man in the face. Now we have the right to work. Now we have the dignity of man again."

Most of the mill girls were sisters or daughters of these dockers. They thought that if James Connolly could do so well for their sons and fathers, he could do something for them. They had no union and no funds. So there was a big task of going round telling people what was going on and organising collecting boxes to support the strike.

My father used to make speeches explaining that the mill workers were not allowed to talk or laugh or do anything else apart from keeping their minds on their work. If any of them felt gay enough to laugh, or even if they talked to one another, they could be sacked. These regulations were laid down by the government, though the workers thought it was just the local owners in Belfast who laid them down. The regulations were known as the 'Truck Act'.

One day during the mill girls' strike, my father and I had just been talking to each other about how in New York they all spoke different languages, so they couldn't speak to each other in their unions. Here in Ireland it was easier as everyone could understand the same language. We were standing beside a lorry by the Custom House steps, where we held our Sunday meetings. Then my father said to me, "How do you feel?"

I used to have headaches at that time, and I had had one earlier that day. I thought he was asking me about that headache, and I said, "Alright."

Then my father turned round and announced, "Now we have a new speaker. It's her first speech."

I went over the things I had just been talking over with him about the languages spoken in New York. I elaborated it a bit, and they liked it. That was the only speech meeting I spoke to at that time.

My father had a little bit of this language and a little bit of that. I think my father knew a bit of French, but not enough to be able to write anything, or read anything completely. I think he knew some German, but I am not sure. But he was perfect in Italian. He used to organise among

the Italians in New York. A short while ago when I went over to New York I spoke to someone who had been finding out a lot about the Italians in New York. He had been amazed at the number of people who told him, according to their age, that their father or grandfather had known James Connolly.

I was told, "There was nobody in America like him. People would say, 'He's not Italian, he's Irish, but he speaks our language. And any troubles we're in, we go to him and he gets us out of it.' "

Whenever they were in trouble with the authorities they used to come to him to ask him what they should do. And he helped prepare them to apply for citizenship. Praise was handed down from grandfather to son, and the name James Connolly was so real to them.

A book that really brought me back to those times was *James Connolly and the United States* by Mr and Mrs Reeve, American writers. It was so well done. They did tremendous research.

In 1912 there was a foundry workers' strike in Wexford. I particularly remember one foundry there, which is now a big agricultural machinery company. At that time it made bicycles. P.T. Daly was in charge of the strike down there, but the management was refusing to meet him and things looked hopeless. So James Connolly was called in, and I came down with him from Belfast. The management came to an agreement with Connolly to recognise the union — it was called the Irish Foundry Workers' Union. The men went back to work the next day.

We stayed on there for another week, and while we were there, my father took me for a walk around Wexford. There were cottages with half-

doors so that people could lean out over the bottom half and talk to each other over it.

Word went around, "That's Mr Connolly!" And leaning out over their half-doors, they called out, "God bless you, Mr Connolly! And God bless your beautiful daughter — may she marry a man with £1000 a year!"

"You hear that, Nora?" said my father. "You get the spiritual and material rewards and I only get the spiritual rewards!"

The man who had called my father down was the father of Conor Cruise O'Brien. It is strange that Cruise O'Brien, who is from such a republican family, has become so swell-headed. He did a lot to wreck the Labour Party, then he left to take up his work with the Observer newspaper. He tried to work the two things together for a while, but he could not manage that, and in the end just continued being a British journalist.

As Secretary of the ITGWU in Belfast after Larkin went to the States in 1914, my father used to begin his letters, "Dear fellow worker," when he was writing recruiting letters and so on; the letters would end, "Fraternally yours," or, "Yours fraternally." Once he published a letter from me just as I had sent it. He wrote back to me praising it, ending his letter, "Yours fraternally." Then he wrote at the bottom of the paper, "PS. See what I called you?"

* * * * * *

As the preparations for the uprising began to be made, my father used to like to look at all the men's rifles and test them himself. One day he

was in his office, and someone brought in a rifle and said, "Mr Connolly, look at this!" (Later, in the more military time, they would call him "Commandant", or "Commandant-General".)

"Don't you remember that French rifle?" the man said. "Well, we ground its barrel down to ordinary size, then we built it up from bits of other rifles. . .", and he showed my father all the different parts of guns from different countries that they had put together.

My father said, "Well, Bill, you've achieved what all the governments in the world have failed to achieve — you have united the whole world into one!" This was in the time of the First World War.

We were all well trained in military matters. We used to go and listen to my father's military lectures. When he was made the Commandant-General in Dublin to prepare for the uprising, all the Volunteers' officers were ordered to go to him to be told about the fighting that was going to take place at Easter. De Valera was told to go to him — he later told me that he regretted that he had never read anything of my father's writings, and had no idea what my father was like. Then Dev was informed that he had been appointed Commandant for the area of the bakery called Boland's Mills, and Mount Street and round there. This was the area where most of the fighting outside the GPO area was later done — it was often called the 'Mount Street fight'.

Dev told me, "I was told to report to James Connolly. It was the first time I'd met him. I told him I had been appointed for Boland's Mill and Mount Street and all that area. The first thing he told me was to go round and see my area, and he showed me this place and that place, saying,

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Recruiting leaflet for the Irish Citizen Army, 1913

'No, not there — don't let anybody go there. That's a *cul de sac*, and they could easily be caught. Send somebody to such-and-such a place — now that's a good spot. And of course the Mill will be your Headquarters. Now you can bring your men along and show them how to get to each place. You must know the places you are sending your men to.' I was with James Connolly three times, and then I was told to go and listen to the military lectures which he was giving to the Citizen Army." This is an example of the ways in which the Volunteers and the Citizen Army were linking up before the rising, and that is how Dev was taught how to give orders and what to say to his men. My father used to lecture to all the officers who were going to be in the various posts around Dublin.

My father had been thinking much harder about the military side than the others. And Plunkett helped him. He and Plunkett really planned the uprising. Plunkett was marvellous from a military point of view, though he was a man who had never before been in an army. He and my father planned out all the posts they were to hold in Dublin. And it was Madame Markievicz who drew the maps for the posts. I watched her working at them one day while I was staying with her.

* * * * * *

During the time before the rising, my father was down in Dublin, while my mother and the rest of the family were living in Belfast. I was working, doing piecework. I was usually making expensive things — fancy blouses and things like that. You could get more money by doing piecework. When

the war began, I switched to making aprons for nurses, and mattress covers for the military. The mattress covers would then go on to be filled with 'coir' — a stuffing made from coconut fibre. Sometimes we would take money in advance for work we had not yet done, so that we could get away for a few days. Then when we got back, we would have to catch up. When I did that, I used to go down to Dublin to see my father.

At the same time I was organising the Cumann na mBan in the North (though when I was in Dublin I was in the Citizen Army). I was organiser of the Cumann for Belfast and its surroundings. I was never given an official title, but I knew a bit more than the other girls and it used to be me who would tell them what to do and why. I took a special first aid course so that I could teach this to the Cumann. Later the Volunteers asked me to teach first aid to them as well.

The Fianna Eireann were set up by Madame Markievicz so that our boys could have something of a Boy Scout nature without having to join the Baden Powell one. The Belfast branch was the only one to have a girls' branch, which was named after Betsy Gray, a woman who took part in the 1798 rebellion and was killed in the fight. I used to teach them first aid, and arranged for each of them to have a tiny bag of medical supplies — a phial of iodine, some bandages, and so on — so that in the case of any slight injury duing the uprising they would be able to attend to it themselves.

During this time my father was working in Dublin and he did not have a big salary. Every Wednesday the railway had an excursion train to Dublin, and they only charged five shillings for a

return ticket. I used to come down on that train. Every time I was coming I used to drop a card to Liam Mellows, and he used to meet me at the station. I just used to write, "Arriving Wednesday next, NC", and they would send word to him if he was not there to receive the card. He had a friend in the office of the Great Northern Railway, and he used to get this friend of his to sign over my excursion ticket, and that meant I could go home any day I liked — I did not have to go back the same day.

Liam and I used to write when we were apart. We were very close friends. He used to be sent round organising the Fianna Eireann for the young people, and the Republican Brotherhood for the adults. He used to write and tell me when he was coming near Belfast, and I used to meet him and we would do some of his work together. Then I would leave him and he would go ahead and do what he had to do, and then come back and tell me about it. Or sometimes he would go away and I would not see him again.

One evening when my father came home, we were all sitting round the table and asking how he was getting on. He said, "I've met a real man this week, and I've great faith in him. I believe he'll do great things for Ireland."

So I said, "Who was that, father?"

He said his name was Liam Mellows.

There was a chorus from round the table of, "Oh, she gets a letter from him every week."

I laughed at the way my father said, "That's the only time you've got ahead of me, Nora!"

Just before the rising, Liam Mellows was arrested and taken to England. He was needed back in Ireland by Good Friday. I was sent over to take

him away from the British and see that he got back on time. He was being allowed to stay with some relatives of his in England, but he had to report to the police each day. I was to go up to where his relatives were and tell them that I had come to bring him back — that he was wanted for Galway, and that he was to be there for Good Friday so that there would be time to make plans for the rising to start on the Easter Sunday.

This was only a few days before Good Friday. The idea we had was for me to go over with his brother Barney, who was a bit like him, if a person did not know them very well. To a person who knew the two of them, there was no resemblance whatsoever in them. Barney was a bit taller than Liam, and he had darker hair — Liam had very golden hair — he was a real blonde. But to a stranger who did not know them there was sufficient resemblance.

So we went to where Liam was staying, and left Barney staying with the relatives so that the British thought Liam Mellows was still in England. Liam and I made our way to Glasgow, where Liam was dressed up as a priest. I was in disguise as well. I had been made up by a woman called Moloney. Sean MacDermott had given me the names of eight safe-places we could go to if we needed, but we did not need to use them.

On the train from Glasgow to the coast we got in with a lot of Irish cattlemen who had been over to Scotland to sell cattle. Liam and I were sitting separately, pretending we were not together. The cattlemen were arguing over who had made the best bargain, and some of the language used by them was rather lurid. Then one of them noticed Liam sitting there in his priest's clothes, and said to

him, "Oh, my God! Forgive us, father, we didn't notice you were there."

When we reached Belfast, I contacted someone I knew as an officer in the Republican Brotherhood, and said Liam Mellows was to be taken down to Dublin. He arranged for two local men to drive him down that night. From Dublin he was to go on to Galway to lead the rising there.

* * * * * *

I was in Coalisland, County Tyrone, when two messengers came from Professor MacNeill, who was the head of the Volunteers, to say that there was to be no fighting. That upset me very much, as I knew that the Northern people were willing to fight, but that as MacNeill was the Chief of Staff, they would have to obey him. I knew what a shock this would be to my father, as it was to be a national rising, not merely a Dublin rising. Even if it went ahead in Dublin, the rest of the country would now probably obey MacNeill and would not take part in the fighting.

It is terrible that there has never been a proper military study of what was to be the plan for the all-Ireland rising. It is important that people should not think that it was only a Dublin plan. The centre for the Northern people was Coalisland, and that is where the local crowd was gathering. There were no plans for any fighting in Belfast. In Coalisland I was brought to a big barn which was filled with weapons, and there were hundreds of men at Coalisland waiting for the call. The plan was for these Northerners to set out from Coalisland towards the West and link up with

Liam Mellows and the others in the West.

There was also a plan for a mutiny in the British army at Athlone. Athlone is a sort of half-way house between Galway and Dublin, and was a big barracks of the British, mainly of artillery forces.

After the rising, a man came to me and said, "Do you think your father believed I betrayed him by not coming out on Easter Monday?"

"Had you planned to come out?" I said.

"Yes," he said. "I was in charge of teaching the soldiers at Athlone how to use the big guns and artillery. I had arranged to make a special command of those men I knew I could trust. I picked them all — they were all Irish." He thought he had enough men with him that would join in the rising on Easter Monday, and join up with the Northerners. Through him, the rising was to obtain artillery.

There were so many plans like this all over Ireland. In so many corners of Ireland people were preparing their own little fight in their own little corner. All these plans were now being called off by MacNeill.

So when I received the message about MacNeill's orders, I realised how important it was to get to Dublin and tell them about the men and the weapons in Coalisland, and of how the Northerners were ready to fight. So I went straight to the hotel in Coalisland where the girls who worked as couriers and first-aiders were. I told them that I was going down to Dublin by the mail train, which meant I would arrive there at six o'clock in the morning — the morning of Easter Sunday. I said they could come with me, or they could stay in the North and go home. They all of them decided to come and stay with me, and be with the people down in Dublin. There were seven of us, and we left at

midnight.

As we were waiting for the train to Dublin, we saw more men arrive from Belfast to take part in the uprising, with ammunition, rifles and guns and everything else. I could see they had not yet heard about the message from MacNeill, as they marched out of the station in martial formation and were clearly ready to fight.

When we reached Dublin, I went with my girls straight from the Station to Liberty Hall. There were seven of us altogether. Liberty Hall was all guarded with armed men — there was an armed guard kept up all the time.

I said, "I want to see Mr Connolly." I didn't know the lad as he opened the door, so I said, "I'm his daughter."

He said, "Well, will you excuse me if I close the door and go to get the orderly?".

So he went and fetched the orderly, who knew me, and who said, "Come in, Nora, come in."

I said, "I have a number of girls here, and I want to see my father. It's most important."

The orderly said, "That's too bad. He's just gone to bed."

"I don't care if he's undressing," I said. "It's important that I see him. The girls can stand outside if you want, but I must go in and see him, because it's very important what I have to tell him." I went on insisting upon seeing my father, so in the end they woke him up and I went in. He was lying on a bed — a little army cot — and was in his suit, with only his collar open.

I told him of how I had heard the message from MacNeill, and I said, "Father, does this mean that we're not going to have a rising?" And I began to cry.

Tears came into his eyes, and he said, "If we don't carry this off, Nora, the only thing left for us to do is to hide our heads in shame and pray to God to send an earthquake or a tidal wave and hide us under the waters. It would be such a disgrace to our generation."

My father said he had heard that the Northerners were not ready to fight. I told him this was not true.

"Daddy," I said, "don't believe it." (I only called him "Daddy" when I was very stern, you see. It was "Pop" I would call him when I was not being formal.) And I told him about the men and the weapons I had seen in Coalisland. I said he could ask the girls who were waiting outside, and they would tell him the same.

So my father called the orderly and told him to bring the girls up, and the orderly brought them all in, the whole lot of them."

So I said to him, "Now, father, you can ask them."

So he asked each one of them, "What Nora said — is that what happened?"

"Yes, Mr Connolly," said each one.

"Did you hear what Nora said?"

"Yes, I heard her — that's true what she said."

He went round all six of them till he ended up with six guarantors that the message I had brought down about the preparations in the North was the real one.

My father was quietly thinking. Then he said, "Nora, call the orderly that's outside the door."

So I opened the door and said to the orderly, "My father wants you."

My father told him, "I want you to pick out six men whom you trust absolutely as being

sensible men. And I want each of them to take one of these girls to an address I give."

You see, my father knew where each of the members of the Army Council in Dublin were in hiding that night. So it was then that he decided to call them together.

He sent each one of us out to call one of them, telling the girls, "Say to them just what Nora said to me and what you said to me, and tell them I would be glad if they would come over here immediately."

(And that is how they came for their meeting on the morning of Easter Sunday, which had been the day that was fixed for the rising before the message from MacNeill called it off.)

(I was sent to go with Jack White to bring Sean MacDermott. He took me to where MacDermott was hiding. He was resting, and had his bodyguard with him. He had also been lying down on the bed with his clothes on. I told him exactly what had happened and what my father was doing, and how he was sending the girls to get all the Council to come to Liberty Hall to discuss what should be done. My father had not actually said that to me. But I could gather that that was what he was doing, though my father had said to me, "No, no, Nora, it's just because I had work for him anyway, before you came."

MacDermott sat on the edge of the bed, and he rubbed his chin and he rubbed his chin. Then he said, "Tell your father I'll be over immediately."

So I left him and I did not see him again until he arrived at Liberty Hall.

Every one of the seven men said they were coming, and they all came quickly. Plunkett was in a nursing home, as he had just had an operation on

his throat. He put his uniform on because it had a high collar which could conceal the damage from the operation. He and Pearse both came in their uniform.

I had the great honour of making them their breakfast that Easter Sunday. I gave them rashers and eggs and bread and butter and tea. Pearse had already had something to eat, and myself I was too excited to eat. The other girls from the North had been sent away. My father said, "They are tired. They need rest, as they may have to go elsewhere on another job soon. But you, Nora, you stay here because I may want you."

So I stayed in the building on that Easter Sunday while the seven members of the Council were meeting. I watched people coming and going. I watched the Citizen Army coming up with its little truck wagon as if they were going for a picnic. The mothers were coming to bring their sons little souvenirs, or some cigarettes and things of that sort. They knew their sons were going for the fight.

Then at three o'clock in the afternoon, my father came down and said, "It's alright, Nora. We are going to go ahead tomorrow."

He was pleased that I had had the gumption to come down and tell him what the situation in the North was. In turn it was my father who had the gumption to call together the members of the Council in Dublin, and they all decided to go ahead with the rising in Dublin. But it was really the people who decided that the rising should go ahead, by answering their call in Dublin, and then Galway and so many other places.

"Nora, girl, I'm proud of you," my father said to me, and he asked me if I would be staying with

him.

"No," I said, "I'll go back to the North. I've been working with the girls up there, and I don't want them to feel I'm deserting them. I want to make sure they get back."

Now that the seven members of the Council had taken their decision, they each went away to gather their men together. There was a concert in Liberty Hall that evening. I did not stay for the whole concert, but left to join the girls at Madame Markievicz's house.

Then on the Monday morning we all reported back to Liberty Hall to get the messages we were to take back up to the North. We left for the North just at the very time the rising was to take place. While I was at the station I heard the clock strike twelve, which is when the GPO and the other buildings were to be seized. There was no sound of gunfire, so I was relieved to know that the first stage of the rising must have gone smoothly.

When I got back to Coalisland, the guns and ammunition were still there, but the Belfast crowd had been ordered back. There were only a few men from other parts still waiting. I spent several days trying to make contact with the men who had been demobilised, but I could not, and I decided to go back to Dublin.

During the 1966 Jubilee of the rising, I gave a talk on the radio in which I mentioned a girl who failed to send a report back during that time that I was in Coalisland. I then received a letter from a patient in a hospital in Belfast who said she had been lying in bed listening to my talk.

"I was that girl," she wrote. She explained the circumstances that had prevented her, fifty years before, from reporting back, and she also told me

of how she and other members of her family had fought and suffered in the following years. "God didn't intend the North to enter the fight then," she wrote. "They got their share of it later on, and are still getting it."

* * * * * *

When they had taken the GPO, Pearse and my father, as the two leaders of the uprising, went out in front of the building. Pearse read out the Proclamation of the Republic, while my father stood at attention beside him.

Later, someone who had been there described the scene to me. He told me how Pearse's voice was not carrying, and the crowd that had gathered was wondering what it was all about. People were standing there, not able to hear what Pearse was reading, but just wondering what the two men were doing, and why they wore two different uniforms. For my father wore the uniform of the Citizen Army, while Pearse had the uniform of the Irish Volunteers. The crowds were curious, but did not go too near the building. They were mostly standing around Nelson's Pillar, which had not been blown up by that time (that was done not so long ago at a time when there was enough peace to do such things!).

The man who described this scene to me went on to relate an extraordinary thing he saw happen. Suddenly, one old lady brushed the people aside very arrogantly, and strode up to the GPO. She was, he said, very, very old, and very poorly dressed — evidently one of the poor. She was a bit bent at first, but as she came forward she straightened up and began to walk with a good, tramping

pace. She went up to my father, took his right hand and kissed it, and then went round behind one of the pillars at the GPO. The man ran round to ask her why she had done this, but she had disappeared — he went down all the length of the pillars on both sides, and there was no sign of her. The man who told me this story said that he had been longing to meet one of the Connolly family so that he could tell them of the extraordinary thing he had seen.

Years later, I told this story to Dorothy Macardle when she was writing her book, *The Irish Republic*, and she said, "Nora, Nora, what a story! Kathleen ni Houlihan kissed James Connolly's hand!"

The British did not know anything about the rising until the guns began to go. There was a company of Lancers who were going down O'Connell Street on horseback as if they owned O'Connell Street. It was the funniest thing in the world when they came near the GPO and were astonished to find that all the windows rattled with guns. Most of the army officers were out at the races that day. It was only the shooting at the cavalry that made them hurry back to decide what had to be done. So it was not until Tuesday that there was any real fighting.

The republicans took it to heart that this was the first rising which had not had a spy, and had not had anyone who had given information against them. The British had no ghost of an idea what was happening until there were bullets coming at them.

II

JAMES CONNOLLY'S LAST DAYS

James Connolly wounded. — In military hospital in Dublin Castle. — Visited by my mother. — Court-martialled. — My visits. — The nurse. — My poem. — Soldier from the firing squad visits my mother. — James Connolly's statement to the court martial.

During the rising, my father had not been content to sit in an office and give orders. He used to go and see that the orders were being carried out. That was how he got wounded. His ankles were shattered, and he had been shot in the arm. After the surrender, he was brought to Dublin Castle. There he was placed in the officers' ward, with a room to himself. He was given the full credit of his rank, and the British soldiers never forgot to call him the General, or the Commandant-General. The ordinary soldiers called him the General, and made it plain that the hope of the ordinary police and soldiers was that he would not be executed. Many of the soldiers knew something about my father. This was because Redmond had got a lot of Irishmen into the army during the war.

By the time he was placed in this hospital ward, he had already lost so much health. There had been no doctors in the GPO building. There was one student who was in his last year at medical school, and he did the best he could after my father had been wounded. There was also an officer of the British Army Medical Corps in the GPO, whom we had arrested. The medical student, whose name

was Ryan, went to this prisoner and asked him for help. At first the Medical Officer said he could not do anything, but Ryan said, "Even if you can't do anything, just tell me what to do and I'll do it all while you give me the orders," and he reminded him of the oath of Hippocrates that doctors take when they become doctors. So the officer went down and gave instructions, but nothing he said did any good. (Ryan later became one of the leaders of Fianna Fail, and became Minister of Finance in the 1950s.)

By the time my father reached Dublin Castle, he was a dying man. Gangrene had set in, and he had little chance of living. He could not even sit up, and was unable to lift more than his head from the pillow, and his shoulders a little bit. The gangrene began affecting his whole body.

The surgeon who was attending my father sent over to London for some medicine he had heard of which he hoped would stop the spreading of the gangrene. This surgeon took a strong liking to my father. It was the same with everyone who met him — they all loved him. The surgeon and my father discussed poetry, and different writers — one would say a poem, and the other would quote a poem in opposition to it, and one would make a joke and they would laugh. And they would discuss different writers, and books they had read, and what their opinion of this writer was, and their opinion of that. And all this time my father was dying every minute, dying every minute.

There was a very young Royal Army Medical Corps officer whose job it was to sit all day long in my father's room. I often wondered what this young RAMC officer must have been thinking. I can imagine that he must have been saying to

himself, "But that man is dying! And look how he is going on — saying poems, making jokes, and laughing!" It was mind over body, and I have a feeling that that poor young soldier must have been in a terrific tension — that he had never seen anything like it.

My mother and I and all our family had moved out of Belfast a few days before the rising. We were planning to move to Dublin. We did not want to attract attention, so we packed all our things in cases to pretend we were just going on holiday. During the fighting, my mother and the younger children stayed in a cottage belonging to Madame Markievicz just outside Dublin. When it was all over she received a note from Dublin Castle saying that she could come to visit James Connolly in the hospital there. She went down and visited him on her own, taking only Fiona, the youngest in our family.

When she reached Dublin Castle, my mother was searched to see that she was not bringing a knife or any drug or anything else for my father to commit suicide with.

"That's proof you don't know James Connolly," said my mother. "Otherwise you wouldn't dream of suggesting that in order to avoid a little pain —"

"A lot of pain, Mrs Connolly," said the nurse who was searching her.

"Well, it doesn't matter how bad the pain is," said my mother. "He'd never commit suicide. He bears all he has to bear. As long as there is life in him, he'll be fighting all the time."

When the nurse had finished searching her, she said, "I'll not do this again next time you come."

"Oh, I can come again?" asked my mother.

The nurse thought she would probably be

allowed to.

On her way out from this visit, a photographer took a picture of her and Fiona outside Dublin Castle, which was later printed in, I think, the 'Daily Sketch'. They were both angry when they saw it, as they were looking very unkempt, and the photographer had just called them out and taken the photo without their permission.

Next my father was court-martialled. I later had the story of what happened from the nurse. My father could not go and attend the court, so the members of the court all went to his hospital room. The whole lot just marched in.

The officer in charge of the court martial told my father, "Sit up! You know what this is."

My father did not say a word.

"I told you to sit up!" the man said.

The young RAMC said to them, "But the man is dying!" The young man must never before have dared to dream of standing up in front of all those high officers. When they kept yelling at my father to sit up, the young man had to tell them twice that he was dying.

"Well, prop him up, then!" the officer said.

In fact they knew of the gangrene and that my father had not many days to live, but they were going to court-martial him anyway, as he was the leader.

So then they called out for the nurse, who was standing outside the room. And they ordered the soldiers to bring pillows and mattresses so that my father could be propped up to hear his court martial there and then. When they had finished, they asked him if he had any requests to make, and he asked to see my mother and me.

By this time, I had come back to Dublin from

the North. I was given two visits, both times together with my mother. Our last visit was only an hour or so before he was taken across from Dublin Castle to Kilmainham to be shot.

Dublin Castle has a double staircase in the main entrance hall, with a long landing between the two. On every step of the stairs when we went in there was a soldier with a rifle and a bayonet. There were soldiers on the landing also. Those on the landing had the little square cushions that used to be used in the army as mattresses — they were called 'biscuits'. They had had their night's rest on these 'biscuits' on the landing. My mother and I were taken to the top officer there — the Intelligence Officer, who wanted to make sure we were not part of a plot to steal James Connolly from them. All the soldiers were on duty as we went in, to prevent an abduction attempt, with their bayonets fixed all the time. The officer told us not to give my father any news. Apart from Surgeon Tobin, the surgeon who was looking after my father, and Father Aloysius, we were the only ones who were allowed in to see him. In this way they hoped to keep him in ignorance of what was happening, so that he would not be able to have any influence outside.

The officers' ward, where my father had been placed, consisted of a corridor with little rooms along it for when an officer fell ill. They would not let an officer go among the 'common people' at all! Each officer who was ill used to have a separate room to himself.

My mother and I sat in this room, one each side of the bed. The only other person in the room was the young RAMC officer, and he sat with his back to us during our visits, just reading a book or

looking out of the window.

My father was lying in bed with a cage over his feet to keep the bedclothes off his shattered ankles. He told us about the court martial, and asked me for news from the North. I had to tell him that the men had gone home, and that there had been no fighting, and I began to cry. But he told me he was very proud of me.

"But I've done nothing, nothing," I said. "I've just carried messages."

"Never mind, Nora," he said. He told me that if I had not come down with the message from the North that the Northerners were ready to fight, it would not have been possible to persuade the Dublin leaders to go ahead with the rising. "Only for you, Nora, we couldn't have done anything," he told me.

Although we were not supposed to be giving him any news, I gave the news of the executions to him anyway. He gave me the opening that gave me the opportunity, by asking me to give a message to Skeffington.

I said, "Skeffington has been murdered by a drunken soldier." And then I went on, "There's only you and MacDermott left. They're all gone."

And that was the greatest shock he ever got in his life. He had not heard from anybody about the executions. He had heard the shooting, but had not realised what it was.

I said that surely they would never shoot a wounded man.

He said he had never believed that. "I remember what they did to Scheepers in South Africa," he said. He seemed to assume that I knew who Scheepers was, but I did not, and I never found out, though I asked many people. It was only this

year that I was told that Scheepers was a hero of the Boers in their fight against the British. His commando unit blew up British railways and bridges, and his fearlessness made him the hero of his men. Falling ill, he was left behind at his own request at a farmhouse, where he was captured by the British. He was court-martialled before he had recovered, and shot while he sat in a chair.

My mother was crying, and my father begged her to stop. He said she would unman him if she continued to cry.

"But your beautiful life, James," she said, "not your beautiful life!"

At one point my father patted my hand and drew it under the blanket. I felt him put a stiff little bit of paper into my hand.

"Take this out of here," he whispered. "It's what I said to the court martial. I was asked what I had to say for myself, but I did not say it for myself, I said it for Ireland. Get it out, Nora, get it out!"

I had no trouble getting it out, because I cupped it in my hands when they searched us going out.

In the end we were told that our time was up to go, and we had to leave him for the last time. Mama was on the side of the bed nearest the door. She could not move. She was like a statue, and seemed rooted to the floor. The nurse and the officer came and helped her out of the door. I was on the other side of the bed from the door. I walked slowly round the bed, looking at the face I would never see again.

As I reached the door, my father called me back and I went back to the bed. He put his arms round me and pulled me down to him and hugged me, and whispered in my ear, "Don't be too

disappointed, Nora. We shall rise again."

He did not want me to drop out of the fight. He knew it would go on after he had gone.

And then I had to go out. Those were the very last words that he said to me before I was taken away — "We shall rise again!"

* * * * * *

Many years later — only a year or two ago — a woman told me that she had a friend who had been a nurse in Dublin Castle during the fighting.

"And she knew James Connolly," she said, "and I don't know whether you'd like to go and have a talk with her."

So I said I would. She lived out in Dun Laoghaire, while I live in Drimnagh, so we were quite a long distance from each other. So I went along to see her. She was retired, and living in a small flat.

She told me that the soldiers who were up there all the time with their bayonets fixed to prevent an abduction of my father were very impressed by him. They always called him "the General". Whenever she came out of his room they would say, "How is he today?"

"Oh," she said, "not any better at all."

"Oh, thank God!" they would say. For they were hoping that he would be ill until the executions stopped, and that this one man would be left, because he was unwell and unable to stand up.

"We always thanked God that he was not better, because if he was getting better then he would be shot," the nurse told me. "A lot of the soldiers seemed to know who he was." These must have been Irishmen whom Redmond had got into the army.

Then the staff nurse told her to get my father ready for the court martial.

"Is he going?" she asked.

"Yes," said the staff nurse. "News came from the War Office in London at ten o'clock that all the men here are to be executed."

The nurse washed his face and combed his hair, and went hunting for some clean pyjamas. "I was determined to get the nicest ones I could find," she told me. "I went to the lockers where the pyjamas were, and in one locker there was a new pair. It hadn't been worn by anybody at all. It was just your father's size, so I took it, and put it on him, and he lay in it, and so he died in it — he was shot in it."

The nurse was not there at the court martial. She was outside the door. But she was called in and had to fetch pillows and mattresses and build them up so that he could sit up.

As for the surgeon, whose name was Tobin, he later became a friend of ours. He used to come and visit my mother to soothe her sorrow. He was furious that his patient had been shot. He helped to pay for my brother Roddy to go to college, and Roddy used to visit him in, I think, Wicklow.

After my father's execution, they would not give us any part of his uniform, except his shirt, which had a bullet-hole in the arm. They said they were keeping his property as evidence. My mother spoke to the Chief of Intelligence about this.

My mother said, "What evidence do you want now that the man is dead?"

My mother was questioned by the Intelligence Officer about her "sons", and she could not understand this as she had only one son, and that was Roddy. So she told him that she had only one

son, and that he was only fifteen, and that he had been held for a time after the rising, and then released.

But the officer asked her about her other son, "Peter". He persisted in asking her, and suggested that James Connolly must have had another wife as well. She laughed at this idea, but she wondered why the officer looked so knowing.

The reason for this was a little game I used to play with my father. For we had a habit of writing to each other, and we would each call the other one "Peter". Then one day up in Belfast I had a photograph taken of myself wearing the uniform — brown belt and all — of a Volunteer named Archie Heron (who later became my brother-in-law). I sent a copy of this photo down to my father in Dublin, saying that here was a picture of "Peter".

My father still had this photograph on him when he gave himself up. But the Chief of Intelligence would not give it up.

"Oh, it's evidence," he said.

* * * * * *

The week of the executions was dreadful. We never knew what to expect when the newspaper-man shouted out that one more had been executed. We only learnt the news of the executions when the paperboys ran around saying, "One executed," "Two executed today," "Four executed today," "None today," "One today."

Then you had to go out and buy the paper and find out who it was, and we were always afraid it was going to be my father. You did not know where you were, or what was going to happen. We did not even know that they were going to allow

COLLAPSE OF THE SINN FEIN REVOLT.

ROUNDING UP THE REBELS.

SCENES OF DEVASTATION IN DUBLIN.

HAVOC IN SACKVILLE STREET.

The information received in official quarters yesterday was to the effect that the rebels are surrendering throughout the country. They have surrendered at Enniscorthy.

At Ashbourne, County Meath, where nine police constables and District Inspector Smith were killed, and County Inspector Gray and fourteen constables were wounded in disturbances which occurred there, all is now quiet.

Arrangements are in process of completion for the reopening of traffic on the railways, and also for establishing a temporary General Post Office in Dublin.

In Galway, where disturbances threatened to develop, surrenders are taking place.

The Revolution of the Sinn Feiners of Dublin having ended in the unconditional surrender of almost the entire army of rebels, and the streets in the central parts of the city having become comparatively safe during daylight, the citizens displayed great anxiety to see for themselves some of the damage that had been done. Residents outside the military cordon on the North side of the city were rigorously excluded from passing through, and on the South side a similar restriction, but not quite so strict, was in force. Those who lived within the cordon were in no way hindered from moving about and viewing the wreck of their once fine city. The spectators appeared as if spellbound when they came into view of Sackville street. Here and there a cloud of [illegible] smouldering ruins. Only a few [illegible] walls remain of the whole range of business houses on one side of the street between Nelson's Pillar and O'Connell Bridge, if the shell of Clery's warehouse is excepted. On the other side of the street only the outer walls and the portico of the General Post Office remain, the Hotel Metropole is gone, and most of the other business places from that point down to O'Connell Bridge are either partially or wholly destroyed.

A TERRIBLE PERIL.

As if not content with the ruin they had brought upon the city, the rebels had in contemplation a plan of destruction appalling to contemplate. By some means at present unknown they had concealed at the back of the General Post Office a very large quantity of dynamite and other powerful explosives. Fortunately the military authorities got to know of the presence of this terrible danger while the postal building was in flames, and the soldiers and firemen, with a courage worthy of the highest commendation, put forth every [...]

[...] tions of street fighting, which it was found necessary to order, were thanked for their splendid behaviour. He specially mentions with gratitude those Irish regiments "who have so largely helped to crush this rising."

JAMES CONNOLLY A PRISONER.

It is understood that James Connolly, the rebel leader, who was wounded in the General Post Office and taken prisoner, is seriously, but not dangerously, hurt. He was shot through the femur of the right leg.

Connolly succeeded James Larkin as secretary of the Transport Workers' Union and organiser of the "Citizen Army." He was one of the seven signatories of the declaration of "the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic." The others are—Thomas J. Clarke, Sean Mac Diarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, P. H. Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, and Joseph Plunkett.

JACOB'S FACTORY.

The surrender of the Volunteers who occupied Jacob's Factory took place on Sunday afternoon. It was a member of the Carmelite Order from Whitefriar street who was instrumental in persuading them to yield. Amid the cheers of the crowd gathered about the building, the clergyman was hoisted by a number of men up to one of the lower windows, from which the bags of flour used instead of sand by the rebels had been pulled. He went inside the factory, and not long after a party of Volunteers walked out.

REBELS AT CORK.

HOW THE RISING FAILED.

A correspondent at Cork reports an interview with the leader of a body of Sinn Fein [...]

OFFICIAL REPORTS.

THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

REPORTS FROM VISCOUNT FRENCH.

From Field-Marshal Viscount French, Commanding-in-Chief Home Forces:
Dublin, Saturday Night.

Dublin.—The situation this morning had improved considerably, but the rebels were still offering serious resistance in the neighbourhood of Sackville street.

The cordon of troops encircling this quarter was, however, steadily closing in, but the house-to-house fighting necessarily rendered this progress slow. The Post Office and a block of buildings east of Sackville street have been destroyed by fire. A party of rebels have been driven out of Boland's mills, Ringsend, by guns mounted on motor lorries.

One of the rebel leaders, a man named Pearse, was said to be in this area, and was wounded in the leg. A report received this evening states that Pearse has surrendered unconditionally, and that he asserts he has authority to accept the same terms of surrender for his followers in Dublin.

Another leader, James Connolly, is reported killed.

The Four Courts district, which is still held by the rebels, is also surrounded by a cordon of troops, which is gradually closing in.

All the information to hand points to the conclusion that the rebellion, so far as Dublin is concerned, is on the verge of collapse. A considerable number of rebels are prisoners in military custody.

OTHER OUTBREAKS.

Reports received this evening from the rest of Ireland are generally satisfactory. The conditions in Belfast and the Ulster Province are normal, and the situation in Londonderry is stated to be quite satisfactory.

The district within fifteen miles of Galway is also reported to be normal, but a band of rebels has been located between Athenry and Craughwell.

Nineteen rebel prisoners have been captured and are on their way to Queenstown.

Another band of rebels are reported to have entrenched themselves at Enniscorthy, but the police are still holding out, and the roads and railways are clear to within four miles of the town.

The damage to the Barrow bridge on the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway, is now reported not to be serious.

SUNDAY'S REPORT.

From the Field-Marshal Commanding in Chief Home Forces:—

Sunday, 6.46 p.m.

The General Officer Commanding-in [...]

Newspaper report after the Uprising

the relatives of the people who were being executed to visit them. You could not think of anything you could do with yourself that would make a change.

My father used to say that whenever things became too much for me and I became perplexed, I was to sit down and write it on a sheet of paper, and leave the paper in a book and put it away for a day or two. Then, when I took the paper back, the thing that I had been puzzled about would be staring me in the face, and I would say, "Wasn't I a stupid person — I didn't realise that was the answer!"

So during the week of the executions I sat down and wrote a little poem — it was only a wee thing, but it said what was worrying me. It was just a few lines about my feelings about what was going to happen now, about the executions, and what would happen in Ireland, and all like that. It went like this:

Tears sighs and prayers and unabating pain
Tears falling swift as drear November rain
Sighs from a heart surcharged with pain
Prayer, dear God, must my prayers be vain?

The answer to my question in this poem was given by my father on the last day we saw him. He told me I was not to cry, so in the midst of my sorrowing I had not let my father see how I felt. He told Mama that she would unman him if he saw her crying.

To me he said, "You don't cry either, Nora, sure you won't."

So I promised I would not.

So when we went back from him to the house we were staying in, I took out the paper and wrote the answer to my question in my poem. This was

the answer my father had given me when he tried to raise my heart and my spirits by the last words he said to me — "We shall rise again". This is how I wrote the answer:

Still sweeping through my swirling brain
And sweeping away the surging pain
Are the words you said as near death you lay
While life in your veins still held full sway
And they sing in my heart like a glad refrain
And sweep away tears and sighs and pain
For your last words were WE SHALL RISE AGAIN.

* * * * * *

As my father was being taken out on a stretcher to be executed, he was asked to say a prayer for the soldiers who were to shoot him. He gave that lovely, glorious smile of his, and he said, "I say a prayer for all brave young men who do their duty."

My mother later told me a story of how, some while later, there was a knock at her door, and there was a young soldier. He looked about sixteen or seventeen years old. He did not look old enough to be in the army. She thought he must be trying to desert, and she asked what he wanted.

"I want you to forgive me," he said. "I was one of the squad that killed James Connolly. It was only afterwards that I heard how he had worked for the working people. I am a miner. My father is a miner, and my grandfather was a miner — they were both very busy in the trade union. How can I go back home? They would know about James Connolly even if I didn't. I haven't been home on leave. I can't go home. I'd let something slip, and they'd know I killed James Connolly. Oh, why was

I chosen to kill a man like that?"

My mother said, "Didn't you hear what James Connolly said? He realised you were being forced. He realised you were only a working class boy. Once he forgave you, there is no need for me to. n't worry any longer, boy."

But the boy still cried, "Oh, but that they should pick a man like me to kill a man like that!"

* * * * * *

By the time of our last visit to my father, I had brought my mother and the children down from Madame Markievicz's cottage into Dublin itself. After leaving my father, I took my mother back across the road to the house where we were staying, which was William O'Brien's. They had only come for us at midnight, and my father was to be executed at dawn.

My mother stood at the window watching for the dawn to come. It was an east window. She was moaning softly. The little children woke up and came in to see what was the matter. When we got the first glimpse of the grey of the East coming up, Mama turned to me and said, "He's gone, Nora, he's gone! He's gone from us now!"

I tried to console her by taking out the little piece of paper my father had given me. I had not read it yet. I think the nurse must have given him a pencil and a slip of paper, and he must have written while the RAMC boy's back was turned. It was not written as evenly as he usually wrote.

I said to the family, "Your Daddy has been executed this morning. He's dead now. But I'm going to read you the last bit of writing he ever did."

As I read the paper, most of them understood. Fiona was too young to understand it, but she understood that he was dead. She had been a great pet of my father's.

I said, "I want to read this to all of you," and this is what I read:

To the Field General Court Martial, held at Dublin Castle, on May 9th, 1916.

(Evidence mainly went to establish the fact that the accused, James Connolly, was in command at the General Post Office, and was also Commandant-General of the Dublin Division. Two of the witnesses, however, strove to bring in alleged instances of wantonly risking the lives of prisoners. The Court held that these charges were *irrelevant* and could not be placed against the prisoner.)

I do not wish to make any defence except against charges of wanton cruelty to prisoners. These trifling allegations that have been made, if they record facts that really happened, deal only with the almost unavoidable incidents of a hurried uprising against long established authority, and nowhere show evidence of set purpose to wantonly injure unarmed persons.

We went out to break the connection between this country and the British Empire, and to establish an Irish Republic. We believed that the call we then issued to the people of Ireland, was a nobler call, in a holier cause, than any call issued to them during this war, having any connection with the war. We succeeded in proving that Irishmen are ready to die endeavouring to win for Ireland those national rights which the British Government has been asking them to die to win for Belgium. As long as that remains the case, the cause of Irish Freedom is safe.

Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence, in any

one generation of Irishmen, of even a respectable minority, ready to die to affirm that truth, makes that Government for ever a usurpation and a crime against human progress.

I personally thank God that I have lived to see the day when thousands of Irish men and boys, and hundreds of Irish women and girls, were ready to affirm that truth, and to attest it with their lives if need be.

James Connolly,
Commandant-General,
Dublin Division,
Army of the Irish Republic.

III

AFTER THE UPRISING

In the States. — Making speeches. — Liam Mellows imprisoned in the States. — Return to Ireland. — War of Independence. — Treaty. — Civil War and execution of Mellows. — My arrest and imprisonment. — Letter to my mother from Kilmainham Jail. — My mother. — My husband. — Second World War.

Some weeks after the rising, in August 1916, I went to the States. The rising had generated tremendous interest among the Irish in America, and I soon found myself speaking to vast meetings of up to 15 or 20,000 people. The first big meeting was in Boston in Faneuil Hall. This hall is known as the 'Cradle of Liberty', as it was used for meetings by the Americans when they were fighting against the British in their War of Independence.

I was up on the platform, and was shaking with nervousness as it was such as terrific crowd. But I went ahead, trying to speak as my father used to. His advice used to be, "Use the simplest words — don't try to show your erudition."

I made a long speech, but there was dead silence all the time I spoke. When I finished there was wild excitement, and I was called outside to make the speech all over again outside the hall, where there were a further 5,000 people who had not been able to get in.

One of the outdoor meetings at which I spoke was at Madison Gardens, and it was full to the top, with the rows and rows of galleries all crowded. There were no megaphones in those days, but the

crowd listened to everything I said, and even those on the edge said they were surprised that though I was only a 'slip of a girl' they could hear me quite well. You can do this without shouting if you have a good, carrying voice.

I had not had experience of public speaking when I gave these speeches, and yet I never halted for words and my speeches were very enthusiastically received. This used to make me say to myself that it couldn't be me speaking — that I could never make such a speech. I wonder whether the spirits of the executed leaders were still roaming around before going on their long journey? If I was being inspired, it must have been by their spirits, as I was inspired quite well!

I also did other propaganda work in the States besides making speeches. I wrote a book on the rising, called *The Unbroken Tradition*. It was only short, but it was the first book to tell the truth about the rising. The title referred to the fact that every generation of the Irish people has had an armed uprising against the British. 1916 showed that the tradition was still unbroken. I wrote the book during 1916, while events were still hot in my mind.

After Woodrow Wilson got the US into the war on the side of Britain, my book was banned as being anti-British, and it became a felony to distribute it.

* * * * * *

Liam Mellows made his way to the States after 1916. When the US joined the war on Britain's side, he was arrested, along with a man from the German Embassy called von Reinkelhausen. A

Turk who had a friend in the house where Liam was staying had knocked at the wrong number and was with Liam when he was arrested. So the poor Turk got arrested too. They were charged with an Irish-Turkish-German plot for sabotage in America.

Clann na Gael, the pro-Irish organisation in America, sent out an order that Liam was not to be visited in prison by anyone who was a pro-Clann na Gael person. No one was to write to him, and no one was to send him anything. He was to be left in isolation. Their idea was that it would weaken their political life, and that their power over voting would not be so strong if their members were associated with the prisoners. Their present political power was more important to them than a man in prison who was far away from his friends. So I never liked Clann na Gael at all after that, as I thought they were so weak.

So when I heard what Clann na Gael had said, I am sure I was ten feet tall with rage. I said, "I'm not a member of Clann na Gael, so I'm going."

So I went down to the Tombs Prison in New York — a jail that is not there any longer.

I said, "I want to see Liam Mellows."

They told me, "You have to have the permission of the City Marshall."

So I said, "Where is this City Marshall?"

So they told me where he was and I went to him.

The Marshall told me, "Why does a nice girl like you want to visit a young man such as this in the Tombs?"

"He's not 'such as this'," I said. "He's one of the finest young men that Ireland ever produced. And I daren't go home to my mother or the family and say that Liam was in prison and I didn't go to see

him — he's so much a friend of the family."

So he said, "Oh, in that case it's a different situation altogether. But let me tell you, young lady, nobody else has asked for permission to see him. You're the first one who's come. And I'll bet you anything, if you're a betting woman, that you'll be the last."

I was shocked at this, as I thought at least somebody would have gone to see him to show him that he was not forgotten.

During my visit to the prison, all the prisoners were placed together, and the warders were walking up and down between them and the visitors. Everyone was speaking in different languages. While Liam and I were talking, he suddenly started to talk in Gaelic, and told me that he was worried about some papers which had been hidden under the floor at his house. He wanted them taken up and put in a safe place.

"No more of that," said one of the warders, hearing us talk in Gaelic.

"Don't be silly," I said. "There are people talking in every language here. I was saying a phrase or two, just to show that coming to the States hasn't made me lose my language."

The papers had not been found by the police, and they were still there when we went for them. We dealt with them as Liam had wanted.

He was kept in prison for a long time. They never brought him to court at all.

* * * * * *

I left the States just at the end of the war. At that time, to get from the States to Britain you had to get a military permit. So I went up for one, and

they asked me some questions. I kept quiet about how I had come over to the US, as I had travelled on a false passport.

They asked me, "What will you do if we don't give you permission to go back?"

Now I had just been asked to do another US tour, though I was tired and I wanted to stop touring and go back to Ireland. So when they asked me that question I said, "I've just been asked to make a coast-to-coast tour. I'd rather go home to Ireland, but if you don't let me, I'll go on the tour."

The men in the office were half-jovial and half-enemy. When I gave them this reply, they said, "In that case, we'll have to give you permission to go to Ireland!"

But when I arrived at Liverpool, I was met by a Home Office official, who had a file on me. He had a letter saying that Nora Connolly could travel in England or Scotland, but "on no account must she be allowed to go from any UK port to Ireland." So I had to begin writing letters to the Home Office to get a permit.

Mrs Skeffington had also been prevented from going back to Ireland. But then one day she was told, "You're lucky now — there's a boat and you can stowaway." But when she reached Ireland, she walked up and down in the streets and got herself arrested, and was brought back to Holloway Prison. She immediately went on hunger strike. That lasted for nearly a fortnight, and then she was given permission to go back to Ireland.

So when I wrote to the Home Office, I said, "Must I, like Mrs Skeffington, get arrested and go on hunger strike before I can go back?"

By return of post I received a letter saying, "We

are in communication with the authorities in Ireland."

Next I got a letter from the Viceroy, saying, "It is utterly impossible and very inadvisable to allow her to return to Ireland."

In the end they let me go, but they took my trunk and they confiscated everything — ordinary pieces of paper and old printed books you could buy in the shops, even bits of music I'd picked up. I had many photos, including glossy photos of me that had been taken for the papers in the States. I was quite a star over there! They took all those.

* * * * * *

After the First World War, we had the British army against us, and we had the Black and Tans against us. There was also another force against us, called the Auxiliaries. The British thought that with the Army, the Auxiliaries and the Black and Tans they would finish us up in no time. They thought they had frightened us all by the executions and by taking the thousands of men and women into prison. They thought everything had calmed down now, and that the fighting was over and there was nothing for them to worry about. They let the prisoners come home from the internment camp in Wales and from the English prisons, thinking everything was quiet.

But they had made a mistake. There were a lot of returned soldiers who had been in the British army. When the war ended, there was no work for them, in spite of all the glory that Redmond had put in their minds about how they had been fighting to make a 'heaven' for the people — everyone would have a whole house, and all the

rest of it. A lot of them had gone into the British army because there had been no work for them, and when they came back they joined the IRA. But many of them were youngsters and had only been reserve men in the British army, so that they had not done any actual fighting. That meant teaching them. The Citizen Army had since 1916 been part of the IRA, and many of those in the Citizen Army had been trained well enough by my father to help them train these youngsters.

When the republican prisoners came back to Ireland, there was wild excitement, and the new IRA recruits were all eager to get organised. Many who had been in the Volunteers in 1916 were ashamed of the fact that they had failed in 1916, by accepting MacNeill's message in the paper rather than what the couriers from Dublin had said. They were now determined to get organised and make up for this.

The IRA had an Active Unit in Dublin, and there was ambushing going on all the time — very, very successful ambushes on the British forces.

That was a wonderful time. The unity of the country was the thing. You could trust people even when you did not know each other. Let me tell you some stories about the unity of the people when we were fighting against the British.

The Auxiliaries were like the Black and Tans, but they were all ex-officers of the British army. They were young fellows who had nothing to do when they were discharged from the army. They weren't trained to do anything else, and there were no jobs anyway, so they volunteered for Ireland. They used to have a habit of making a ring around a chosen area, and then not letting anybody in or out of it, while they searched everybody caught

inside. One day I was riding upstairs in a tram when the Auxiliaries formed one of these rings and the tram was caught inside, so that all the passengers had to sit and wait to be searched. There was no covering on the top of the trams, so we could see everything that was going on, and how they were searching all the people in the street below. One Auxiliary would hold a man, while the other searched him for arms, or for any papers that would incriminate him.

While this was going on, a man got onto the tram, rushed upstairs and sat down in an empty seat right in front of where I was sitting. What happened next gives a picture of the unity of the people at that time. The woman sitting beside him was carrying a carrier bag full of shopping. This man looked at her and she looked at him. Then she just turned away and he put a gun into her shopping bag. When the Auxiliaries had finished searching all the people and he saw that it was safe to go, he put his hand in her bag and took the gun.

All this while the woman had just kept her head turned away. She never looked at the gun. But she must have realised what had been happening, because when he got up to go, she called after him, "Good luck, love, good luck! Good luck, lad!"

That was the sort of unity there was. You could trust even a stranger.

Another time I was rounded up, on my way back from a Gaelic class, and I found that one of the chief engineers of the IRA was also caught. He was standing right beside me and we were all going to be searched.

I said, "Good God, how did you come to be in this position?"

"Oh," he said, "nothing to worry about, Nora."

Then he showed me a .45 that he was holding in one of his fists, but he put both his hands in the air and when they came to him they just searched his body and never thought of looking up; I nearly fainted with relief when they passed him off.

"Ah, well," he said, "you can cod them, you know, Nora, you can cod them very easily." (I don't think that phrase is used outside Ireland, but it means you can fool them, or play a little trick on them.)

Another time when I was rounded up, I noticed that one of the men waiting to be searched had put his hands up and was being very cooperative and seemed very much on the side of the British. I told him, "You don't need to put your hands up yet, you know."

"Ah, but I do, ma'am," he replied, and he quietly said, "Here, take a look!" He showed me a big wallet of money he was holding in one of his fists.

The British thought he was so much on their side that they hardly searched him, and let him go. And I remembered once again how that other lad had said, "You can cod them."

We used to carry out our own raids to get guns, and we used to steal them from the British army. One of the ways was to get talking to a British soldier in a pub, and buy him a little porter, and then some whiskey. Then we would get him talking and make him feel that he was a great chap, and as fast as he could drink, his glass was filled up until he was stocious. (I do not think they use that phrase outside Ireland either, but it means not just drunk, but altogether beyond the beyond in drink.) So when he was stocious, we would take his rifle, and hide it under a raincoat or an overcoat.

Then we would go out and stop an ordinary soldier outside, and we would say, "There's a poor young fellow in there and he's stocious. You'd better get him out of there before a Redcap comes along."

The 'Redcaps' were the military police. So the ordinary soldiers would smuggle him back into barracks so that he would not get into trouble.

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Some time after the truce that brought an end to the War of Independence against the British, I said to Liam Mellows, "You've made a mistake having a truce and letting it go on for months and getting nothing done. You should have a truce *and* get the troops out."

It was the first time Britain had come and asked Ireland for a truce.

But it is easy to tell a man to keep going, but it is not easy to tell someone to take something up again. We had had six months of freedom between the Truce and the Treaty. But we would not have had the Treaty if we had taken up the struggle again. I said that when the Treaty came out.

The people who were sent out for the negotiating were people who knew nothing about diplomacy. They just wanted freedom from Britain and that is all they knew. They were not going to take up the struggle again after there had been a lapse. They had not the wisdom or the training of the British Foreign Office and the various ministers there. So when our men went over, the British won out. Ireland was divided under the Treaty, and the battle was on again.

During the summer of 1922, when Liam had

been thrown in Mountjoy Jail, he wrote his notes that were printed in all the papers. This attracted a lot of attention, especially as it was considered very funny that a prisoner had been able to write all that and get it sneaked out and then put in all the papers for everyone to read. He gave it to someone he knew, and it was taken to the Headquarters. From the Headquarters it was given out to such a person and such a person — all the people who would know what to do with it and see it was printed in all the papers and was read among all the people. The papers were pleased to get hold of that sort of thing, not for the contents — they were not interested in that — but because it had been slipped out of prison and made good news. They printed it complete as he wrote it.

It had a terrible effect when Liam and the three other Republicans were shot later that year. It had a terrible effect on the Republicans and a terrible effect on me. I had just gone out of the house for something, and bought a newspaper and opened it, and saw that Liam had been executed. I nearly died. I turned round and went back home. My husband was at home at the time, and also the Chief Engineer of the IRA was there. When I told them the news, they said, "That's Connolly."

Liam Mellows followed my father, and he was one of my father's students. He was completely soaked in Connollyism.

* * * * * *

During the Civil War, Margaret Skinnider was Paymaster General, under Austin Stack, for the IRA. Her job was to handle the money. Stack would send a courier to Margaret, and tell her to

give out a certain amount of money, and take a receipt. Then she was arrested, and Stack sent a letter to me asking me to take over while she was in jail. That is how I became temporary Paymaster General of the IRA.

By this time I was married, and my husband, Seumas, and I were living in a flat on top of a Gaelic school. Seumas had made a hidey-hole in our bedroom for the money and records I had to keep. Then we were raided three times in one day. At that time I had a draft for £3000, as well as money, some of it in gold. But the three bands of soldiers who were sent to try to get some evidence against me and my husband did not find the hidey-hole. All they could find was a receipt for ninepence for a notebook. They were all Intelligence workers, but they were not intelligent enough to find out where the money was.

But they arrested me and Seumas anyway. They reckoned Seumas must have been working with me just because he was my husband. I was sent to an internment camp north of Dublin. A few days later, we observed the first anniversary of our wedding, he in one prison and I in another.

Later I was transferred to Kilmainham Jail. For many weeks the letters between me and my husband and my family had been stopped. I was terribly worried about my mother. She had been in difficulties about our house. A Trustee Fund had been set up for the widows of the men executed in 1916, and the trustees had a plan for my mother to be assisted to set up a boarding house. But she was very simple-minded about such things, and while I was in prison she did not have me to advise her.

"I can never understand how you manage," my father had once said to my mother. "Money means

nothing to you."

"If I have money, I spend it," she replied, "and if I haven't, then I manage some way or another."

I spent fourteen days without sleeping. My nerves were giving way. As I walked, I began to count every step I took, and the numbers swelled to thousands. I was taken to the doctor, who gave me some drug, but it was no good and I still did not sleep. Then I was sent up to Parnell's rooms, which had been made into a hospital. Up there, Margaret Neville said that if I ate some lettuce, it would make me go to sleep. Where she got that idea from, I do not know. But she made me some lettuce sandwiches and I forced myself to eat them. And then, would you believe it, I fell asleep properly for the first time.

On Good Friday, 1923, I sent this letter from prison to my mother:

Kilmainham Jail
Good Friday

Dear Mama,

At last I am able to write to you and to receive letters. I am terribly worried about you and unhappy to think you have had such a dose of trouble since I last heard from you. I have just received your letter written on March 16th and devoutly hope that Moira and Aideen are better now and your troubles dissipated.

I suppose you have heard somehow that all letters in and out were stopped, as well as parcels, and that as a protest against this treatment 96 girls here were on Hunger Strike for 7 days. There would have been far more on strike if our MOs would have allowed it. They exempted all who were delicate and receiving medical treatment and all girls under 20 years.

It has been a most anxious and worrying time. I was exempted, as you will expect, owing to my

health, but really and truly Mama I would have had an easier time if I had been allowed to strike. As it was I was running about all day, not able to eat when I thought of the others suffering, and the worry of it all has had a very bad effect on my already deranged nerves. I have not slept 12 hours altogether since the strike began last Friday. Mrs Gordon says I have become so thin that I am like a sardine and that if I do not sleep that I will collapse altogether.

On Wednesday evening I did collapse. My nerves absolutely gave way and it was nearly an hour before I could get about again. I was not allowed to sleep in my own cell that night. The MO was afraid of a further collapse and as my cellmate, Mary McSweeney, was on Hunger Strike she thought I would be unable to get help. I feel myself that if I could get sleep I'd be all right.

The girls here were wonderful. I'll never forget them. Such spirit in spite of their suffering and weakness. Not one had a thought of giving in. Nellie Hoyne was so bad that she was released yesterday and taken to the Mater Hospital. And a Cork girl, Annie O'Donovan, was also released. Please go to see Nellie Hoyne. She has no relative to go to see her, and see Annie O'Donovan too. Tell them the strike finished last night and everything was conceded to the girls.

I want you to send in some of the following things. I will have £1 sent out to you. Get them to the Prison by tomorrow before 6 if you possibly can:

1 lb. tea, 1 lb. butter, 1 lb. sugar, 1 pkg. of corn flour, 1 pkg. of custard powder, 1 pkg. of farola, cream crackers, jam sandwich, 1 lb. pot strawberry jam and marmalade, and a few eggs.

You will see by the list that it is mainly light things for some of the country girls who will not be able to get them for some time. If you think of anything else that would be good for them send them in also. Use up the £1.

I have had a letter from Seumas. He is only re-

covering from a bad attack of the 'flu. He tells me you sent him in a pile of collars, which is a source of amusement to him and the others. They don't wear collars in jail.

I hope to have a letter from you soon. Give my love to all at home and tell them to remember me.

It is depressing and a bit of a strain to spend Easter in the jail where Papa was executed. I cannot forget that fact for one minute.

Best love to yourself. I hope that with the passing of Lent your troubles will also pass.

Nora

While I was in jail, it used to be me who would go to the Governor if there was anything the prisoners wanted to ask for. I went and asked if we could hold a commemoration meeting in the execution yard for Easter. We were allowed to do this, and we got a wreath. I made an oration, in which I dealt not only with 1916, but with what had happened since.

There was a girl there who knew shorthand, and she took down my oration and it was smuggled out and typed and sent to Headquarters. Headquarters sent a copy of it to the men in Mountjoy. When the men in Mountjoy received a message, they would take it in turns for one of them to read it out loud to the others. The day my oration arrived, it was Seumas's turn to read, and he found himself reading out my oration!

In the end I was released on Habeas Corpus. Though there were seven senior lawyers against me, the barrister defending me was a marvel. He proved that it was unconstitutional to arrest me because the Act under which I was arrested had not been signed by that time.

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I hold my mother in the same esteem as my father. Without her, my father could never have done the things he did. I have always wanted to write a book on the life of my mother.

My mother was very particular about how she looked. Even when she was scrubbing the floor, she would put on hessian bags which she washed and cut to her size to wear round her legs as a kind of apron. We did not have carpets or linoleum — just bare boards, with a little bit of carpet by the bedside. When her work was all finished, or when she went out, she wore other clothes. She always wore dark colours — mainly black. I do not ever remember her wearing a bright colour at all. She had one skirt for when she was scrubbing, and one for when she had finished or when she was going out.

As children we used to love it when she washed her hair. It was lovely, long hair that reached way down below her hips. After she washed it, she used to roll it tightly, and wind it round like a crown. Then we used to love to watch and see what we called 'fairy curls' come out round her neck — that was what we called the tiny little short hairs that were just growing and were still too short for the bun. As they dried, they turned into curls. She gave all our family curls but me. She did not give me curls at all. My hair goes into curls when I wash it, then the curls go when it gets dry.

She loved my father right up to the last moment in Dublin Castle, when she said to him as she cried, "Not your beautiful life, James, not your beautiful life!" She was heartbroken at his loss, and it took her a long time to recover.

When I came back to Ireland after being in the States, I found that my mother was smoking. I

had been smoking since I was eighteen -- I picked it up from the young lads in Fianna Eireann and the Volunteers. But my mother did not like me smoking.

She said, "If you must smoke, don't let me see you."

I can remember how one evening, my mother came into my room shyly and said, "Nora, can you give me a cigarette?"

It turned out that she liked a cigarette when she went to bed, but she had run out.

I said, "Well, you can have one this time, but make sure you give it back to me when you've finished with it!"

When I first started writing my book, *Portrait Of A Rebel Father*, I wrote a chapter on my own. When I had finished writing this chapter, I went to my mother and said, "I'm writing a book on Daddy."

I read her the first chapter. I turned my back towards her while I read it, and she was quiet while I did so. Then when I finished, I turned round and saw that she had tears pouring down her cheeks.

"That's perfect," she told me, "word for word."

She was surprised how I could have written so well about what had happened when I was very young. This shows how children do observe adults and can appreciate what is going on.

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I first met my husband, Seumas O'Brien, when I was in the States after 1916. At that time he was the manager of a big store in Boston. We met at a big dance there. He wore tails, and had the job of walking me round and introducing me to people

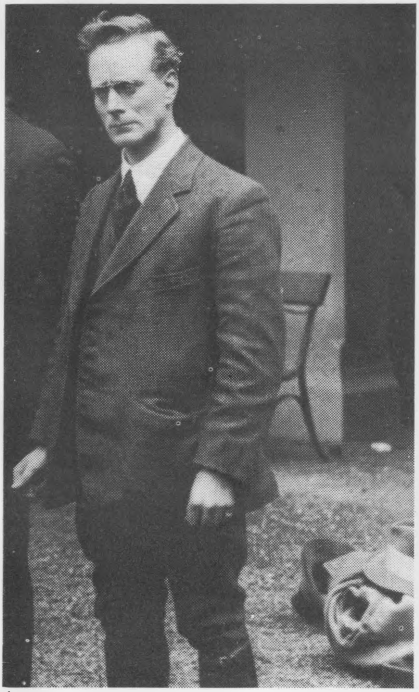
James and Lillie Connolly with their first two children in Edinburgh in the mid-1890's. The younger child is Nora. Her elder sister, Mona, died in childhood.

Lillie Connolly. "I held my mother in the same esteem as my father" (p.57).

Three of the younger children outside their Belfast home in about 1911.

Seumas O'Brien. "I was forty years with my husband, without a row . . . Our only arguments were over politics"(p.59).

The ruins of the GPO building in 1916 after the rising.



Liam Mellows. "He was completely soaked in Connollyism"(p.52).

Nora Connolly in Volunteer uniform posing as 'Peter' (p.35).

Nora Connolly on Nantucket Beach in June 1917.

Nora and Lillie Connolly in about 1919.

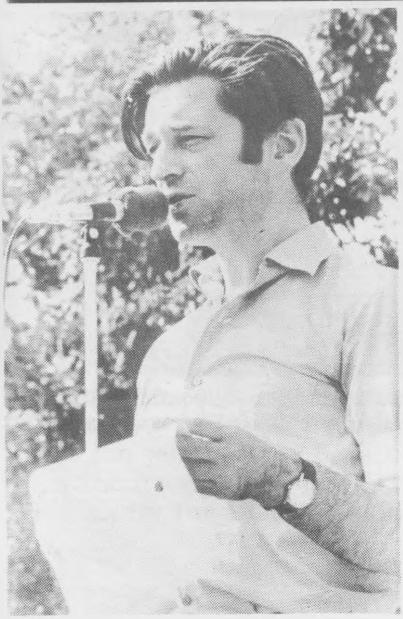
Portrait of Nora Connolly O'Brien by Margaret Neville, painted while both were in prison together in 1923.

Nora Connolly in about 1920.

Countess Markievicz in the uniform of the Irish Citizen Army (p.80).

Margaret Skinnider in her 'toque'-ish hat, which would be "stuffed with bullets and other such supplies, and with detonators wound round and round inside the brim" (p.79)

Nora Connolly O'Brien becomes a Doctor of Laws. "I like the way you wear that hat,' said the Vice Chancellor, 'It's cocky.'"(p.62)



Seamus Costello. He "was killed because the enemies realised that he would lead the people as Connolly led them"(p.74).

"I was in the Citizen Army then, so from then on, when the two armies joined to form one, I was in the IRA. And I was always in the IRA afterwards and I still feel myself to be part of the IRA."(p.117)

"The unbroken tradition is saved by the Provos coming out against the border which cuts us off from six counties of our country" (p.76)

while others danced. I was the VIP. That is how we first met. Later he moved to Ireland, and we were married in 1922.

My husband knew James Connolly when he was in the States. He was also one of those who encouraged the novelist Liam O'Flaherty to start writing. My husband was great pals with Liam's brother in Boston, and he shared a flat with another friend who was a writer. Liam O'Flaherty was in the 1914-18 war, but when he got back to Dublin after the war he had no money and nowhere to go. There was no job left for him. So he went travelling, and during that time stayed with his brother in Boston.

My husband had a very good job as a commercial traveller in Ireland. Then he later went to work for the Department of Defence. He was loved by my mother. Whenever he came back from a business trip he used to give me money to buy a hat. I always used to like looking in shops for a hat, and I would decide very definitely when I saw a hat that I liked.

I was forty years with my husband, without a row. We never had any children. Our only arguments were over politics. He died in 1962.

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During the last world war Ireland was neutral, though there were 50,000 of Redmond's followers lying dead in France. But the army grew into the biggest we ever had — I mean the regular army, not the IRA. Of the men aged from 18 to 60, eight out of ten joined some form of defence, and this was without any conscription.

As for the IRA, it had plenty of arms, and there

were more arms coming in all the time from the United States.

At the beginning of the war, I was working for the ITGWU, where I had been working for some time. I had at first been a correspondent on union business, and then worked on statistics. Then during the war I worked at the telephone exchange in the GPO building. I worked in shifts, starting from 8 to 4, and then when you got used to that you started working from 8 to 8, with 4 hours free in the middle of the day. You could not do anything during those 4 hours — it was no use going home. You did not feel like doing any tidying up of the house, or making a meal or anything. But they had beautiful meals at work, anyway.

I got very good at my job, working on telephone telegrams. Somebody very important from America once sent a cable away to the United States, and began to spell out for me all the places he wanted mentioned in the States. But I knew every one of them already. So I was just saying, "Oh, I know that, I can spell that," and so on.

Then when I read it back to him after it was finished, he said, "Well, I want to speak to your supervisor."

So afterwards I went to my supervisor to find out what I had done wrong.

But my supervisor said, "That American is full of praise. He says that in all the countries in the world where he has been, he's never met anyone who was so clear and so correct, and that he didn't need to get even a comma changed."

And whenever there was a cranky or curious person on the line, I was called to deal with them. I only used to work with the telephone telegrams at odd times. Mostly I was dealing with the telegrams

coming in and going out. I got into the habit of writing my initials, NCOB, on the ones that I passed.

One night Seumas said to me, "Nora, I think you'd better give up that job. You're working all day and you're working all night too. You keep saying in your sleep, 'NCOB, NCOB, NCOB'."

But I did not stop my work for that. I kept going, because the money meant something to us.

But then the doctor said to me, "Listen, Mrs O'B" (as he used to call me), "if you financially can give up that job, give it up. Because otherwise you will have serious trouble with your stomach and digestion within a month or two. So I'd advise you to give it up, if financially you are able to do so."

This was just the time that Seumas got a job at the Department of Defence, so I gave up my job.

Years later I had a surprise when I called up the operators and a voice said, before I had had time to say who I was, "Oh, that's Mrs Connolly O'Brien, isn't it?"

It turned out it was my old boss, who had remembered my voice even after all that time. We started talking, and he asked me whether I got my telephone rent-free, and all the things I could get like that.

I said, "No, I haven't got any of those things at all. I never applied for them."

"Oh," he said, "Don't be silly." And he got my telephone rent knocked off, and various other things that I now get free.

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I have served three terms in the Senate, so I have a little idea of parliamentary work. When De Valera

became Taoiseach for the second time, in 1951, he came up to my house to ask me would I allow him to nominate me to the Senate.

"But Mr De Valera," I said, "you must realise that I don't belong to your party."

He told me that did not matter, so I accepted.

I have also been made a Doctor of Laws. When this happened, I had to wear a special coat and hat. The Vice Chancellor of the University was very amused at the way I wore it.

"I like the way you wear that hat," he said, "It's cocky."

I keep getting honours and honours, and I have a great name among the people. My hat is as well known as Finn MacCool's. But I cannot understand that I have done all that much. I always feel that I have not done enough, and yet they all say I have done so much. That is the feeling I often get.

When I go out, I cannot appear anywhere but some stranger recognises me, and comes up and says, "You're Nora Connolly, aren't you? I'm very pleased to meet you."

I feel awfully shy when this happens, as my feeling is that I have just been ordinary. Why should I get all this glory? I have only done ordinary things that an ordinary person in such a situation would do.

IV

SOCIALISM IN IRELAND

"The socialists will never understand. . .". — Marxism. — Irish visitors to Moscow. — John MacLean. — British communists. — Larkin. — Republican Congress. — The Irish in Britain. — Irish Republican Socialist Party. — Provisional Sinn Fein.

During my last visit to my father before he was executed, he said to me, "My socialist friends on the Continent will never understand why I am here. They will forget I am an Irishman."

For just as my father was not satisfied with the ideal of national independence alone, so also he saw national freedom as an essential step towards social freedom. He knew that his socialist friends would not understand why he not only took part in the national uprising, but even took a leading part in it, as Commandant-General. That was on his mind at that time, and that was what he said within a couple of hours of being executed.

I think he said, "the European socialists", or "my socialist friends on the Continent", meaning the socialists with whom he had communications. He had a general, huge subscription to socialist papers. He had two particular people in Brussels and Holland that he had communications with — they are the only two I remember. Those who could speak English, and could write to him, used to send him articles for the paper, translated from the French or other languages. He knew a bit of several languages, but I never heard him say that he

did the translations himself. He would have communications with all those who could read and write English, and he would get answers back from them. So he knew them well and he knew that they would not be able to understand him getting into a national uprising, and not only getting into it but being a leader of it — he was Commandant-General for Dublin, and was in full charge of that district. He knew they would have no understanding at all of why he was in a national rising rather than waiting for the socialist one. He did not mention that they would fail to understand him because he was a leader, or anything like that — just that he was an Irishman, and that is why he was in it.

But Lenin later made a beautiful speech about this, and said it was right to have an uprising, and that the socialists should understand this. He said the Easter uprising was giving them a lesson.

James Connolly's industrial ideas were that unskilled labour should not be separate from skilled tasks. All workers should be apprentices to train to take over the management, while the fighting was going on. This way, the workers could gain sufficient information about the civilian part of building up socialism, while the revolutionary part was doing the fighting. These were James Connolly's ideas of industrial unionism.

He was also a Marxist. But my view is that Marxism is no use to workers today. What was good for one generation is not necessarily good for the next — though we should learn to see that we do not make the same mistakes that were made before. That is all we can do. That is my view and it was also the view of my brother Roddy. Roddy ran a little communist paper for a time after the Russian revolution, and visited Moscow. There is a

photo of him there at the November celebrations with Lenin and Trotsky.

Several visits were made by Irish delegates to Moscow after the revolution. On one occasion, there was Roddy and MacAlpine, who was a correspondent from the United States who was an Irishman. Others who went to Moscow included Eamonn Martin, and Archie Heron. Archie Heron was married to my sister Ina, who died a few months ago, and she went to Moscow with him.

At the mealtimes during the Congresses there were so many languages being spoken — all the delegates would be speaking their own language. At the Irish table, they did not want to speak English, as so many delegates were doing, so they used whatever Irish they had. They all had different amounts of Irish — some were quite good, and some knew only a little. A Swedish delegate came up to them and said that he was thrilled to hear Irish spoken. He said that he could read it, but had never actually heard it spoken before. Not realising the difficulties that some of the Irish delegates themselves were having in speaking it, he remarked, "Isn't it a slow language!"

I used to know many of the communists after the Russian revolution. I knew John MacLean, the Scot. He was a very serious man, and very nice. We once sat together at an international parliamentarians' conference. Though he never became an MP, he attended to discuss the local party politics of Glasgow. He and I had a talk with two Russians. One of them was a woman. She had no other language but Russian, but she looked Irish. You would absolutely swear, looking at her, that she was an Irishwoman from Kerry. The man spoke a little German. He was older than she was. MacLean

knew a bit of German, and I would say something to him, and he would translate it into his sort of German. The Russian who spoke some German would then give it to the Russian woman.

We were all sitting at a table having a cup of coffee together, and we got to know each other and talked about the various things that had been discussed. Then another Russian who was much better dressed came over and sat down at the table too. The other two were not very well dressed — just well dressed for workers, you know. But this man was really tailored up to the last stitch, and he was evidently coming to watch over them, to see that they did not say things that they should not say. He had absolutely perfect English. He was a young man — I should say about 25. He explained to us what this meant and what that meant.

While he was talking, the other two Russians did not speak too much. In fact as soon as he came over they stopped speaking, and soon went away.

John gave me a pinch, as much as to say, "Watch your tongue!"

I got on well with John MacLean. I used to get letters from him. But he was much more often in Scotland than in Ireland, and it would really only be by chance that I would meet him. Sometimes I would go to a meeting and find him there and we would renew our friendship. Then he would go off and I would not know where he was going.

He knew my father. When my father was doing a lot of speaking, he used to go over to Scotland on speaking tours. John MacLean was held in veneration by so many people. I was shocked when I heard of his death. I knew he had been in prison, but I did not know he was ill at all. I can see him in front of me now — I can see him so well.

During the Anti-Partition business after the Treaty, I was all around the place making speeches, and I spoke in Glasgow. The authorities did not know where I was to be found — I would go one night in each place. But I was not a very important speechmaker — I had not learnt the art very well.

I knew many of the communists at that time. I met MacManus, and later I became very fond of Harry Pollitt. He used to come and visit me when he came over to Ireland. And I used to see Willie Gallacher.

Willie Gallacher and I were very close friends. He would always tell me some stories when we met, and I remember many of them. I remember how he said that when he first landed in Russia, he wanted a cup of tea.

Now in Russia at that time they used to have samovars, with watery tea, and that tea wasn't tea for Willie. He knew some words of German, and he said, "Stark!", thinking that word would mean 'strong' to them.

They could not understand him, so he raised his arm and bared his muscles to try to get over his meaning. They thought he was threatening them, until eventually someone came over and explained to them that he was asking for stronger tea.

The leading communists all came to my sister's husband's funeral when he died. Pollitt came, even though he was not well and was not active any longer. When Pollitt died, I felt that I had lost a friend. He was a grand type. He never tried to force me to go beyond what my father had said. I also met T. A. Jackson while he was writing his book on Ireland.

Earlier on I had met Tom Bell, who was editor of one of the socialist papers. They used to keep

IRISH WAR NEWS

THE IRISH REPUBLIC.

VOL. I. No. 1 DUBLIN, TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 1916. ONE PENNY

"IF THE GERMANS CONQUERED ENGLAND."

In the London "New Statesman" for *April 1st*, an article is published—"If the Germans Conquered England," which has the appearance of a very clever piece of satire written by an Irishman. The writer draws a picture of England under German rule, almost every detail of which exactly fits the case of Ireland at the present day. Some of the sentences are so exquisitely appropriate that it is impossible to believe that the writer had not Ireland in his mind when he wrote them. For instance :—

"England would be constantly irritated by the lofty moral utterances of German statesmen who would assert—quite sincerely, no doubt—that England was free, freer indeed than she had ever been before. Prussian freedom, they would explain, was the only real freedom, and therefore England was free. They would point to the flourishing railways and farms and colleges. They would possibly point to the contingent of M.P's, which was permitted, in spite of its deplorable disorderliness, to sit in a permanent minority in the Reichstag. And not only would the Englishman have to listen to a constant flow of speeches of this sort ; he would find a respectable official Press secret bought over by the Government to say the same kind of things over and over, every day of the week. He would find, too, that his children were coming home from school with new ideas of history. . . They would ask him if it was true that until the Germans came England had been an unruly country, constantly engaged in civil war. . . . The object of every schoolbook would be to make the English child grow up in the notion that the history of his country was a thing to forget, and that the one bright spot in it was the fact that it had been conquered by cultured Germany.'

"If there was a revolt, German statesmen would deliver grave speeches about "disloyalty," "ingratitude," "reckless agitators who would ruin their country's prosperity. . . . Prussian soldiers would be encamped in every barracks—the English conscripts having been sent out of the country to be trained in Germany, or to fight the Chinese—in order to come to the aid of German morality, should English sedition come to blows with it."

"England would be exhorted to abandon her own genius in order to imitate the genius of her conquerors, to forget her own history for a larger history, to give up her own language for a "universal" language—in other words, to destroy her household gods one by one, and put in their place

A 'Mosquito' newspaper. Only one issue of this paper was published.

up those papers although sometimes they had no money at all to pay for their printing. They had a kind printer who used to let them go without paying for one issue, but he would never let them go owing for two.

During the First World War, the police in Ireland were not content with merely arresting those who printed something which was not agreeable to the British censors. They even used to go and smash the printers' machinery. Some newspapers used to leave a blank space in their newspapers when something was censored, so that everybody knew that they had printed something the British did not like. One-page and two-page newsheets started up to escape the censors. These were known as the 'mosquito press' — a term the British first used, but we took it up gladly. My father got his paper printed by the Glasgow socialists, and they used to bring it over to Ireland. This continued until Liberty Hall set up a press of its own, in the basement. This was kept under armed guard all the time, and the paper was printed under armed guard.

The communists later began their harsh work on people and smashed socialism in the UK. They insisted that you are not to decide on your own — that you are not to be an individual. But I still knew many of them. And I knew all of the ILP.

What happened about communism in Ireland is that the Russians supported Larkin, and Larkin was only Larkin, you see. My father had to make a great effort to get on with Larkin. Larkin liked to help his friends. The older men would come to him and say they needed money for this and they needed money for that, as they had no money at all, and no work. And Larkin would take the

money from the union, which was really just robbing the place so that he could appear the 'good man'. He left behind thousands of pounds owed, including many bills for legal proceedings. When my father came down to Liberty Hall after Larkin left for the States, he had an awful job paying off this debt. It was only when my father showed how anxious he was to get things in order and pay it all off that the banks cut the debt down to what my father could get paid to them. Larkin was all 'human charity', and always liked to help people. But it was not his money to give — it was the union's money. And when the bills ran into thousands of pounds, the union could not do all the things it was meant to do.

When Larkin was sent over to the States to raise funds after the 1913 Dublin lockout, he never sent the union back any money. I do not say he was greedy — he certainly never made any money for himself. But he was stupid with any money that came his way — he just handed it out to the first fellow who came to him with a hard-up tale.

After Larkin visited Moscow, he came back boasting that he was "governor of a sixth of the earth". The British communists sent over Bob Stewart to Larkin to form a workers' party. I liked Stewart, but he did not do any good at all. All that just petered out, and did not last any time at all.

Then Larkin started a union instead of a party, and they did very well. But it was his sons, really, who made it as good as it was. Jim Larkin Junior was very brainy, but he had no personality at all. Larkin Senior had a great personality and a great fluency of words, and he was a great speaker. Once I was asked to describe him, and I said that he was like a bell tolling to call the people to church — but

he was finished at that. He should have allowed someone to make the full use of his wonderful speeches. But he always wanted himself to be the one and only, and did not want another to take his place. So he did not allow anyone to assist him.

Then the Republican Congress came along. This was in the 1930s, when there was a vacuum for a political movement in Ireland. It was purely socialist as well. We wanted to start a new party, and we wanted Republican Congress to be the next government. We had so many people that it would have been. Everything was socialism at that time. In all the prisons people were reading Connolly. Then the IRA prisoners were released under the amnesty after De Valera came to power. When they came out they were all anxious to do work, but the IRA was not doing any propaganda. So Republican Congress was getting all the IRA boys as we had work for them to do. There were delegates to the Congress from all parts of the country.

At one time all the printers in Dublin were on strike, but our paper was printed in Roscommon, and the newsboys sold it as an ordinary paper. Republican Congress was very strong, and it was a grand time.

At that time I used to spend Monday to Friday working full time with Republican Congress. Often I would travel up and down the country with Mick Price, recruiting and organising branches and so on. Saturday and Sunday I would spend with my husband.

I remember on one occasion there was a big street brush. A gang of ruffians had heard that the newsboys had taken a lot of money selling our paper, and that a van was bringing the money to deliver it to us. The ruffians took the van. But my

husband was of a policemanly shape, and he thwacked some of them, and they said, "Oh, God, come away! He's a cop! He's a cop!"

But the communists did not want Republican Congress to start a new party, which we wanted to do. They were out for a united front, but this was something Russia wanted, not what we wanted. The communists wrapped the green flag around themselves, and made themselves out to be the most nationalistic of the lot, and the most caring about what happened to Ireland. They said that those who had died in our fight would turn in their graves if they thought we were starting another party. As for those of us who were against them, they said we were too far to the left.

Peadar O'Donnell was a very popular republican at that time. He had been in touch with socialists on the Continent. The Communist Party sent Willie Gallacher over from London just before the Congress to persuade O'Donnell to stand for a united front instead of making Republican Congress a political party. Gallacher and O'Donnell were up all night arguing about this point, and finally O'Donnell gave in, and stood for a united front. Even Sean Murray, the leader of the Communist Party of Ireland, did not know about this. It was Willie Gallacher himself who told me about this later. I lost all respect for O'Donnell after this, and have never had any respect for him ever since.

Our people in Republican Congress had not been trained for anything but fighting, and the communists took a bad attitude and started aiming to get so many communists as delegates by trickery. I could not stand it, and when it became clear that Republican Congress was not going to set itself up as a party, I walked out.

I said, "We don't want a united front, we want a united Ireland."

I had nothing more to do with Republican Congress once I had walked out. They elected me onto the Executive Committee, but I had nothing to do with it. Price, O'Donnell and all of them scattered all over the place, and it soon all petered out.

Sean Murray and his communist party were in touch with Russia through London. I liked Sean Murray personally. He was a fine chap. But once he took that bad attitude, he became unpopular. He became so unpopular that he had to move up to Belfast.

Poor Desmond Greaves, when he was writing his book on James Connolly, got the idea that I would not even look at a Russian or a communist. He used to ask my sister, Fiona, who was living in Britain, about this thing and the other thing.

Fiona said, "But I was only a child at that time. Why don't you ask Nora? She'll answer all your questions."

"Oh," he said, "but I understand she won't even speak to a communist."

"Don't be a fool," she said. "If it's anything connected with Ireland, Nora will speak to anybody about it."

"Are you sure of that?" he said.

"Certain," she said. "I'll write her a note and tell her you're going to see her. And she knows you, because she met you at the Connolly Club."

But I did not like the Connolly Club. I thought it was a nesting-place for producing communist thought in the young.

Many of the Irish in Britain in the 1930s were socialists. I have a badge with a big F on it that

belonged to one of Mosley's fascisti. When Mosley went out to the East End of London to have a massacre of the Jews, the Irish lads joined in the fighting on the side of the Jews. One of the Irish lads ripped this badge off the coat of one of the fascisti and sent it to me as a memento.

Today I get on very well with the Irish Republican Socialist Party. They are the nearest approach to Connolly's idea. However, I am not a member of their party. I am an independent Connollyite. Seamus Costello was killed because the enemies realised that he would lead the people as Connolly led them. When he was shot I went down to a memorial meeting held by the IRSP. I told his widow, "What your husband was doing was carrying on the work of James Connolly. He had the same vision of a free Ireland that Connolly had. He must have been considered as much danger to the present powers as James Connolly was, and that is why he was shot."

I had not met her before. She was a stranger. I never met him either, that I know. But I feel as though I knew him. He was teaching the IRSP properly. They had great standing in Bray, where he was on the County Council, and he was getting the party more and more popular. He expressed himself so much on my father's line of thought that it was evident to me that he had been a thorough reader of all of James Connolly's writings. In him I hoped that at last after all these years a true leader had come who would bring about an organisation such as my father wished to bring about, and he worked hard at the job. To me also, of all the politicians and political people, Seamus Costello was the one person who truly understood James Connolly's vision of Irish freedom. His death

was a tremendous loss to the cause of Irish freedom as James Connolly pictured it in his mind and soul.

The Provos are also coming to realise the importance of James Connolly's ideas of industrial unionism. But I have sometimes been concerned that Sinn Fein does not do enough propaganda. I cannot understand this, as propaganda is the life of a party. They are apt to behave as though they were a brotherhood, or a secret society. They do not go out and talk to people enough. I know that street corner meetings and meetings outside churches and so on are now a thing of the past, but it is still not enough just to bring out a paper. A paper is often bought only by those who are already won. I sometimes feel that the only time the public knows that there is a Sinn Fein active is when there is an Ard Fheis. In Republican Congress we used to put out news sheets every day. Even when they were suppressed we would still bring them out again. Every day there is something to do propaganda about.

I do not think that young people in Ireland have yet been given enough opportunity to learn from our earlier generation. They all want to do the fighting. The leaders have not developed who are known for propaganda work and do nothing but propaganda work. And I believe Provisional Sinn Fein should sit in the Dail. They have the right to put up candidates, but they believe that if they go into the Dail they are recognising the Treaty. But Provisional Sinn Fein could have the big opposition in the Dail now, and everything in Ireland is now all hinged on building a republican party everywhere. A person who knows he has to get something done for himself will not vote for a party that will not sit in the Dail.

I always try to explain to Sinn Fein the things my father would have said. I like to go to the Ard Fheis and sit in among the audience. I went to an Ard Fheis last year and got into the middle section of the audience. I wanted to see the young people, and be among the public. I wanted to see if they were happy.

When the IRA split, the Provos were willing to fight against Partition. The 'Officials' started a political party, and were not prepared to fight against Partition. As for the Officials, I think they are a danger. I never had anything to do with them and I never will have anything to do with them.

The unbroken tradition is saved by the Provos coming out against the border which cuts us off from six counties of our country.

V

WOMEN IN IRELAND'S FIGHT

James Connolly on the role of women in the fight for freedom. — Margaret Skinnider. — Maire Comerford. — Madame Markievicz. — Kathleen Lynn.

The Proclamation of the Republic in 1916 gave the vote to women, saying that the National Government would be "elected by the suffrages of all her men and women". This means that Ireland was one of the first countries in the world to declare equal rights for women.

This was along James Connolly's line of thought. Many times he stated his belief that no progressive or revolutionary movement could succeed unless it had the active as well as the sympathetic support of women. He often expressed the hope and desire that they should be encouraged and recruited for active participation in the revolutionary movement. He did not visualise the revolutionary movement for which he worked and struggled and fought as being composed only of working class men and boys, with, in the dim background, wives, mothers and sisters acting as their quiescent echoes and never actively participating in the shaping of the new world which must emerge. His championship

This chapter is largely based on a speech I made at a memorial meeting in honour of Dr Kathleen Lynn.

of women is an aspect of James Connolly which, if ignored, makes any picture of him incomplete.

In his day, the life of working class women was infinitely poorer than it is today. Then it was mainly a hand-to-mouth existence with the grim spectres of insecurity, unemployment, and illness lurking round the door and never quite out of sight. He believed that these women, on whom the worries and responsibility of bringing up the family pressed consistently, continuously and almost unbearably were those who longed most fiercely for a world for their children which would be free from insecurity, hunger or want, and who, if roused out of their "most damnable patience", as he called it, and recruited into the revolutionary movement would quicken that movement and unbelievably hasten its march towards freedom.

Because of that belief, James Connolly was never slow to give his approbation or admiration to working class women and girls who showed signs of revolt, or that were looking for a way out of the morass of misery and insecurity that encompassed them. He was ever ready with the necessary nudge or decisive push that launched them into active participation in the movement, and was always available and free and ready with advice when it was needed.

He was an ardent supporter of the women's franchise movement. I can remember that whenever a meeting was held for women's suffrage you would always get a crowd coming along just for the fun of heckling the speakers. One day my father spoke at a women's suffrage meeting in Phoenix Park and was heckled all the time by one man. My father took no notice of him, until finally the heckler asked, "Hey, Mr Connolly, who's going to

win the Derby?"

"A horse," said my father, speaking to the heckler for the first time, "and I'm surprised at an ass asking it."

He was well known for his witty answers which got the audience's attention back onto him rather than the hecklers.

James Connolly worked hard to support the unionisation of women, and was very enthusiastic about the Belfast mill girls' strike of 1911. There were later many women who would tell you that it was he who gave them the nudge or actual push that precipitated them into active participation in trade union life.

Women played a big part in the Easter rising and the preparations for it, and in the War of Independence. They were particularly important as couriers, and even from an early age. One friend of mine was Margaret Skinnider, a member of the Glasgow Cumann na mBan. She was a schoolteacher, and during her school holidays used to come over to Ireland. She would wear a 'toque'-ish hat, which would be stuffed with bullets and other such supplies, and with detonators wound round and round inside the brim.

On the day we were packing up to leave Belfast just before the rising, Margaret Skinnider came up from Dublin as a courier. She came to ask us where she could contact the man she had brought the message for. Then she came back to Dublin with us. In the fighting she was hit by a sniper and badly wounded, and had to spend some time afterwards in hospital. Then she was taken from hospital to prison. She had been put in charge of a squad of five men. This was in line with James Connolly's dictate that women should get promotion as well

as men.

I first met Maire Comerford when we were both working as couriers. Liam Lynch was driving down to Cork, and he dropped me on the way to take messages round Tipperary and then make my own way home. Maire and I spent a night at the same house in Tipperary. She must have been driving all day, because she seemed to be dreaming about it. She held her hands out in her sleep and kept moving them about as though she was still at the steering wheel.

Maire was put in Mountjoy Jail when the Free State was formed, but she was soon out. Sheila Humphreys also escaped with her. Maire was afterwards caught and put in an internment camp. The last time she was arrested was only a couple of years ago, for speaking on a platform with the IRA. They even arrested Plunkett's sister, Fianola Plunkett, who was 90, at the same time. I also had my say at that meeting, but I was not arrested because when the police came I was no longer on the platform. I had got down to talk to an old friend that I saw in the crowd, and whom I had not seen for years. I think our generation is quite remarkable. So many of the men and women of 1916 look quite young and are still active in the struggle.

Madame Markievicz was one of the officers of the Citizen Army. During the Easter uprising, she was in the fighting at St. Stephens Green. She was made a Major, and was deputy to Michael Mallin, who was the commanding officer in that post. She was put in prison at the surrender, and sent to Holloway. She was sentenced to death, but this was commuted to life imprisonment. A wonderful film was made of her coming home. She rode through

the streets in an 'outside car', and there was wild excitement.

There is a woman in Australia who writes to me, who is descended from Fenians, but has never been to Ireland, and her divinity is Madame Markievicz. She likes to write to me because Madame Markievicz was so much a part of our family. Recently she sent me a slice of her 21-year-old son's birthday cake. That is an example of the great reverence that so many Irishwomen all round the world have for her.

During Easter week, a doctor named Kathleen Lynn was with the group which fought round Dublin Castle, and in defence of the City Hall. Those who were there with her afterwards told of her calmness and serenity while, on the roof of the City Hall, with rifle bullets smacking all round her, she straightened and covered the body of Sean Connolly, or attended the wounded, and of the quiet yet authoritative manner in which she instructed the girls to help the wounded to safer positions. After a breach had been made in the wall and English soldiers poured in through the dust and rubble and fumes of burst grenades and machine and rifle fire, she stepped forward in a calm and assured manner and said to the English officer, "I am a medical officer and I surrender on behalf of this group."

She was the only officer left to surrender the post — the other officers were all up on the roof, either dead or wounded. The English could not understand that a woman should surrender the post, and their officer at first said he did not know if he could accept the surrender from a woman.

The English were surprised that there were so many women as well as men in the City Hall. At

the same time they were surprised that all the fighting had been done by so few people altogether.

"Is this all there are?" was the amazed remark of the English officer.

As for me, I have bronze medals for my part in the Easter uprising and in the War of Independence, and gold medals for both fifty-year jubilees. This means that altogether I can wear four medals across my broad chest!

Another woman who was very involved in the Irish fight for freedom was Charlotte Despard, the sister of Lord French. She tried to form a workers' party during the 1920s, but she was not accustomed to dealing with working people. She left Dublin and went up to the North to get at the Protestant workers. She gave lectures and things like that, but nothing remains of what she tried to do. It was a pity, because she was very sincere.

Now once again more women are beginning to understand that it is time they took part in politics and not just their husbands. I am particularly concerned with the girls in Armagh jail, and I now often find myself working more alongside women than men. Miriam Daly was a republican woman I liked, though I cannot say I knew her very well. I liked her courage and her ideals. Her emotions were very strong in her.

These are only a few of the women who have refused to be satisfied with "damnable patience" and who have fought in Ireland's fight and for a fuller and happier life for the human race.

VI

REBEL SONG AND VERSE

Rebel songs. — James Connolly's songs. — Poems by James Connolly, Alice Milligan, Padraic Pearse and others. — Plays by James Connolly and by me. — Rebel songs and youth.

In Ireland we have many old, ancestral songs about the fight for freedom, and singing has always played a big role in that fight. For more may be remembered of a country's history and treasured deep in the heart of a people through a song or a poem than through the pages of a history book. Many of these songs thrilled our minds, fed our aspirations and gave expression to our hopes during the period of preparation for 1916, and after Easter week voiced our sorrow, our faith, our rage and our love. Through these songs we could envisage the joy of conflict, taste the bitter sorrow of defeat, and share the aspirations of our dead heroes whose names became as familiar to us as our own. Through them our country's history became vibrant with life. As my father wrote, "Until the movement is marked by the joyous, defiant singing of revolutionary songs . . . , it is a dogma of a few, and not the faith of the multitude."

This chapter is largely based on a paper I read to the Old IRA Debating and Literary Society. It received the award for the best contribution of the year.

We heard these songs at concerts, on the ceilidhe floor or on marches, and we sang them at hooleys. They sent the blood coursing through our veins, steeled our hearts and put iron in our determination. Through them we learned the story of our country's struggle against England, learned the places of the battles and the heroes of those battles so well that deeds centuries old were as fresh in our minds as the deeds of yesterday.

I remember Liam Mellows bringing a party of Fianna country delegates to the Ard Fheis at Thomas Street. When he pointed to St. Catherine's Church and said, "Here is where Robert Emmet was executed," one of the boys began to sing softly:

Bold Robert Emmet, the darling of Erin,
Bold Robert Emmet will die with a smile . . .

And I remember how fiercely we used to chant McCall's "Follow me up to Carlow":

Lift, MacCahir Oge, your face, brooding o'er the old disgrace,
That Black Fitzwilliam stormed your place and drove you to the fern!
Grey said victory was sure — soon the firebrand he'd secure;
Until he met at Glenmalure Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne!

Curse and swear, Lord Kildare, Feagh will do what Feagh will dare:
Now, Fitzwilliam, have a care, fallen is you star low!
Up with halbert, out with sword! On we go, for by the Lord,
Feagh MacHugh has given the word, "Follow me up to Carlow!"

And how we would almost roar:

Rooster of a fighting stock, would you let a Saxon
cock
Crow out upon an Irish rock? Fly up and teach him
manners!

And when we came to the last verse, how gleefully we would sing:

White is sick and Grey is fled, now for Black
Fitzwilliam's head,
We'll send it over dripping red to Liza and her ladies!

Did it matter that that song chronicled a conflict nearly four hundred years old? Not at all! In it was all the defiance which we were feeling then.

Of the ballads of 1798, some told of the fight in the North, of Henry Joy McCracken in County Antrim, and Henry Monroe in County Down. A popular marching song, "Kelly the boy from Killanne", was a Wexford song of '98, as also was "Boulavogue":

At Boulavogue, as the sun was setting
O'er the bright May meadows of Shelmalier,
A rebel hand set the heather blazing
And brought the neighbours from far and near.
Then Father Murphy from old Kilcormack
Spurred up the rocks with a warning cry:
"Arm, arm!" he cried, "for I've come to lead you,
For Ireland's freedom we'll fight or die."

. . . .

Look out for hirelings, King George of England,
Search every kingdom where breathes a slave,
For Father Murphy of County Wexford
Sweeps o'er the land like a mighty wave.

. . . .

God grant you glory, brave Father Murphy,
And open heaven to all your men.
The cause that called you may call tomorrow
In another fight for the green again.

Other songs popular at the time of the rising were "A nation once again" by Thomas Davis, and "God save Ireland!" and other songs about the Manchester martyrs, the three Fenians who were hung in Manchester in 1867.

The Citizen Army had its own band, and there used to be frequent concerts at Liberty Hall. My father used always to urge that we sing rebelly songs at such concerts. He himself also wrote labour songs, including the "Watchword of labour" and "A rebel song", which began:

Come workers, sing a rebel song, a song of love and hate;
Of love unto the lowly, and of hatred to the great.
The great who trod our fathers down, who steal our children's bread,
Whose hand of greed is stretched to rob the living and the dead.

My father himself could not sing a note. Once he had written the words for a song, he would pass them over to me and I would sit down at the piano with them and work out what tune they could be fitted to. I had a song book with tonic sol-fa, and I nearly always found in it some well-known tune that was suitable, like "Clare's Dragoons", or "The last rose of summer". There was one song of his that I could never fit a tune to, and that was an ironical song about 'moderation', with the chorus:

For our demands most moderate are:
We only want THE EARTH!

Though I never sang in public, it used to be me who would teach our singers my father's songs. There was never any shortage of singers. I used to have to explain to them, "Now, this is not a love song or anything like that. It is a war song, a rebel song."

After 1916, I never did any more singing.

Perhaps the best-known labour song was, of course, "The Red Flag", which was written by Jim Connell, an Irishman. As my father had made a name for himself as a writer of labour songs, very many people thought he had written the "Red Flag", and I can remember Jim Connell jokingly suggesting to my father that he was trying to take the credit for it. My father used to have to keep explaining to people that when Jim Connell was written down as the author's name, it really meant that, and was not a mistake for Jim Connolly.

I was staying at the house of Madame Markievicz in Dublin while she was writing her "Grand Battle Hymn". She would sit at the piano playing the melody of an old Polish hymn. She could not sing but she hummed the tune and chanted the words to fit them to the accompaniment. I was sitting beside her when she completed it, and was the first to hear it. It was very warlike:

> Tone is our battle cry, Emmet inspires us,
> Those who for freedom fall never can die.
> England is breaking, shout we exultant,
> England is beaten, Ireland is free . . .

It became popular at the time, though no one sings it now.

It was in about 1912 that I first heard Peadar Kearney's "The Soldier's Song". A Fiannidhe came back from Dublin and sang it for us at a ceilidh in

Belfast. We liked it so well that we made him sing and sing it for us till we caught the tune, and again and again until we got the words. We kept him at it till he must have wished to heaven he had never heard the song!

Peadar Kearney also wrote a song about the rising, which used the same tune as "The Red Flag". It began:

No worker can e'er forget the day
When Connolly stood midst war's array.

While England was at a war with Ireland, she used all her arts to woo Irishmen to join her army, telling them how brave she had always found them, and how she had always loved the Irish. This brought forth songs with a gay, joyous, derisive quality which spoke of the certainty of minds which could no longer be misled by English propaganda and also of the growing confidence in rebel hearts. As one song put it, the Irish

Despise their country's story,
All they love is England's glory,
Ha, ha, ha!

Besides his songs, my father also wrote poems. When he first went to the States he had to leave us behind, and he wrote a poem called "A father in exile", which was published in the "Boston Pilot" at Christmas 1903. It began:

'Tis Christmas Day in Ireland
and I'm sitting here alone,
Three thousand miles of ocean intervene.
And the faces of my loved ones
in my little Irish home,
Come glancing in and out my thoughts between . . .

Some years later, on his way back to Ireland, he wrote "The call of Erin", which began:

With the engines 'neath us throbbing
and the wind upon our stern,
Little reck we of the distance
that divides us now from Erin . . .
Glorious is the land we're leaving,
and it's pride shall grow through years;
And the land that calls us homewards
can but share with us her tears.
Yet our heart her call obeying,
heedless of the wealth men crave,
Turneth home to share her sorrow
where she weeps beside the wave.

If my father was ever asked to sing, he used to give a recitation instead. He would sometimes recite poems of his own, but his favourite was "Shaun's Head", a very warlike poem which told of a clansman of Shaun O'Neill, an Irish leader who had led resistance to the English, but who was treacherously murdered while a captive. This was a particularly terrible crime according to the custom of the Irish, who used to treat captives kindly. The poem told of how O'Neill's clansman, who had searched all Ireland for his leader, came at last to Dublin, only to find Shaun's head placed on a spike outside Dublin Castle:

Is it thus, O Shaun the haughty,
Shaun the valiant that we meet?
Have mine eyes been led by heaven
but to guide me to defeat?
Have I no chief and you no clan
to give us both defence?
Oh, must I too be statued here
by your cold eloquence?

God's wrath upon the Saxon,
may he never know the pride
Of dying on the battlefield his broken spear beside.
May every light from cross of Christ
which cleansed the heart of man
Be hid in clouds of blood
before it reach that Saxon clan.
For sure, Oh God, and you know all,
whose thought for all sufficed,
To expiate those Saxon sins
we'd need another Christ!

I learned a lot from my father about how to speak in public. I learned from him that you do not get attention by roaring and rampaging. Whether he was giving a speech or a recitation, he would drop his voice if he wanted to gain more attention. That way the audience gets the impression that what you have to say is terribly important, as you cannot even talk out loud about it. Recited in my father's voice, poems like "Shaun's Head" sounded very impressive and very warlike.

Another poem that was a favourite for recitation by many of the girls was by Alice Milligan. It told of how when she was a little girl her nurse would hurry the children in by calling, "Come in, or when it's dark the Fenians will get you!", and she would tell terrible tales about the wicked Fenians:

When I was a little girl,
In a garden playing,
A thing was often said
To chide us, delaying:

When after sunny hours,
At twilight's falling,
Down through the garden walks
Came our old nurse calling —

"Come in! for it's growing late,
And the grass will wet ye!
Come in! or when it's dark
The Fenians will get ye."

Then, at this dreadful news,
All helter-skelter,
The panic-struck little flock
Ran home for shelter.

And round the nursery fire
Sat still to listen,
Fifty bare toes on the hearth,
Ten eyes a-glisten —

To hear of a night in March,
And loyal folk waiting
To see a great army of men
Come devastating —

An army of Papists grim,
With a green flag o'er them,
Red-coats and black police
Flying before them.

But God (Who our nurse declared
Guards British dominions)
Sent down a deep fall of snow
And scattered the Fenians.

"But somewhere they're lurking yet,
Maybe they're near us,"
Four little hearts pit-a-pat
Thought "Can they hear us?"

Then the wind-shaken pane
Sounded like drumming;
"Oh!" they cried, "tuck us in,
The Fenians are coming!"

Four little pairs of hands,
In the cots where she led those,
Over their frightened heads
Pulled up the bedclothes.

But one little rebel there,
Watching all with laughter,
Thought "When the Fenians come
I'll rise and go after."

Wished she had been a boy
And a good deal older —
Able to walk for miles
With a gun on her shoulder;

Able to lift aloft
That Green Flag o'er them
(Red-coats and black police
Flying before them);

And, as she dropped asleep,
Was wondering whether
God, if she prayed to Him,
Would give fine weather.

There were many in the years before 1916 who stigmatised all thought of an Irish Republic as utter folly and accused the leaders of that movement of being guilty of at least criminal folly. They pointed out the power and the strength of England, and viewed with utter hopelessness any attempt to win by a trial of arms. Padraic Pearse wrote his poem, "The Fool", in answer to them. It ended:

The lawyers have sat in council,
the men with the keen long faces,
And said, "This man is a fool,"
and others have said "He blasphemeth."
And the wise have pitied the fool,
that hath striven to give a life,
In the world of time and space,
among the bulks of actual things,
To a dream that was dreamed in the heart,
and that only the heart could hold.
Oh wise men, riddle me this:
What if the dream come true?

What if the dream come true,
and if millions unborn shall dwell
In the house I shaped in my heart?

These were some of the poems, songs and ballads that pleased us and struck fire in our hearts and minds in the period of preparation for Easter week. The last concert before the rising took place on the Easter Sunday night at Liberty Hall. As I had been up all the night before, I only attended part of it, and then left to join the girls staying with Madame Markievicz.

I always preferred rebel songs to country music or opera or any other kind of singing, and it is the same with instrumental music. I am not so fond of ceilidh music, with the uillean pipes and so on. What I like are the war pipes, or what in Scotland they call the bagpipes. Whenever the Irish went to war, each clan would be led by its own piper playing a march, and that is the kind of instrumental music I like.

In 1916, my father wrote an anti-recruiting play, called "Under which flag?", which was staged at Liberty Hall. One of the Citizen Army men, Sean Connolly, had been an actor at the Abbey Theatre, and he gave our actors a lot of tips and whipped the performance into shape. Sean Connolly (who was no relation of ours) was killed in the fighting in Easter week. The play was rather short, so we had some ceilidh music before and after it.

I later wrote a play called "Hope the weaver", which was about Jimmy Hope and the United Irishmen. There was to be music to go with the play, including Brian Boru's march. I felt that there was so much in the life of the North at the time of the United Irishmen that was still relevant.

But this play was never performed.

I also wrote another play, again on a historical subject. It was called "The Masque of the Georges". I brought a little poem by Thackeray into this play:

> Who on earth has ever heard
> Anything good of George the Third?
> George the Fourth to hell has descended —
> God be praised, the Georges are ended!

In this play, I had two characters called 'Youth' and 'Age', one standing at each side of the stage. People said to me, "Nora, you can't do that! Who ever heard of such a thing?" And yet only a year or two later Tennessee Williams's first play came out, and he had just the same thing in it!

"The Masque of the Georges" was just going to be performed when Republican Congress came along, and we were soon too busy to think about plays, so it was never produced either.

* * * * * *

Some years ago, I gave a talk to the Old IRA Debating and Literary Society on "Songs, poems and ballads of 1916", and this is how my talk finished:

> "Life is of no value, can be nothing more than a dreary, empty existence unless based on an ideal and the struggle to achieve that ideal. Without such, this life must be empty and meaningless. I truly do believe that a knowledge of our patriotic songs and ballads would enrich the lives of our younger generation, give them a purpose in their lives, and relieve them of the feelings of frustration and 'not-worth-whileness' which spoil their enjoyment of the fullness of their

youth. From them they can learn of a dream and dream themselves. They will quicken to unselfish deeds and in turn become unselfish themselves. They can learn of the richness of their country's past, of the courage of its people in the past, who strove to ensure that their country should enjoy the stature of full nationhood. That knowledge can spur them to determine that they and their children, and all the children of the nation to come, shall enjoy all the fullness of living in a country completely free and unfettered."

VII

IRELAND AND THE WORLD OUTSIDE

The Russian revolution. — Poland. — China. — The invasion of Afghanistan. — Africa. — Other parts of the world.

I heard the news of the Russian revolution while I was in New York. My first thought was, "If only father was alive to hear that now — how pleased he would be!"

The Irish Republicans in the States had some dealings with Russian revolutionaries who were also in exile there at the time. An extraordinary thing happened when De Valera, Harry Boland and Liam Mellows were over in the States selling Irish bonds to raise funds to support the Irish people. This was after the Russian revolution, and some Russian revolutionaries came and offered them a great amount of wonderful jewelry. They said they wanted money badly, as they had run out of cash and could not even afford an ordinary ticket to travel back to Russia. They were not supposed to be there, and so they could not offer the jewelry for sale publicly because it would draw attention to them. So De Valera's party accepted it in pawn, and took the jewels and gave them the amount of money they wanted. The Russians were in trouble, trying to get out of the country and back to Russia, where the White War was going on at the time. They never came back for their jewels.

Then, many years later — not so many years ago — the Irish told the Russians that they preferred the money, and they wanted to hand the jewels back. So they finished the old bargain that had been made so long before. I never saw the jewels myself, but I believe they were exquisite.

The Irish in America decided to send a delegate to the Soviet Union to see if the Soviet government would recognise the Irish Republic declared in 1916. But a big mistake was made when they picked as their delegate Dr MacCartan. MacCartan was a medical doctor, and although he was nominally the editor of an Irish paper in the US, he had no knowledge of international affairs. He reached Moscow just after the First World War, when the world situation was very hard. Lenin was open to the idea of recognising the Irish Republic, but MacCartan bungled the talks and the whole thing came to nothing.

I have a letter from Trotsky which he wrote me when he was in exile. I had written to him saying how tremendously I had admired his army work, and saying how sorry I was that he was in exile.

My sister Ina and her husband, Archie Heron, met Trotsky, and they mentioned me to him.

Trotsky said, "Nora knows me."

Ina and Archie were both surprised, and said that they had never heard from me that I knew him.

So Trotsky said to them, "You remind Nora about 'Bronstein' in New York, because that was the name I was known by then. She knew me as Bronstein."

It was marvellous what Trotsky did with the army. He built it up. There were many different nations attacking Russia. The Russians beat the

'Whites'. I give them that — they are wonderful soldiers. And they are wonderful scientists and engineers, and they are wonderful writers. But they are not socialists. They have forgotten all that socialism meant.

I never got so big a disappointment as when I read of the inhumanity there. I think the workers there are more like slaves than they are under capitalism. They have trade unions, but they have no control over the trade unions. And the labour camps there are more disgraceful than anything we have had until the present British ones.

* * * * * *

I have read a lot about Poland. Even before the war I used to read about the Poles, and translations from Polish. I read a series of four novels by Ladislas St. Reymont. These four novels were all set in a little village. He started at Autumn, and then Winter, and Spring, and finished at Summer. By the time you had read those books, you knew everyone in that village. You knew all the things that were right and all the things that were wrong. You knew what they thought, and you even knew if someone had some illness and was not telling anyone about it. You saw how hard life was in the villages in Poland in the cold winter, and then how life begins to warm up in the spring. They were marvellous books.

The last time I saw Willie Gallacher, he was telling me about Warsaw, and about how beautifully the people had rebuilt it after the war. He said that they had recreated it, and that they had had to do it all by themselves, without getting help from the Russians.

"Nora," he used to say to me, "if you ever go anywhere, go to Russia!"

"Not to Russia," I said. "Russia has destroyed socialism in the minds of the people." But though I said I would never go to Russia, I said I would go to some of the countries that she had taken over.

"Well, then," he said, "go to Warsaw. Don't go anywhere else, but go to Warsaw and see the beautiful work the people did for themselves. Oh, if only we could do all that kind of work for ourselves!"

Willie had big, heavy working man's hands, you know. When he said, "If only we could all do things like that for ourselves," he really felt it. Living in England, he was just going round talking and making speeches, and not doing an ordinary man's work. For he was a real worker — a genuine worker.

But I have never visited Poland. The only Eastern European country I have visited is Yugoslavia, where I once went with my sister Fiona on an ordinary tour. We had a very pleasant time, and found the people very like the Irish. Even in appearance they were like the Irish, so that we sometimes felt inclined, as they could not speak English, to speak in Gaelic to them!

Now in Poland they have got a trades union. They had to fight for it, but they are great fighters, the Poles.

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I got my first book about China when I was seven years old, and ever since then China has been a country that I have loved. I remember that wherever I was I would go to the library to get

what were called 'penny books', and if any of them had the word 'China' on them, I would make sure it was really about China and not about cups! I have loved China all my life. It is the one place I could have wanted to live in, apart from Ireland. It has been the wish of my life to go there, but I have never gone. I like to hear the experiences of those who have been to China. One friend of mine has been to China twice, and has walked across the Gobi Desert. She has material for one of the best travel books that was ever written.

I read as many as I could get of Edgar Snow's books. His writing was so vivid that he really brought you there and then left you there to find your way about. He let you see what a terrible time the Chinese people had to live through during the Second World War.

I have stood by the Chinese people in my mind all the time, even when they fell a bit in Russia's way. I felt that this was the case with Tibet. I had a great love for the Tibetan people who had to leave because of their religion. But even from the beginning the Chinese were different from the Russians and did not join completely with them. The Russians have never forgiven China for standing different from them.

I liked Mao very much in the beginning, but I hated the 'cultural' scheme when they had the choir children and even grown men and women all waving Mao's little red book in the air all the time, and raving around battering each other if they did not have it. It seemed more like they had gone mad than that they were keeping to the tenets that Mao had developed for them. It all seemed so ridiculous, and so senseless, and made them very unpopular. I was surprised to see them do that, and it upset me,

as I was always so fond of China. That is why I didn't like to see them do a thing that was not right.

Now China has turned to the right way, I think. Right from the start they were so different from Russia. They had more the type of socialist freedom that my father fought for. My father and China would have got on awfully well. One thing that would have made him very happy is that the new Chinese ambassador in Dublin is a woman, and he was a great believer in equality between working men and women. I am hoping to go to meet her before long.

* * * * * *

Britain has invaded Ireland and is holding it apart from being a united country. And that is what the Russians are doing to Afghanistan. It is the same position. We must support Afghanistan because it is a small country being invaded by an imperialist.

The people of Afghanistan have been left to fight with poor weapons, and not all the big weapons the Russians have. But they have blown up many of the Russians' tanks. They have to use the rocky country for their way of fighting. This is very much like our flying columns when we beat the Black and Tans. They must feel, "If the IRA can do it, I can do it."

Perhaps Thatcher has made a protest, but Britain has been 'friendly enemies' with the Russians — you could put it like that. Britain has not given any help to Afghanistan. I feel very bitter about this. Of course their troubles are great in Britain, but they still send ammunition and guns to South

Africa to keep the Blacks in Apartheid. But the Afghans have been left to fight with poor weapons.

I suspect the reason why Britain does not help is that the people of Afghanistan held their independence for so long, and the British, when they had India, tried to get Afghanistan joined on. But time and again the British were beaten back, and they had to give it up.

The Russians have forgotten what socialism meant. My father said that "under a socialist system, every nation will be the supreme arbiter of its own destinies, national and international; it will be forced into no alliance against its will, but will have its independence guaranteed and its freedom respected by the enlightened self-interest of the social democracy of the world." "The internationalism of the future will be based upon the free federation of free peoples and cannot be realised through the subjugation of the smaller by the larger political unit." For my father held the view that, while it is true that the problems and trials of people the world over are the same, it is equally true that each and every country must set socialism up in the way most suitable for its own people.

The Russians are looking after themselves. Afghanistan is a very important point for their imperial jumps. It leads them on to Iran, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and on to North Africa. That is what they are after.

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I am particularly interested in Africa. I was in London on the day of Elizabeth II's coronation. There were many Africans in London then, on

special cheap excursion rates for the coronation. Many of them were freedom fighters. Some of them went to talk to Fenner Brockway, an opposition spokesman on colonial affairs. Among the people there, there was one man that Fenner Brockway asked me over to meet.

This man said to me, "I'm from the Gold Coast. I'll show you a book as thick as this that I have, which I made in 1913. I used to cut out everything I could about the Irish struggle and put it in this book. One thing stood out, and that was James Connolly. I'm not the only one in Africa watching what is going on in Ireland. We are following as best we can."

A short while ago I met a Japanese writer. I very much enjoyed seeing a book which he showed me that came out recently. It had Irish historic photos with captions in Japanese. The writer told me that books on Ireland sell tremendously well in Japan.

Now a book about James Connolly has been written in French by Roger Faligot. I thought his work was very good, though I could not read the actual book. He has told me he is arranging for it to be translated into English.

It is the same in all the countries that you can think of, from the States to France and Italy and from Africa to Australia and the very Eastern part of the East. A nephew of mine who went to teach for a while in Borneo told me how the people there, including the Chinese community on the island, had heard of Ireland's fight from the De La Salle Brothers, the missionaries there.

So many people in all parts of the world that I have met have been possessed of the knowledge of what we Irish have had to suffer in our fight for independence.

VIII

IRELAND'S FIGHT TODAY

Partition. — Religious liberty. — The renegade Irishmen. — The hunger strikers. — Portlaoise Jail. — Recent visits to the States and to Britain. — The unbroken tradition.

My father was once asked how he would describe a free Ireland, and he replied, "An Ireland free and independent from the centre to the sea, and flying its own flag out over all the oceans." It is this vision which has inspired fighters for Irish freedom for centuries. The Easter rising was just one link in the unbroken tradition of struggle for this goal. But in the North we have another enemy besides the British — the renegade Irishmen, I call them. They want to be part of Britain and not part of the nation where God placed them.

Ireland was partitioned after we had beaten the Black and Tans in 1921. It was the first time in our history that Britain had to come to us and asked for a truce. But the people we sent over to London to negotiate knew nothing about diplomacy. They just wanted freedom from Britain and that is all they knew about. They had not the wisdom or training of the British Foreign Office and Lloyd George. Now that the Truce had brought an end to the fighting in Ireland, our negotiators were not prepared to continue the struggle. So they agreed to sign the Treaty which partitioned Ireland. The British had won out. Ireland was divided and the struggle was on again.

One thing you will not hear the renegade Irishmen mention is that when King George V made his one and only visit to Ireland, which was to open Stormont, he made a fine speech for the Unionists, but he nevertheless made it clear that this was to be regarded as only a temporary measure, and that the future lay in the hands of the Irish people themselves. He told Stormont:

> May this historic gathering be the prelude of the day in which the Irish people, north and south, under one Parliament or two, as those Parliaments may themselves decide, shall work together in common love for Ireland upon the sure foundation of mutual justice and respect.

The renegade Irishmen ignore even these last words that were given them by George V.

The renegade Irishmen preach to the Protestants that if they join with the rest of Ireland they will be banged on the head just because they are Protestants. I am talking about people like Paisley, who preaches hatred towards Catholics, while calling himself a minister. Doesn't he know that Christ preached love, not hate?

Besides the renegade Irishmen, the people of the North have to face the British army, and the RUC. The RUC are called police, but they are fully armed with rifles and machine guns, and go around the streets, threatening this one and threatening that one. The real terrorists up there are the RUC. And yet the attitude of the nationalist people in the North is tremendous. If they feel fear, they do not show it.

Republicanism was first started by the Protestants of the United Irishmen, and many of the Irish leaders who are still held in greatest respect

today by republicans were Protestant — Tone, Emmet and Davis, to name but three. There has never been a time when there has been no republicanism at all among the Protestants of the North. There would be much more if it was not for the renegade Irishmen who put about stories to frighten them with the idea that they would lose their freedom if they joined up with us. Yet the truth is that the Protestants who now live in the twenty-six counties are an even smaller minority than the Protestants would be in a united Ireland, and facts show that there is no discrimination against them. The Protestants living in the twenty-six counties have religious freedom. Most of them are as opposed to Partition as the Catholics are, and many of them have taken part in Ireland's fight for freedom from Britain. They are among our best citizens, and many have held important posts. Two of our Presidents have been Protestants — our first President, Douglas Hyde, and, later, Erskine Childers Junior. For that matter, we have had a Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin. We do not have racism in the twenty-six counties, and we are not prejudiced against the Protestants. The Orangemen know this perfectly well, because they come down here on their holidays.

The renegade Irishmen like Paisley give such petty excuses to put doubts in the minds of the Protestants about what life would be like in a united Ireland. They point to the questions of divorce, abortion and contraception, as though these three things were a good enough reason to keep the six counties part of Britain. The fact is that these things are prevented by the Catholic religion. I have my own doubts on these questions. I knew a woman who was advised by her doctor

not to have a second child as she was mentally unbalanced. As she was a Catholic, her religion did not allow her to use contraceptives. She avoided getting pregnant for ten years, but in the end she had another child. What the doctor had feared, happened, and she went mad and committed suicide. I think it may come to the idea that divorce and these other things should be allowed under our constitution. Catholics may be prevented by their religion in any case.

In the Proclamation of the Republic that Pearse read from the steps of the GPO in 1916, there is one bit that I always particularly like, and that is the part about religious liberty. It says, "The republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, . . . cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past." I like this part because it makes Britain responsible for the way many six-county Protestants have been led astray about the question of Irish unity. I think it is a good idea to put up a copy of the Proclamation on the wall. That is better than just looking it up in books. It hits your eye and reminds you of what you should be doing.

My father helped to write this Proclamation, and it is agreed that there is a lot of Connolly in it. He was always a worker for unity between Catholics and Protestants. I do not believe in changes in the constitution to make Ireland a federation. We are too small a country for a federation. Everybody knows that the Orangemen are against sharing power with the Papishes, as they call the Catholics, and a federation would only strengthen them and make them more able to keep the Catholics out of

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

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

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

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

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

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE.

SEAN Mac DIARMADA. THOMAS MacDONAGH.

P. H. PEARSE. EAMONN CEANNT.

JAMES CONNOLLY. JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

any power position in the six counties. The Orangemen should form a party in the Dail of the whole of Ireland, and not be left in power in part of a federal Ireland.

The hunger strike has now shown that not all the renegade Irishmen are Protestants or even six-county people. I was shocked at what some of our TDs have been saying against the hunger strikers. As for Gerry Fitt, he has used the most terrible language against the IRA and the people who support them, and as for the hunger strikers his attitude is just, "Let them die." He is someone who is just out for himself and his own career at Westminster. He has renegaded from this and renegaded from that. I cannot say any more because I would get in trouble with the libel laws, so I shall just say that he is one of renegade Irishmen.

In 1921 we had the joy of seeing the British troops marching down to the quay because there was no longer any fighting in Ireland. Now once again we must fight to the limit of our abilities to get Britain out of its little toehold in the six counties. The renegade Irishmen who want to be part of Britain can always be deported from the country. Then we can "cherish all the children of the nation equally" in building an "Ireland free and independent from the centre to the sea, and flying its flag out over all the oceans."

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We must all feel so serious and so concerned about the hunger strikers. So many mothers and fathers, and so many brothers and sisters, and so

many thousands of friends and supporters in Ireland and all over the world are marching and organising demonstrations and meetings. It is a wonderful thing to think that so many relatives and supporters of those who are suffering in prison in Ireland, in the H-Blocks and Armagh, are struggling together to support them. The seven who were chosen to go on hunger strike last year were chosen because it was seven men who signed the Proclamation of the Republic in the Easter uprising.

The British officially declare that they will do nothing. It was officially announced by Mr Atkins during the last hunger strike that, men or women, the British government would let them die. How can a government fall so low that a minister can say that publicly — publicly and not just in a corner to a friend! Maggie Thatcher also said she agreed with this official statement that the British government were quite happy to have them all die.

Did it ever strike you that the Provos went on from shooting soldiers to bombing buildings because that would hurt the pockets of the enemy more? You can always rebuild a building, but you cannot rebuild a destroyed man.

In the prisons in the six counties there is so much horror, so much danger and damage to body and mind. I saw a strong young man weep after he came out from one of those prisons. What do you think of that?

The great humanity of these prisoners is shown by the idea that it is better to destroy property than men — remember that. The conditions to kill the hunger strikers are so good — you know yourself how you feel when you are hungry. There have been so many hunger strikers — tomorrow there may be more. It is only their courage and

humility and their love of their country that keeps them alive.

As for that renegade, Gerry Fitt, I have already said that he uses the most terrible language against the prisoners. It is only people like this, and the six-countyite renegade Irishmen, or Orangemen as they call themselves, who follow Paisley, that can say such things.

My father once went on hunger strike. He was sentenced to three months in Mountjoy because he held a meeting of locked-out workers. He told the court that he did not recognise the writ of the king of England to run in Ireland. He told the judge, "I do not accept you. You are a menial of the man whose writ I do not accept. All my life I have had the aim of a free Ireland, and I won't give up even half an inch of it."

My mother went down from Belfast, where we were living at that time, to see what could be done to get him released. She was told that nobody had the power to release him except the Viceroy. So she went to the Viceroy and persisted in demanding his release until the Viceroy agreed. She was then driven down in the Viceroy's car to Mountjoy, with a note ordering the governor of the jail to release my father.

During the last hunger strike I planned to get up to the North to visit the girls in Armagh Jail. I wanted to talk to the governor of the jail to see if he would let me. He had given me permission to see them, but that was before the hunger strike. Then, after the hunger strike built up, it seemed I was not permitted again. I wanted to bring flowers and books for them at Christmas time. Books are not provided for them.

I see Cardinal O'Fiaich when I go up North. He sent me a telegram of condolence on the news of my sister's death. He can be sympathetic to the prisoners, but he also makes a few mistakes in the language he uses. I am going to have to explain to him how to talk to the governor of a jail.

* * * * * *

Down here in the twenty-six counties as well, they do terrible things to the boys in Portlaoise Jail — stripping, and I mean real stripping, of prisoners, and searches of their bodies.

Last year I had an advertisement put in the paper to invite people to a public meeting to protest at events in Portlaoise Jail. I insisted on a middle-page advert, where the editorial always is. When the meeting was held, three or four hundred people came, and there were crowds outside — as many people outside as in.

I told them exactly what searching and stripping meant.

I said, "My mother always said that old age has its privileges. Well, I'm old and I'm taking my privilege and explaining what this search means."

I explained that it meant all the openings of the body, even the male organ. The prisoners are held down by one man, but there is another man outside looking through the Judas hole. The poor boys are humiliated beyond belief.

The crowd was shocked beyond measure. There were rigid faces, and the women had their mouths open in horror. There were a lot of mothers in the

audience, and some of them contacted me afterwards, asking what they could do to help. There was a collection which paid the costs of the advert and organising the meeting.

Amnesty was having an international congress in London at that time, and I called it up and explained about our meeting and about Portlaoise Jail. They explained that it was not on their agenda. Some of the mothers from our meeting tried to get the US Embassy to do something. The man at the US Embassy told them that all he could do was to send back a report about it, but he advised us to get in touch with the Human Rights people on the Continent. But when I got in touch with them, they regretted that it would take them a long time to do anything about it, and they recommended that we get back in touch with the Amnesty meeting, and they gave me the name and phone number of the man in charge.

In the end, Amnesty sent three men over, but they were not permitted to see any prisoners at all. But it upset the government enough to get it to stop the treatment.

So we got it stopped. It was a very cheery thought for me that I helped to prevent it from going on.

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I have made two visits to the United States in recent years. On my last visit, I went from New York to San Francisco and all the way back, giving talks. I had a terrific time there. It was about the women in Armagh Jail that I was mostly concerned, and everywhere I went I gave talks about women in Ireland. They were astounded, flabbergasted to

hear that women were in jail for the sake of struggling for a united Ireland. They had not heard any news about it. I would not be able to count the number of radio interviews I had, and I had four TV interviews. Everybody was horrified to hear how the women in Armagh Jail were being treated.

Once when I was there I came out of the car onto the sidewalk and there were cameras there. I had no coat and no hat, and I must have looked very dishevelled, and that is not a thing I like to be. But I was interviewed and I believe it was a tremendous success. The interviewer had all the techniques. I thought he must be someone who knew me, the way he said, "We found out you were having dinner here . . ."

I said, "If it's anything to do with Ireland and the North, then it's alright, I'll speak."

The people in the Irish Caucus in the States, as well as the travel agents, were all very generous in paying for my travel, and my niece was able to go with me as well. Her husband was pleased at the idea of her going. He said to me, "We've had a hard life, and she has had nothing like that before. It'd be the best thing she's ever had."

I was presented with several mementoes during my visit. The Mayor of Boston presented me with a very large silver fruit bowl, as did also the Massachusetts State Labour Council. The Irish Caucus in New York presented me with a silver bowl and jug on a tray. And the House of Representatives of Massachusetts gave me an Official Citation, signed by the Senators and State Representatives of Massachusetts.

During the last hunger strike I went to Britain on November 14th. I was to give a speech at the

rally on November 15th. I used to come over to Britain every year when my sister Fiona was alive. The last time I had come, my bags were searched. I did not feel they were doing this particularly to me — they were doing it to everybody. But this last time, they asked me my name.

"Dr Nora Connolly O'Brien," I said. "I'm not a medical doctor," I explained, "I'm a Doctor of Laws."

"Oh, well, if you're a Doctor of Laws, you're alright then," they said. So they let me go through and my bag was not searched.

I had been driven from my home by a friend who is a taximan — a great friend and a great republican. It only dawned on me after I arrived in Britain that I never paid him anything — and it's a long distance to the airport.

Just before I left Ireland, a friend of mine remarked that she had heard I was to give a talk the evening I arrived as well. So I suddenly found myself having to think about two speeches to give and not just one.

The march through London on November 15th was a long and wonderful march. I was driven past it so that I could have a look.

At the main rally, it was a wonderful thing to think that in the hall we had so many relatives of the prisoners in Ireland, and so many supporters. Lily Fitzsimmons, a parent of a prisoner, gave a very good speech, which reminded me of a letter I once received. That letter was from the mother of a young prisoner — a boy who had been absolutely innocent, who had refused to recognise the court, and who immediately went on the blanket when he went into jail. That letter was the most touching thing I ever read. It had a mother's feeling. She said

that when her boy comes out of prison he will be too old to start as an apprentice. He has a spoilt life in so many ways.

I was disappointed at the chairman of the meeting cutting me short when I was speaking. No one had told me that I could only make a short speech. I was only just getting onto my main speech, and I was going to talk about the H-Blocks. I was just coming to the stinging part. The chairman put a piece of paper in front of me asking me to stop.

I said, "At least I must finish my sentence."

But then I went on with another paragraph or two. I was going to give a cut to Paisley, and a cut to the RUC. I was going to point out that it is not just one army fighting another army. It is several different armies fighting against the one, and the one army is the one that we belong to — the one that follows the unbroken tradition — the tradition of every generation in Ireland having an armed uprising against Britain.

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My father was the first person to announce the formation of the IRA. The whole Citizen Army, and the Volunteers who were taking part in the rising, halted outside Liberty Hall before marching off on Easter Monday. My father got up on the steps and told them that he hoped they all realised that they were leaving as one army. He said how pleased he was to see so many of them there, because he had told the Citizen Army that if anyone did not want to fight, they could leave, and nobody would have any recriminations against them or think little of them. Each man must do

what he felt was right.

And just as they left for the rising, he said, "Now when we start marching, each of you to the different posts you are going to, your first step you take after Pearse and Plunkett and myself, you form the Irish Republican Army."

I was in the Citizen Army then, so from then on, when the two armies joined to form one, I was in the IRA. And I was always in the IRA afterwards and I still feel myself to be part of the IRA.

One time I used my father's last words to me at a meeting of the Provisionals. I said, "I'll just tell you what my father said, and a little little poem I wrote."

And I told them of how he had said to me, "We shall rise again."

And the Provisionals were all very touched, and they clapped and clapped.

"We shall rise again," I said, "and we have risen. This is the continuation — so that the tradition has not been broken. Here we are rising again. And if we go down, we'll rise again!"

AFTERWORD

It was during her visit to London last November that I had the good fortune to become acquainted with Nora Connolly O'Brien. I spent four memorable days in her company, attending to her needs while her hosts were out at work.

She talked non-stop. She was pleased with my idea that I should publish what she had to say, and I was left with a pile of tape-recordings and notes that I had taken. During the following weeks I transcribed this material and arranged it into chapters, with constant reference back to Nora by phone. During this, as during all stages, she closely supervised my work, and we were often on the phone for half an hour or more. By March of this year I had a draft ready and took it over to Dublin for her to revise.

Hardly had I got through her front door when she had me fetch out the draft and start reading it through to her. With a tremendous power of concentration, she kept me at the job until at the end of four days we had gradually worked through the entire text. She constantly stopped me with additions, corrections and suggestions, and frankly left me with next to no editorial discretion, so definite and assured were her opinions and her manner of expressing them. She kept me on such a tight leash in my editorial work, and paid such a meticulous attention to detail, that she even regretted that her loss of sight had left her unable to keep a close check on my use of punctuation!

As a result, I was never left in any doubt at all as to the precise words she wanted printed, and so I am confident that the many people who knew her or heard her speak will recognise her authentic voice in every sentence of this book.

The final text of the book, incorporating her revisions, was subsequently sent to her and was read through to her by Evelyn Shire. After making a couple of last-minute corrections, Nora expressed her approval of the text and was eager to have it published as soon as possible.

From the first time I met Nora, I came under the spell of her forceful and forthright mind. But now she can only exercise that spell from the other side of the grave. For the news has come that she has gone to join her father before this book is to see the light of day. She was asking after the book during her final days in hospital, and at any rate died knowing that through it she was once more to have her say.

During these last months, then, her work on this book provided Nora with a continuing channel for the propaganda work to which she had devoted over 70 of her 88 years of life. Though her body was frail, her mind was as strong as ever, and she was already talking of passing on to next business — a biography of her mother.

I hope it is not begrudging her the rest she so richly deserves when, as a publisher, I say that her death is a grievous loss. She was a great propagandist to the last. She was, besides, invariably welcoming and encouraging to me in my work, and I shall sorely miss her on my own account as well.

In this book, then, Nora Connolly O'Brien has her final say. Different readers will find different things in it. The Irish patriot will derive from it renewed inspiration for the fight. The historian will find new details of the Easter uprising. The theoretician will gain a valuable first-hand perspective on James Connolly's thinking at the consummation of his life's work.

If there are a few British socialists who do "understand" why James Connolly did what he did, then the message they will see in Nora's book will surely be that any would-be socialist in Britain who acquiesces in British domination over other countries can do nothing but sing a variation on the imperialist theme. Such socialism is no better than the so-called socialism which is being inflicted by the Soviet Union on the people of Afghanistan (with whose resistance Nora so heartily identified), or the 'socialism' of the Labour Party ministers who endorsed the 1916 executions and, in our own time, supervised the continuing

colonial administration of the six counties. Not until the countries which Britain still dominates in various ways have achieved their liberation can 'British Empire socialism' be buried for once and for all and a genuine revolutionary tradition in Britain be reborne. In assisting by any means possible this process of national liberation we therefore not only fulfil our internationalist duty but at the same time fulfil an essential precondition for any real advance towards the transformation of British society along socialist lines.

In Ireland there is, as Nora says, an unbroken tradition of how to treat Britain's rulers and their forces when the benign masks slips. That mask will certainly be slipping more and more here in Britain as well, as history moves the final showdown with Britain's rulers inexorably closer. The insurrectionary tradition in Britain, which was once so vigorous, has lain dormant during a century or more of the relative prosperity of empire. Those British socialists who "understand" James Connolly will appreciate the value of the example he set. In the tense situation now building up in Britain's cities, they will be working to rebuild our broken tradition and follow the example of James Connolly on British soil as well.

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My thanks and acknowledgements are due to those of Nora's family and friends who have provided help and encouragement in the preparation and publication of this book, notably Ann Rossiter, Gautam Appa, Evelyn Shire, Keith Bennett, Paddy Buttner, Paddy Brennan, Nora's nieces Margaret and Maura, and her neighbour Mrs Lyons. It is tragic that in fulfilling the welcome duty of thanking them I must at the same time offer them my condolences.

The Editor,

Mosquito Press.

London, June 1981.