

1916

THE 1916 RISING:
PERSONALITIES &
PERSPECTIVES

an online exhibition



- 3.
- 3. 2. **Those who set the stage**
Republicans and those who would resort to physical force

3. 2. 1. **Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough**

They contributed to the Rising by revitalising the Irish Republican Brotherhood and promoting the Irish Volunteers.

Throughout the nineteenth century the republican movement tended to wax and wane: it experienced a particularly low ebb for the ten years following the death of Parnell in 1891. At the time most nationalists looked to parliamentary politics as the only feasible and moral means of advancing Ireland's cause. Home Rule was the objective: most people believed it was inevitable and that it would transform the Irish economy. While some hoped that it would lead to eventual separation from Britain, most people accepted Ireland's role as part of the United Kingdom - the most powerful empire on earth: for many their situation was not particularly irksome.

While dormant, the republican tradition, however, was not dead. There was always a minority of people who believed that Britain had no legitimate claim to jurisdiction over Ireland. They also felt that Home Rule would bring little material benefit to Ireland and that the only worthwhile objective was absolute independence. Considering how well-nigh impossible it was to wrest any concession from Britain by constitutional means (as was the experience of O'Connell with Repeal of the Union and of Parnell with Home Rule), the only option for republicans appeared to be physical force.

In the early years of the twentieth century republicanism underwent a revival in Belfast. The main activists were Denis McCullough (1883-1968) and Bulmer Hobson (1883-1969). McCullough, the son of a Fenian, came from the Falls Road and was educated by the Christian Brothers. He worked as a piano-tuner in Belfast where he eventually set up a music business, which he later transferred to Dublin. He joined the IRB in 1901, but found that it lacked direction and was in effect moribund.

Hobson came from a Quaker background in Hollywood, Co. Down and was educated at the Friends' School, Lisburn, Co. Antrim. A printer by trade, he became interested in Irish culture and the republican movement and joined the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association. He established the Protestant National Society as a means of imbuing young Protestants with the republican vision. In 1903 he established Fianna Éireann, a form of scouting organisation for boys which was named after the legendary Fianna. Initially, Fianna Éireann made little progress, but in August 1909 it was re-launched by Hobson and Countess Markievicz. The new version had considerable success, becoming a notable feature of the republican movement, two of its early recruits, Con Colbert and Seán Heuston, among those executed after the 1916 Rising.

In 1904 Hobson was sworn into the IRB by McCullough. The following year they combined in founding the Dungannon Clubs, the name commemorating the Volunteer conventions seeking parliamentary reform held at Dungannon in 1782-3. The Dungannon Clubs promoted extreme nationalism, one of their main concerns being the high level of recruitment to the British army. They were eventually subsumed into Sinn Féin.

Hobson and McCullough were involved with Tom Clarke and Seán MacDiarmada in reforming the IRB into an effective organisation. McCullough was chairman of the Supreme Council at the time of the 1916 Rising, but the Military Council did not inform him of the final details. Due to the confusion arising from Eoin MacNeill's

3. 2. 1. **Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough**

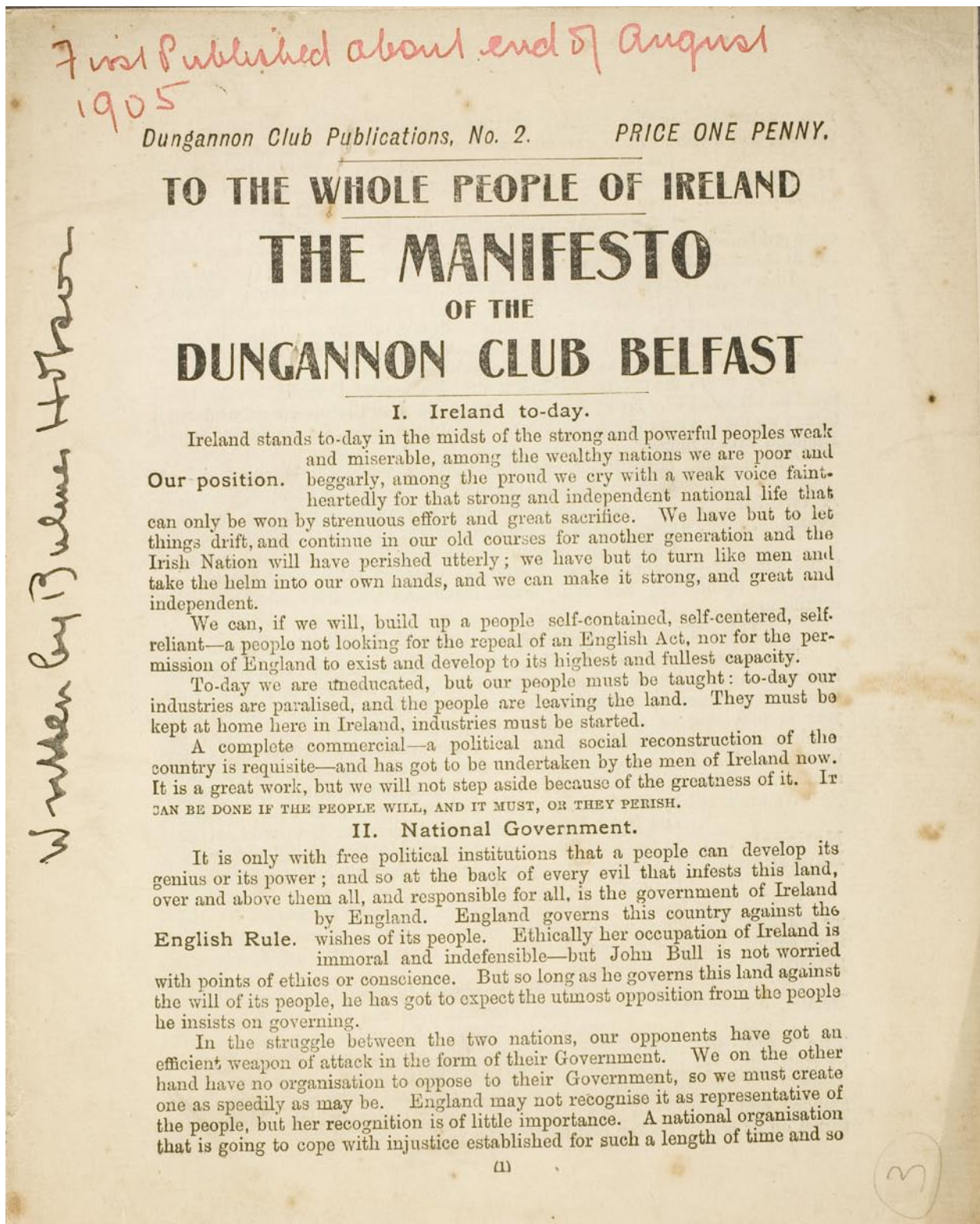
countermand he was unable to play an effective part in the Rising. Hobson had a major role in the formation of the Irish Volunteers, but lost credibility when he acquiesced in allowing Redmond to take control of the organisation, despite the fact that he did it for good reasons. No more than McCullough, Hobson was not privy to the final arrangements for the Rising; however, when he suspected on Holy Thursday that it was planned for Easter Sunday he informed MacNeill of his suspicions, thus precipitating the crisis. To ensure that he caused no more trouble, the Military Council had him placed under arrest until Easter Monday. He did not take part in the Rising, claiming afterwards, 'I was not going to be driven against my judgement by being faced with a fait accompli'.



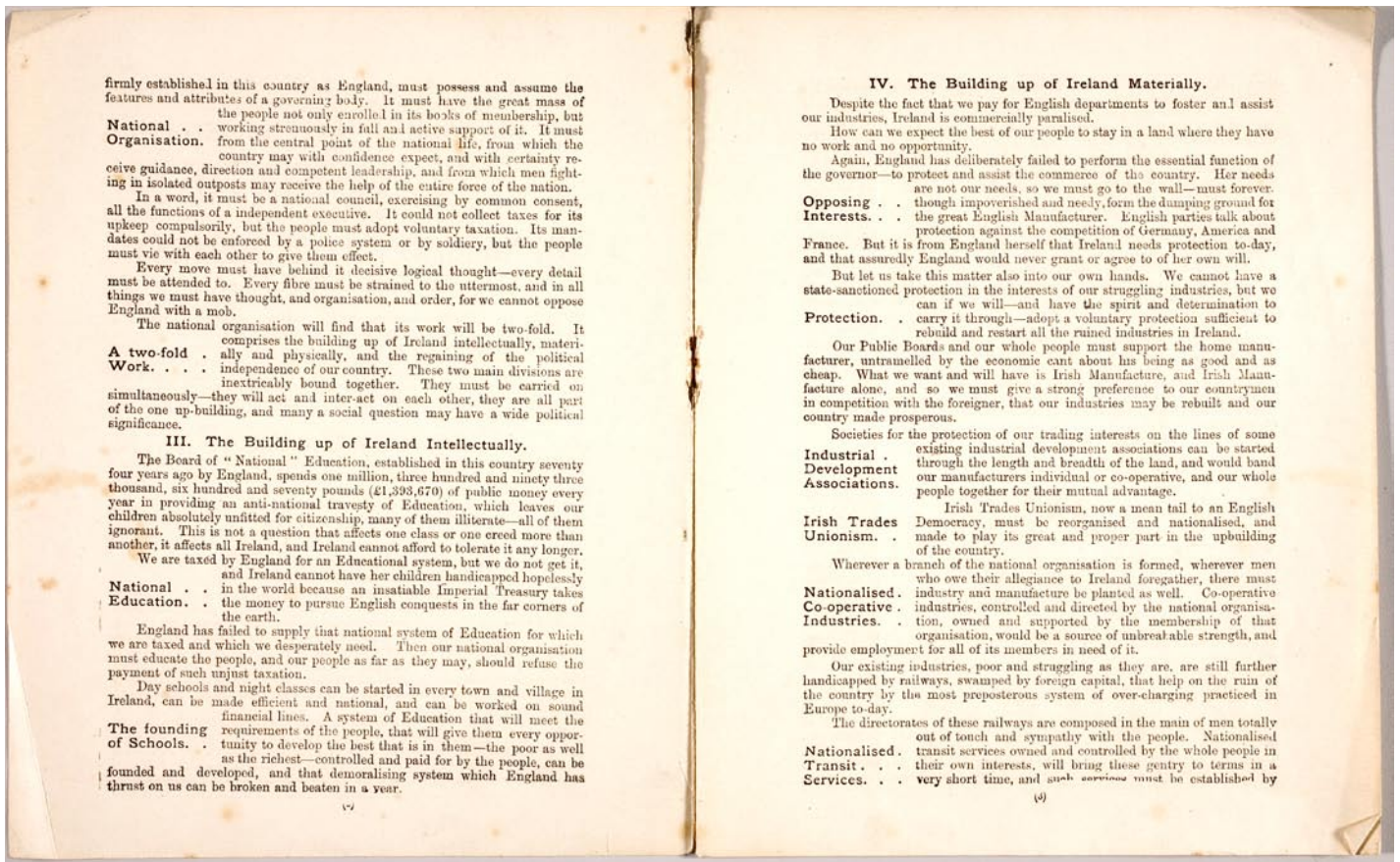
Bulmer Hobson. (Ms. 13,174(7), Hobson Papers).



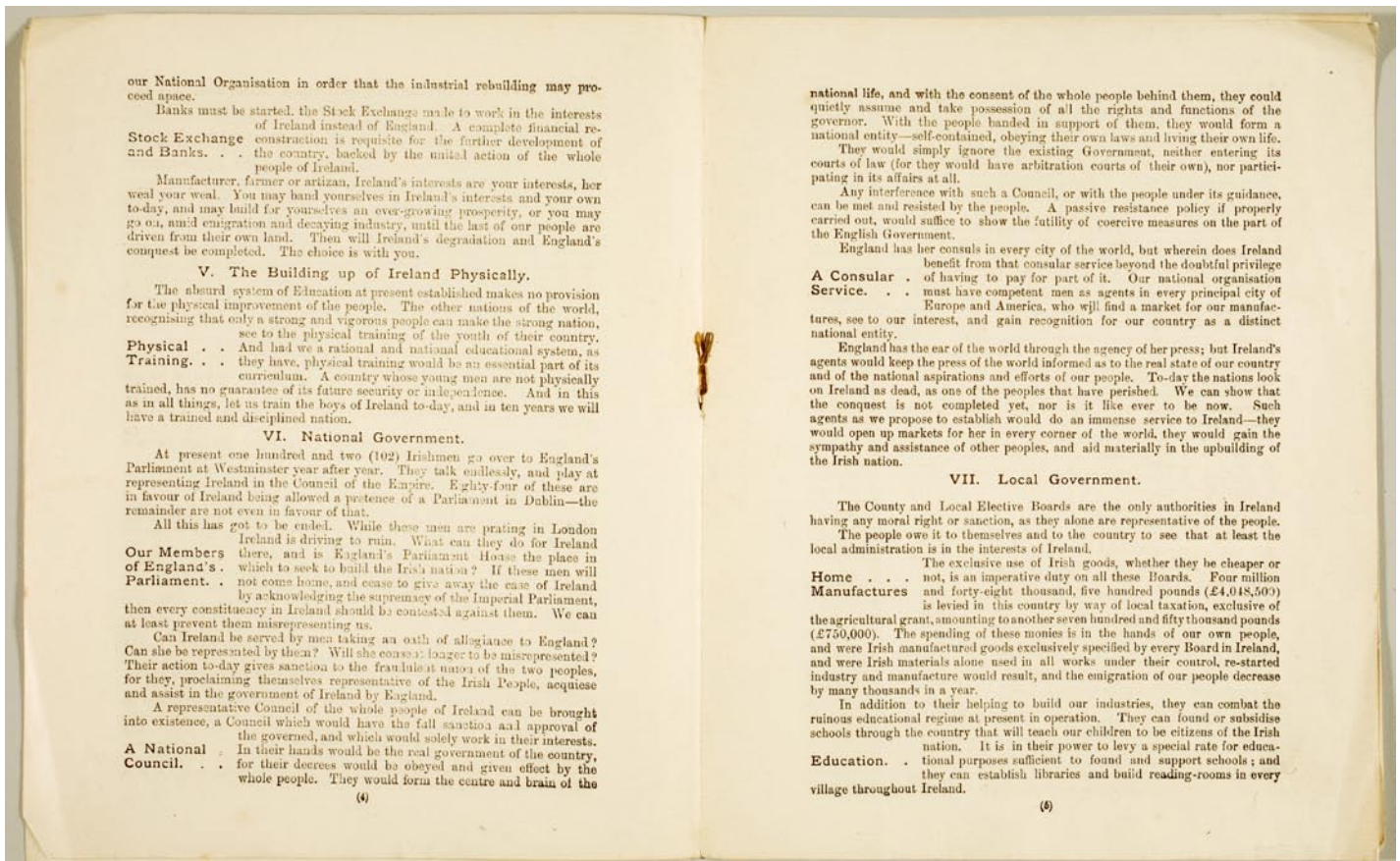
Denis McCullough.



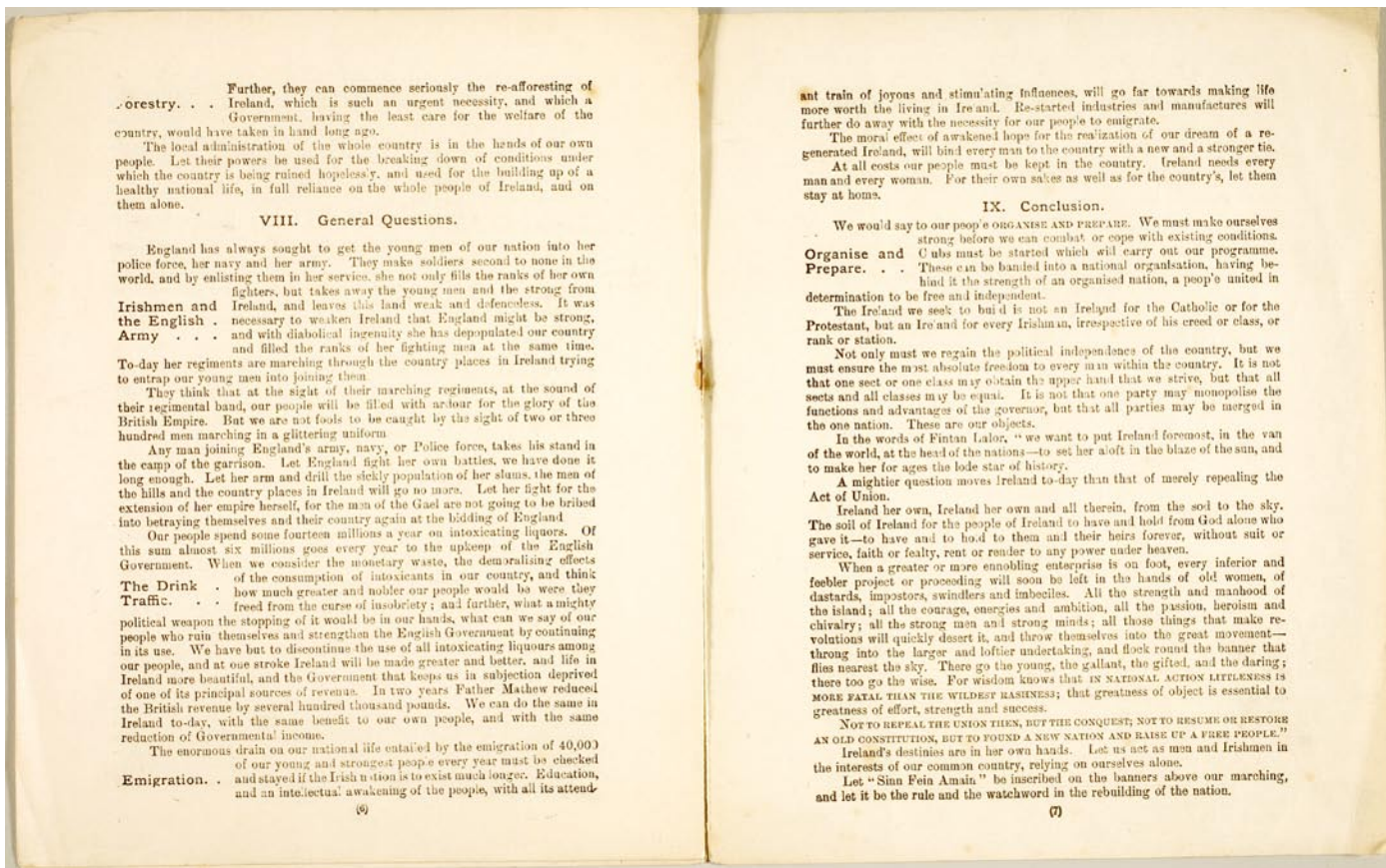
Manifesto and constitution of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c.Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).



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Manifesto and constitution of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c. Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).



Further, they can commence seriously the re-forestry of Ireland, which is such an urgent necessity, and which a Government, having the least care for the welfare of the country, would have taken in hand long ago.

The local administration of the whole country is in the hands of our own people. Let their powers be used for the breaking down of conditions under which the country is being ruined hopelessly, and used for the building up of a healthy national life, in full reliance on the whole people of Ireland, and on them alone.

VIII. General Questions.

England has always sought to get the young men of our nation into her police force, her navy and her army. They make soldiers second to none in the world, and by enlisting them in her service she not only fills the ranks of her own fighters, but takes away the young men and the strong from Irishmen and Ireland, and leaves this land weak and defenceless. It was the English necessary to weaken Ireland that England might be strong, Army . . . and with diabolical ingenuity she has depopulated our country and filled the ranks of her fighting men at the same time. To-day her regiments are marching through the country places in Ireland trying to entrap our young men into joining them.

They think that at the sight of their marching regiments, at the sound of their regimental band, our people will be filled with ardour for the glory of the British Empire. But we are not fools to be caught by the sight of two or three hundred men marching in a glittering uniform.

Any man joining England's army, navy, or Police force, takes his stand in the camp of the garrison. Let England fight her own battles, we have done it long enough. Let her arm and drill the sickly population of her slums, the men of the hills and the country places in Ireland will go no more. Let her fight for the extension of her empire herself, for the men of the Gael are not going to be bribed into betraying themselves and their country again at the bidding of England.

Our people spend some fourteen millions a year on intoxicating liquors. Of this sum almost six millions goes every year to the upkeep of the English Government. When we consider the monetary waste, the demoralising effects

of the consumption of intoxicants in our country, and think The Drink Traffic . . . how much greater and nobler our people would be were they freed from the curse of inebriety; and further, what a mighty political weapon the stopping of it would be in our hands, what can we say of our people who ruin themselves and strengthen the English Government by continuing in its use. We have but to discontinue the use of all intoxicating liquors among our people, and at one stroke Ireland will be made greater and better, and life in Ireland more beautiful, and the Government that keeps us in subjection deprived of one of its principal sources of revenue. In two years Father Mathew reduced the British revenue by several hundred thousand pounds. We can do the same in Ireland to-day, with the same benefit to our own people, and with the same reduction of Governmental income.

The enormous drain on our national life entailed by the emigration of 40,000 of our young and strongest people every year must be checked and stayed if the Irish nation is to exist much longer. Education, and an intellectual awakening of the people, with all its attend-

Emigration. . . ant train of joyous and stimulating influences, will go far towards making life more worth the living in Ireland. Re-started industries and manufactures will further do away with the necessity for our people to emigrate.

The moral effect of awakened hope for the realization of our dream of a re-generated Ireland, will bind every man to the country with a new and a stronger tie. At all costs our people must be kept in the country. Ireland needs every man and every woman. For their own sakes as well as for the country's, let them stay at home.

IX. Conclusion.

We would say to our people ORGANISE AND PREPARE. We must make ourselves strong before we can combat or cope with existing conditions. Organise and Prepare. . . Clubs must be started which will carry out our programme. . . These can be banded into a national organisation, having behind it the strength of an organised nation, a people united in determination to be free and independent.

The Ireland we seek to build is not an Ireland for the Catholic or for the Protestant, but an Ireland for every Irishman, irrespective of his creed or class, or rank or station.

Not only must we regain the political independence of the country, but we must ensure the most absolute freedom to every man within the country. It is not that one sect or one class may obtain the upper hand that we strive, but that all sects and all classes may be equal. It is not that one party may monopolise the functions and advantages of the government, but that all parties may be merged in the one nation. These are our objects.

In the words of Fintan Lalor, "we want to put Ireland foremost, in the van of the world, at the head of the nations—to set her aloft in the blaze of the sun, and to make her for ages the lode star of history."

A mightier question moves Ireland to-day than that of merely repealing the Act of Union.

Ireland her own, Ireland her own and all therein, from the soil to the sky. The soil of Ireland for the people of Ireland to have and hold from God alone who gave it—to have and to hold to them and their heirs forever, without suit or service, faith or fealty, rent or render to any power under heaven.

When a greater or more sun-bobbling enterprise is on foot, every inferior and feebler project or proceeding will soon be left in the hands of old women, of dastards, impostors, swindlers and imbeciles. All the strength and manhood of the island; all the courage, energies and ambition, all the passion, heroism and chivalry; all the strong men and strong minds; all those things that make revolutions will quickly desert it, and throw themselves into the great movement—throng into the larger and loftier undertaking, and flock round the banner that flies nearest the sky. There go the young, the gallant, the gifted, and the daring; there too go the wise. For wisdom knows that IN NATIONAL ACTION LITTLENESS IS MORE FATAL THAN THE WILDEST RASHNESS; that greatness of object is essential to greatness of effort, strength and success.

NOT TO REPEAL THE UNION THEN, BUT THE CONQUEST; NOT TO RESUME OR RESTORE AN OLD CONSTITUTION, BUT TO FOUND A NEW NATION AND RAISE UP A FREE PEOPLE."

Ireland's destinies are in her own hands. Let us act as men and Irishmen in the interests of our common country, relying on ourselves alone.

Let "Sinn Fein Amain" be inscribed on the banners above our marching, and let it be the rule and the watchword in the rebuilding of the nation.

Manifesto and constitution of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c.Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).

Constitution of the Dungannon Club.



1. That this Club be called "THE DUNGANNON CLUB (NO. 1), BELFAST."
2. That it be open to all Irishmen who endorse its propaganda.
3. That its objects are :—

I. The Building up of Ireland

- (a) **Intellectually**—By educating the people by means of Schools, Classes. Lectures. Publications, etc. The establishment of Libraries and every means calculated to educate the country.
- (b) **Materially**—By the fostering of existing and the starting of new industries, by the exclusive use of Irish manufactures and produce, and by nationalised transit services, etc.
- (c) **Physically**—By the popularisation of physical culture and training, by the spread of our national games, and by the training of the boys of the country.

II. The Regaining of the Political Independence of Ireland—

By a passive resistance to the government of this country by any other than the people of Ireland.

By the formation of a national council, obeyed and supported by and working in the interests of the whole people of Ireland.

By a passive resistance to all interference with the working of such a council.

4. That we maintain that the attendance of Irishmen at the English Parliament is inimical to the best interests of the Irish nation by admitting the right of any body other than the Parliament of Ireland to make laws binding on this country.


5. That we will co-operate with men of any class or creed who are working for the welfare of the country, as we believe that the interests of Ireland are above the interests of any creed, or class or party.

Published at the Office of the DUNGANNON CLUB, 7 NORTH ST., BELFAST.

Printed on Paper of Irish Manufacture.

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Will You Help?



NA FIANNA EIREANN (or National Boy Scouts' Organisation) was founded with the object of developing the national and military spirit amongst the boys of Ireland.

The Organisation is governed by the boys themselves, and its programme includes every element of military training: Physical Culture, Infantry Drill, Morse and Semaphore Signalling, Camp Life, Scouting in all its branches, First-Aid, and Ambulance Work. Instruction in Irish and Irish History are also included in the course of training. The Fianna is organised in fifty-four centres throughout Ireland.

The Central Council appeals to every Irish Nationalist to help in spreading the movement in every town and village in Ireland. For this great work the Council has instituted an Adult Association, known as HONORARY FIANNA, consisting of Irish men and women who are willing to help in propagating the boys' movement. A small monthly subscription to the Organising Fund is expected from all Honorary Members.

**HONORARY FIANNA
APPLICATION FORM.**

FIANNA HEADQUARTERS,
12 D'OLIER STREET, DUBLIN.

No. on Roll.....

I am willing to help, as far as I am able, in pushing the propaganda of NA FIANNA EIREANN throughout Ireland, and I am willing to subscribe *threepence per month or †.....per week to the Fianna Organising Fund. Please put my name on the Roll of HONORARY FIANNA.

Signed,.....

Address,.....

Date,.....

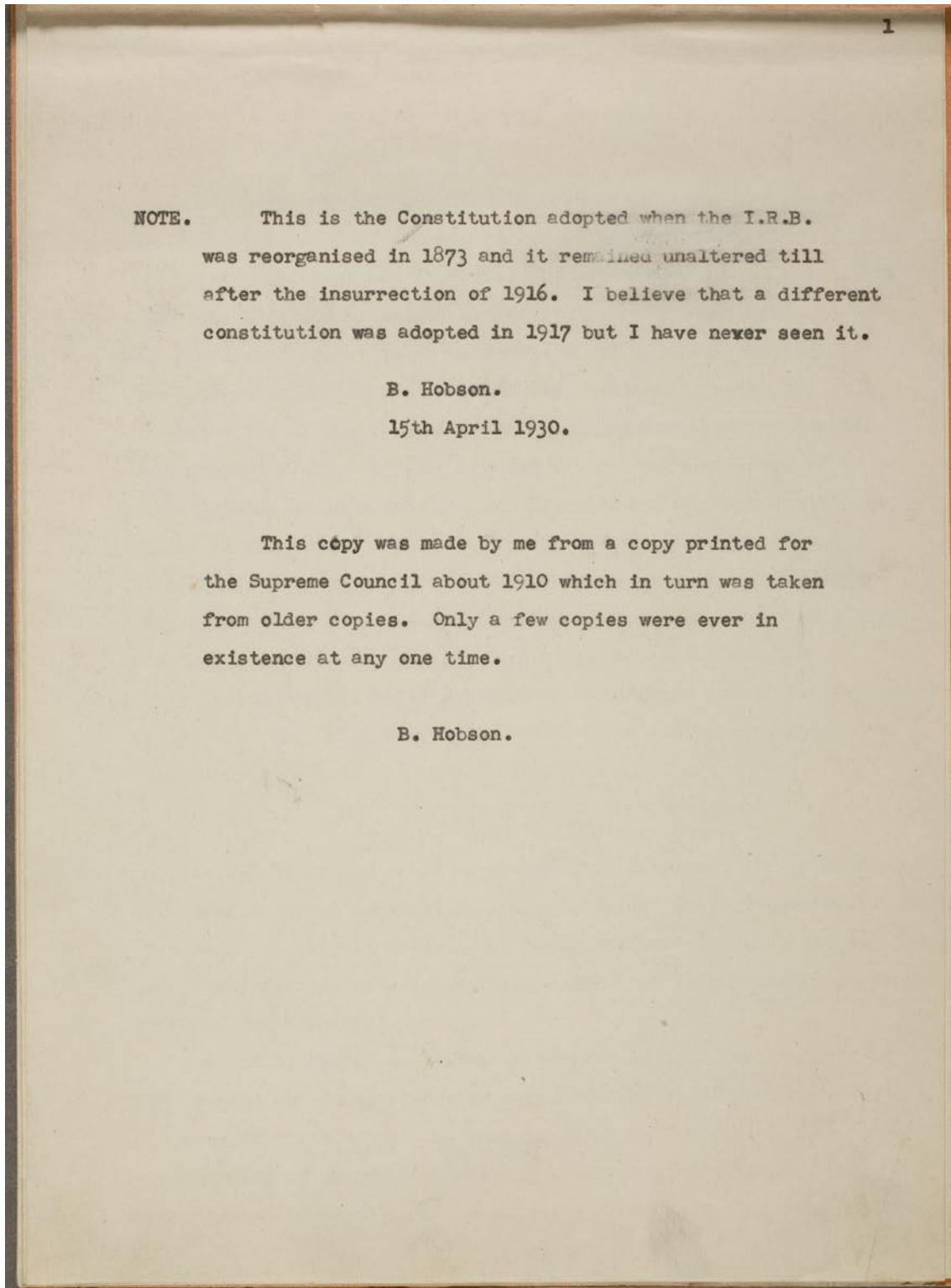
* Strike out the words not required † Fill in amount of weekly subscription, if you desire to subscribe weekly.
A Scout will call regularly for your Subscription.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF

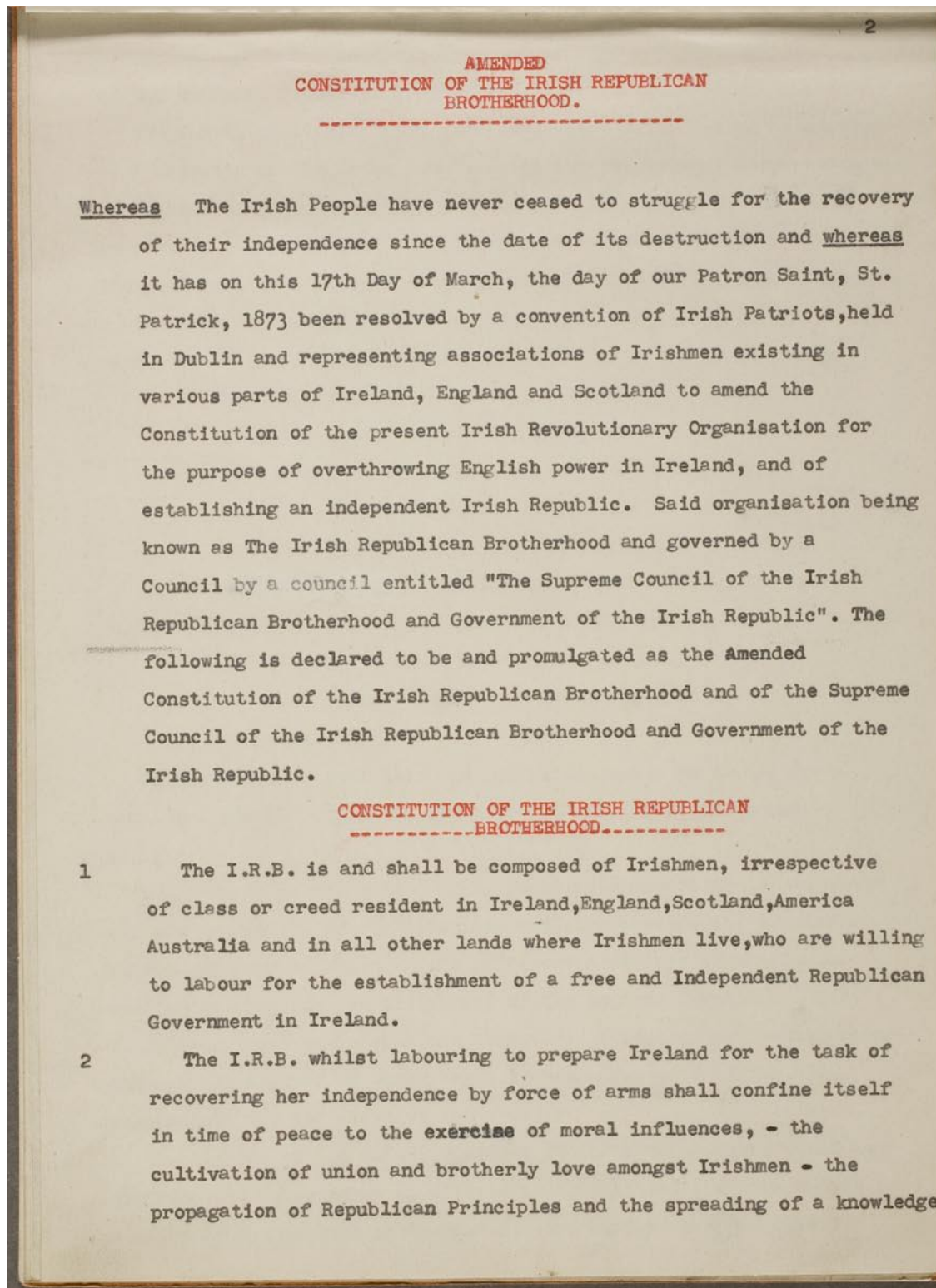
Application form for Fianna Éireann issued probably soon after its re-launch on 16 August 1909.



Members of Fianna Éireann engaging in medical field training. (Keogh 210).



The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).



The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

of the national rights of Ireland.

3 The I.R.B. shall await the decision of the Irish Nation as expressed by a majority of the Irish people as to the fit hour of mangurating a war against England and shall pending such an emergency, lead its support to every movement calculated to advance the cause of Irish independence, consistently with the preservation of its own integrity.

4 The mode of initiating members into the I.R.B. shall be the rendering of the following Oath of Allegiance to its Government:-

"In the presence of God. I.....do solemnly swear that I will do my utmost to establish the national independence of Ireland, and that I will bear true allegiance to the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Government of the Irish Republic and implicitly obey the Constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and all my superior officers and that I will preserve inviolable the secrets of the organisation".

5 No one shall be inducted into the I.R.B. whose character for sobriety, truth, valour and obedience to Authority cannot bear scrutiny.

6 Each member of the I.R.B. shall contribute according to his means for the production of war materials and also towards the expense of keeping up communication in the different divisions of the I.R.B. and for maintaining the efficiency of the Supreme Council.

7 In every case where arms are lost through negligence the department through the neglect of which the loss has occurred shall be responsible for the value of the arms.

8 The members of the I.R.B. resident in towns or parishes shall be directed and governed by an officer to be entitled a centre and to be elected by the members of the I.R.B. each body of members electing

The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

the centre for their own town or parish.

- 9 The members and centres of the I.R.B. shall be directed and governed by an officer to be entitled a County Centre and to be elected by the Centres of the respective counties, and in England and Scotland the towns shall be grouped into districts corresponding in population to the counties in Ireland and each district shall be directed and governed by a District Centre who shall be elected by the Centres of his district.
- 10 The I.R.B. shall be divided into seven electoral divisions - to wit - Leinster, Ulster, Munster, Connaught, North of England, South of England and Scotland and in each division one Civil and one Military Secretary shall be elected by the County or district Centres and the duty of the Civil Secretary shall be to act in all respects as deputy of the member of the Supreme Council of his division and in the event of the removal of said member by the act of the enemy, disability or death the Civil Secretary shall exercise authority in the division until a new member of the Supreme Council shall have been elected in the manner provided for in the Constitution of the Supreme Council; and the duties of the Military Secretary shall be to execute all orders received by him in relation to the procuring, distribution and safe keeping of arms and ammunition.
11. The term of office of all members of the I.R.B. shall be subject to removal at any time by a two thirds vote of the electoral body.
12. The divisional officers shall have power to make all bye-laws framed in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution - which they may deem necessary for the purpose of local organisation.
13. Each County or District Centre shall on or before the last day in each month send in a report of the position and progress of affairs to the Civil Secretary of his division who shall forthwith send it to the member of the Supreme Council for the Division, by whom it shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Supreme Council.

The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

14 In each of the large cities, to wit - Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Belfast, London and Glasgow a committee of five shall be elected by the centres whose duty shall consist in directing local organisation subject to the supervision and control of the County or District Centres.

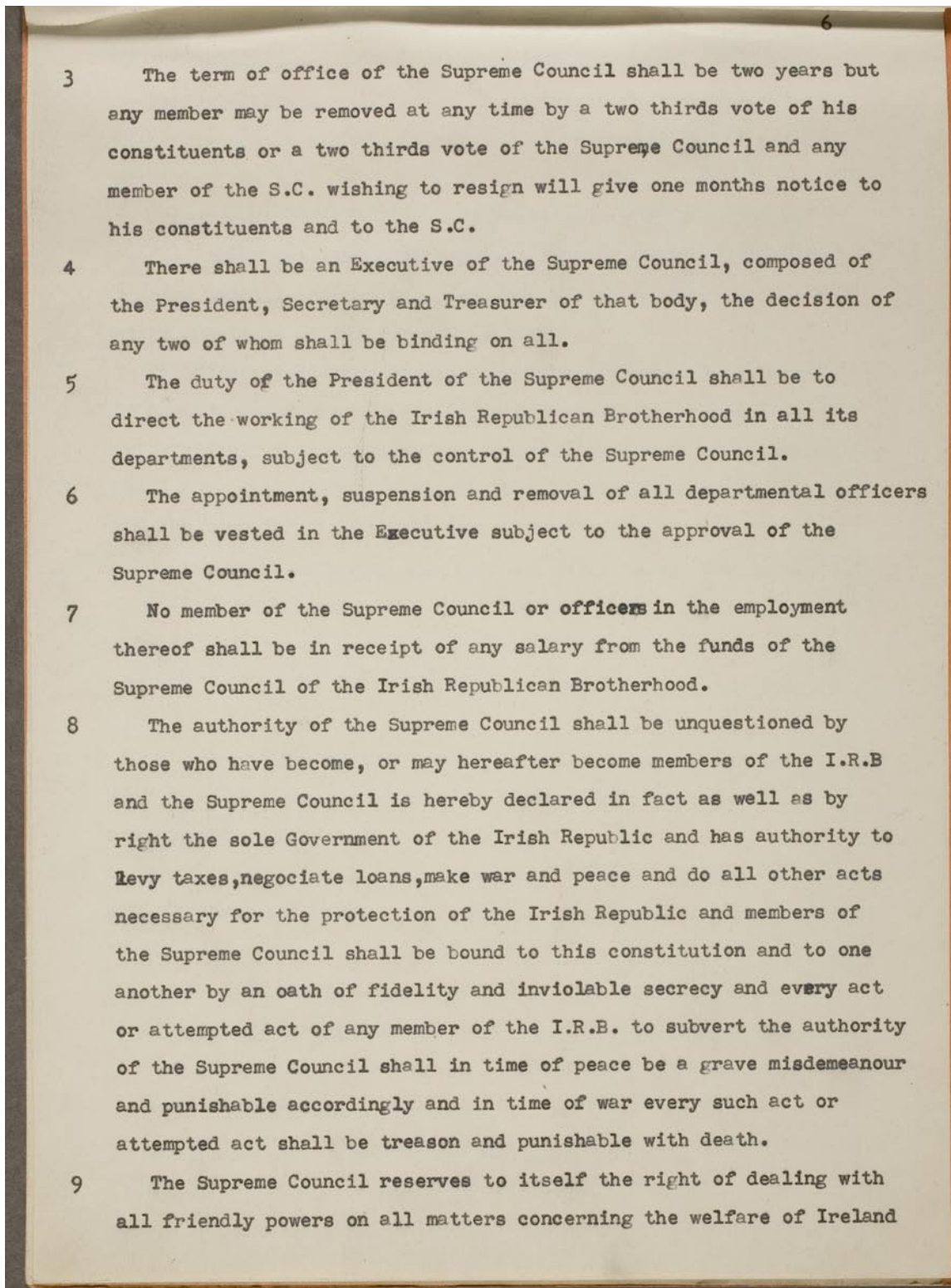
15 No member of the I.R.B shall receive any information respecting the organisation, except what shall be necessary for the performance of his duty, and no member of the I.R.B. shall be at liberty to make use of any such information he may accidentally acquire.

AMENDED CONSTITUTION
OF THE
SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE I.R.B
AND
GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC

1 The Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Government of the Irish Republic is and shall be composed of eleven members; seven of said members shall be elected by the seven electoral divisions as marked out in the Constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and the remaining four shall be honorary members and shall be elected by the seven, to whom alone their names shall be known and enactments of the Government so constituted shall be the laws of the Irish Republic until the territory there of shall have been recovered from the English Enemy and a permanent Government established.

2. The manner of the election of the before mentioned seven members of the Supreme Council shall be as follows:- The County or District Centres shall be assembled in convention and shall elect a Committee of five of their number, who under seal of an oath of secrecy, shall elect the member of the Supreme Council for the division whereunto they belong.

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and the advancement of the cause of Irish Independence.

10. Executive power shall never be vested in one man, but shall be vested in the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Supreme Council.
11. Every member of the I.R.B and every member of the Supreme Council owes Civil and Military obedience to the Executive of the Supreme Council and the President thereof is in fact as well as by right President of the Irish Republic.
12. In the event of the Supreme Council being unavoidably reduced in number, the member or remaining members shall exercise the authority of the Supreme Council until such time as the vacancies shall have been filled up which shall be done as soon as possible and the same for the Executive.
13. The military authority shall at all times be and remain subject to the Civil Government and shall never be permitted to arrogate to itself the power of legislating or of restraining in any way the Constitution of the Irish Republic as promulgated by the Supreme Council.
14. At each meeting of the Supreme Council the members thereof shall hand in a summarised statement of the receipts and expenditure of the respective divisions.
15. The Supreme Council shall have power to award Capital Punishment only in cases of treason and the crime of treason is hereby defined as any wilful act or word on the part of any member of the I.R.B. or of the Supreme Council calculated to betray the cause of Irish Independence and subserve the interest of the British or any other foreign Government in Ireland to the detriment of Irish Independence.
16. The Supreme Council shall appoint a secret court in each of the seven divisions of the I.R.B. for the trial of all members charged with the commission of treason or grave misdemeanours.

The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

17 The Supreme Council shall undertake the punishment of all minor offences committed by members of the I.R.B. once the offending members have removed from the division whereunto they belong and in cases where members unlawfully appropriate moneys entrusted to them for national purposes, such members shall be expelled the I.R.B. and the Supreme Council shall draw up a list of the names of such members, and circulate it through all parts of the I.R.B. and forward copies of it to representative Irishmen in every part of the world in order that those who rob the treasury of their country may be held up to the execration of all honest men.

18 In the Irish Republic there shall be no state Religion but every citizen shall be free to worship God according to his conscience, and perfect freedom of worship shall be guaranteed as a right and not granted as a privilege.

19 The Supreme Council shall have power to alter or revise the foregoing constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Government of the Irish Republic but whenever it is contemplated to make any alterations it shall be necessary to give one months notice of the meeting of the Supreme Council at which such alteration is proposed to be effected; and it shall require a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Council to make the proposed change.

By Order of
THE SUPREME COUNCIL

The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

Ms 13,170

PÁDRAIG FEARSE.

After the formation of the Irish Volunteers in October, 1913, Pádraig Pearse was sworn in by me as a member of the I.R.B. in December of that year. I cannot recollect which Circle. The circumstances leading to this were as follows: Being in financial difficulties with his school, St. Enda's, Rathfarnham, and being afraid of bankruptcy, Pearse came to me in December 1913 with his problem. He had started his school on a promise of £500 which had never materialised.

I arranged a lecture tour for him in the United States after correspondence with John Devoy, Joe McGarrity, Judge Keogh of the Supreme Court ^{of New York} and, I think, John Quinn. When these arrangements were made, and in view of the fact that Pearse would almost certainly have been brought in to the I.R.B. at a very early date, I swore him in before his departure for the States.

Pearse went to the United States. I followed a fortnight later. Pearse was quite unaware of my intention to go there and was surprised when I turned up. I deal with the reason for my visit to the U.S.A. in my statement on Roger Casement.

Pearse's development towards Left Wing Nationalism was remarkably rapid. As late as 1912 he spoke at a Redmondite meeting in Dublin, and a little over a year later he became a member of the I.R.B. Six months after I swore him into the I.R.B. he was writing to people in America, to whom I had introduced him, telling them that I was not sufficiently reliable, from a revolutionary point of view, to be entrusted with funds or given support. Copies of some of his letters are

Statement by Bulmer Hobson on Patrick Pearse given to the Bureau of Military History, 26 Jan. 1938.

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still extant and I have given them to the National Library.

He was a sentimental egotist, full of curious Old Testament theories about being the scapegoat for the people, and he became convinced of the necessity for a periodic blood sacrifice to keep the National spirit alive. There was a certain strain of abnormality in all this. He did not contribute greatly to the hard grinding work of building up the movement, but as soon as we had succeeded in getting a small organisation and a handful of arms he seized the opportunity to bring about the blood sacrifice.

(Signed) Bulmer Hobson

26 January, 1938.

