



- 3.0 Those who Set the Stage
- 3.2 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.

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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 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

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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'.

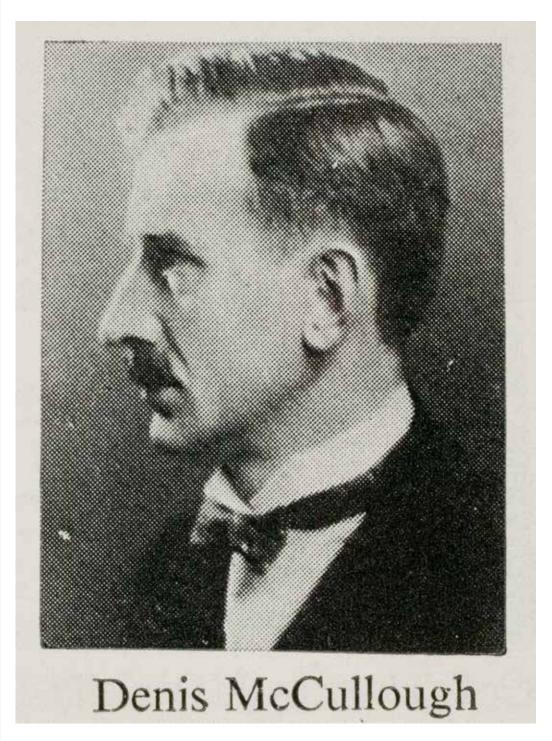


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Bulmer Hobson. (Ms. 13,174(7), Hobson Papers).

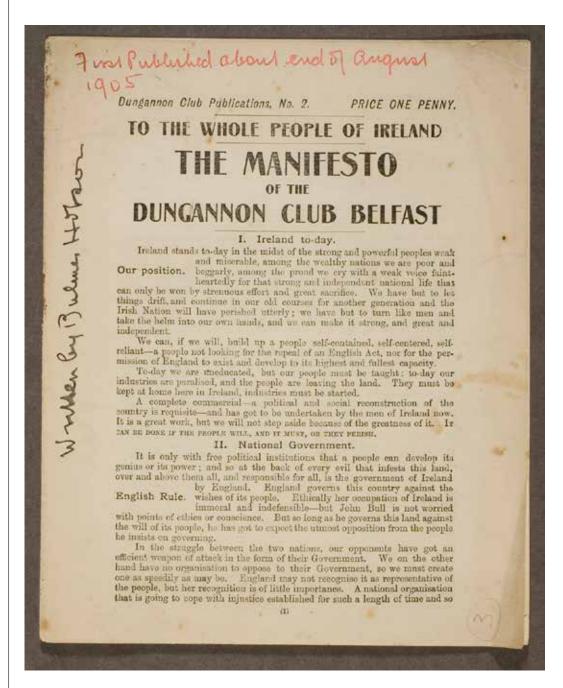
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Denis McCullough.

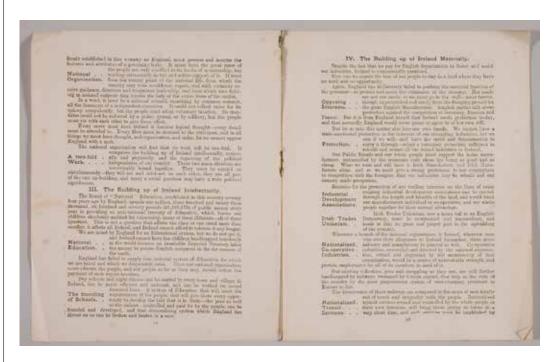


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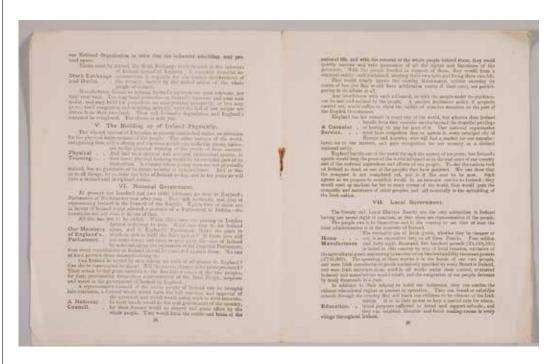




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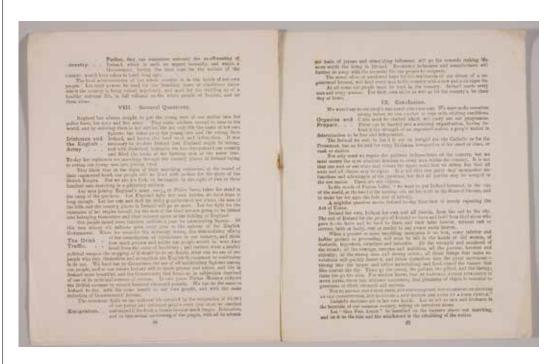


Manifesto of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c.Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).



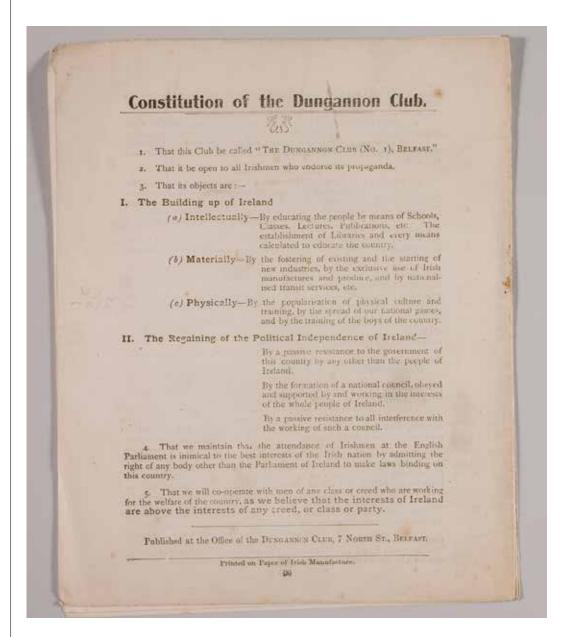


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3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough





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	to every Irish Nationalist to help in spreading the
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Application form for Fianna Éireann issued probably soon after its re-launch on 16 August 1909.



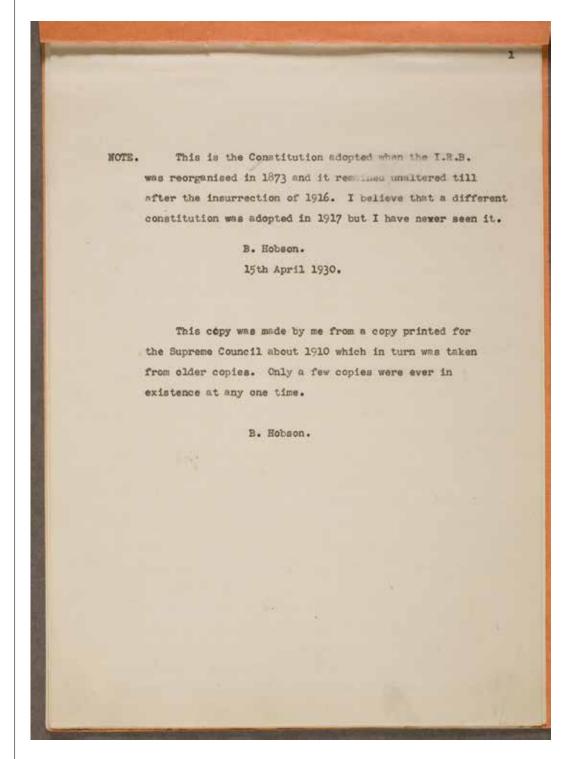
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Members of Fianna Éireann engaging in medical field training. (Keogh 210).

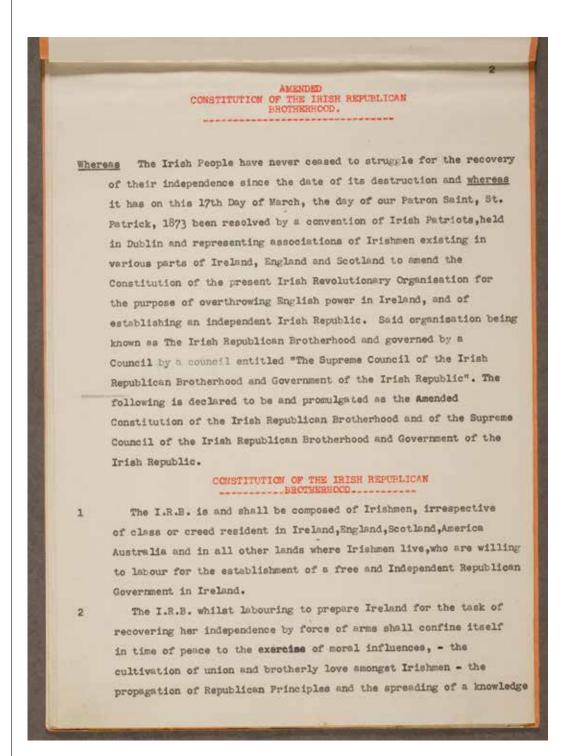


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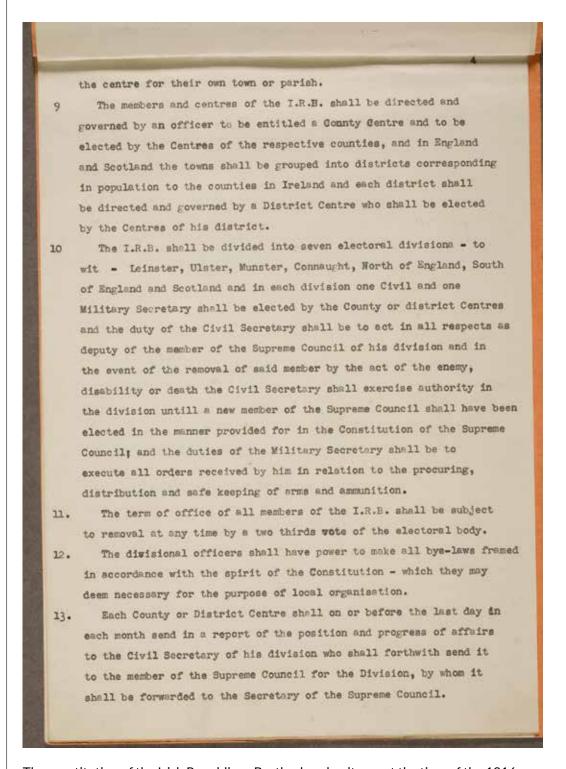


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of the national rights of Ireland. The I.R.B. shall await the decision of the Irish Nation as expressed by a majority of the Irish people as to the fit hour of mangurating a war sgainst England and shall pending such an emergency, legd its support to every movement calculated to advance the cause of Irish independence, consistently with the preservation of its own integrity. The mode of initiating members into the I.R.B. shall be the rendering of the following both 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". No one shall be inducted into the I.R.B. whose character for sobriety, truth, valour and obedience to Authority cannot bear scrutiny. Each member of the I.R.B. shell 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. 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. 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



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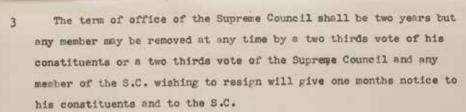
- In each of the large cities, to wit Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Belfast, London and Glasgow a committee of five shall be elected by the centres whose duty shall consist in directing local organisation subject to the supervision and control of the County or District Centres.
- No member of the I.R.B shall 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 mambers 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 untild the territory there of shall have been recovered from the English Enemy and a permanent Government established.
- 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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There shall be an Executive of the Supreme Council, composed of the President, Secretary and Treasurer of that body, the decision of any two of whom shall be binding on all.

The duty of the President of the Supreme Council shall be to direct the working of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in all its departments, subject to the control of the Supreme Council.

The appointment, suspension and removal of all departmental officers shall be vested in the Executive subject to the approval of the Supreme Council.

No member of the Supreme Council or officers in the employment thereof shall be in receipt of any salary from the funds of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

The authority of the Supreme Council shall be unquestioned by those who have become, or may hereafter become members of the I.R.B and the Supreme Council is hereby declared in fact as well as by right the sole Government of the Irish Republic and has authority to levy taxes, negociate loans, make war and peace and do all other acts necessary for the protection of the Irish Republic and members of the Supreme Council shall be bound to this constitution and to one another by an oath of fidelity and inviolable secrecy and every act or attempted act of any member of the I.R.B. to subvert the authority of the Supreme Council shall in time of peace be a grave misdemeanour and punishable accordingly and in time of war every such act or attempted act shall be treason and punishable with death.

The Supreme Council reserves to itself the right of dealing with all friendly powers on all matters concerning the welfare of Ireland



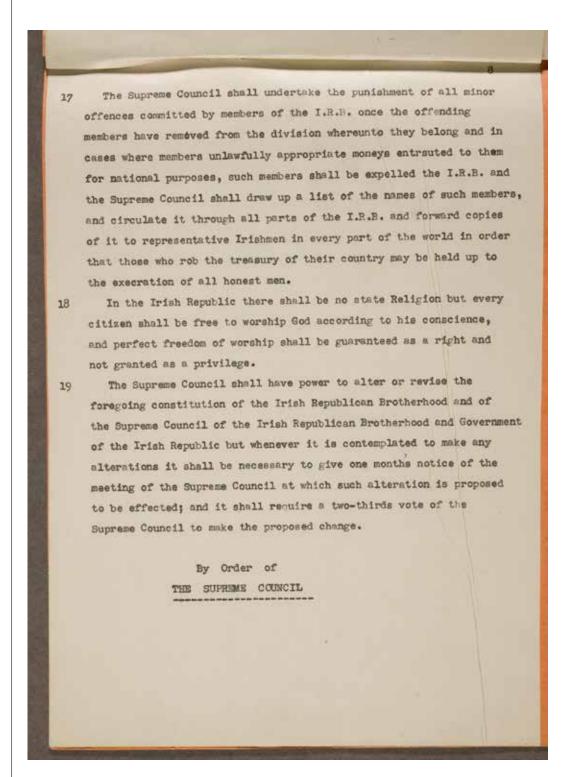
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and the advancement of the cause of Irish Independence. Executive power shell never be vested in one man, but shall be 10. vested in the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Supreme Council. 11 Every member of the I.R.B and every member of the 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. 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. The military suthority 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. 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. 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.

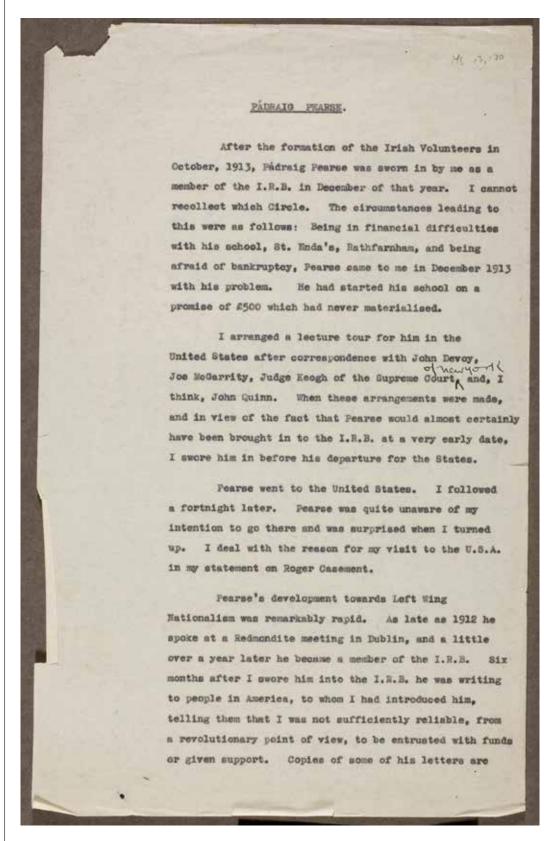


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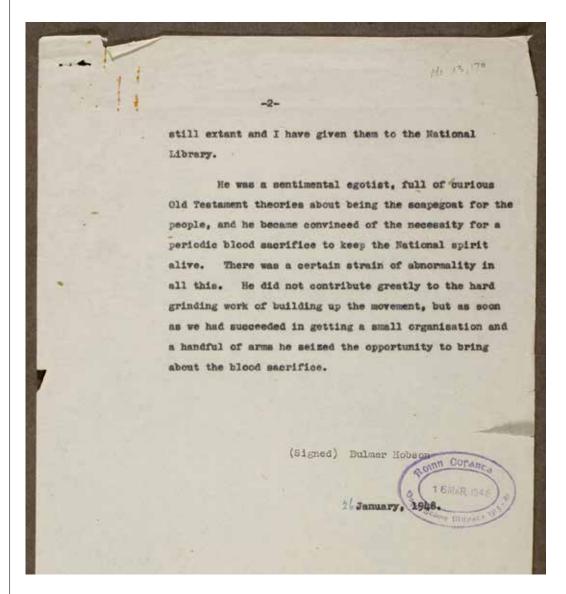
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Statement by Bulmer Hobson on Patrick Pearse given to the Bureau of Military History, 26 Jan. 1938.



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