



### 5.0 Roger Casement

He tried to recruit an Irish brigade from Irish prisoners of war in Germany and to import German arms.

Roger Casement (1864-1916) was born at Doyle's Cottage, Lawson Terrace, Sandycove, Co. Dublin, the son of Captain Roger Casement of the 3rd Dragoon Guards of the British army and Anne Jephson from Mallow, Co. Cork. His mother had him secretly baptised in her own religion, Roman Catholic, but he was raised in the Protestant faith of his father. As both his parents died young, Roger was taken in by his uncle, John Casement of Magherintemple, near Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, and educated as a boarder at the diocesan school in Ballymena.

After leaving school in 1880, Casement worked in various employments, including clerking, administration, and civil service work in Africa. From 1895 onwards he held consular appointments at various locations in Africa, including Boma in the Congo, where the British Foreign Office authorised him to investigate and report on Belgian mismanagement.

His report condemned the Belgian administration as ruthless, and it exposed systematic infringement of the human rights of the indigenous people. The report earned Casement a CMG (Order of St Michael and St George) in 1905.

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He resumed consular service with postings at Santos, Para and Rio in Brazil. He was then commissioned to undertake a report on the reported abuse of workers in the rubber industry in the Putumayo basin in Peru. The report was published as a parliamentary paper (1911) and had considerable impact, gaining Casement international recognition as a humanitarian, his contribution being acknowledged with a knighthood.

Meanwhile Casement had been a member of the Gaelic League for some years and participated in its cultural activities whenever he was in Ireland. He was learning Irish and had an active interest in Irish literature, history and tradition. It would also appear that by the time he left the consular service around 1911 he had become disillusioned with the British empire and what he had come to regard as its unjust dominion over Ireland. Moreover, he became increasingly radicalised by the opposition of the Ulster unionists to Home Rule from 1912 onwards. On the foundation of the Irish Volunteers in November 1913, he became a member of the provisional committee. When the war broke out in August 1914 he was in the United States raising funds for the Irish Volunteers. In the new political scenario, he identified Germany as a potential Irish ally and he determined to seek German assistance.

Casement was regarded with scepticism by many Irish nationalists who either suspected his integrity or considered him volatile and dangerous. Nevertheless, the Clan na Gael leader John Devoy, who hosted his American tour, put him in contact with the German ambassador who arranged for him to visit Berlin. Casement had three demands: arms, German officers to lead an insurrection in Ireland, and the formation of an Irish brigade consisting of Irish soldiers in the British army then held as prisoners of war in Germany. The Germans promised only a relatively small quantity of arms, and few of the prisoners of war were willing to join the Irish brigade. On learning that an insurrection was planned for Easter, Casement determined to stop it, as he believed it was doomed to failure without substantial arms and German support.

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Casement was arrested at Banna Strand in Co. Kerry on Good Friday 1916, having been put ashore by a German submarine. Meanwhile, the ship transporting the German rifles, the Aud, was intercepted by the British navy off the south coast and scuttled by her captain. Casement was taken to the Tower of London and tried for high treason at the Old Bailey. He was found guilty of treason. Before his execution he was received into the Roman Catholic Church. Roger Casement was hanged at Pentonville Prison on 3 August 1916. He was unmarried.

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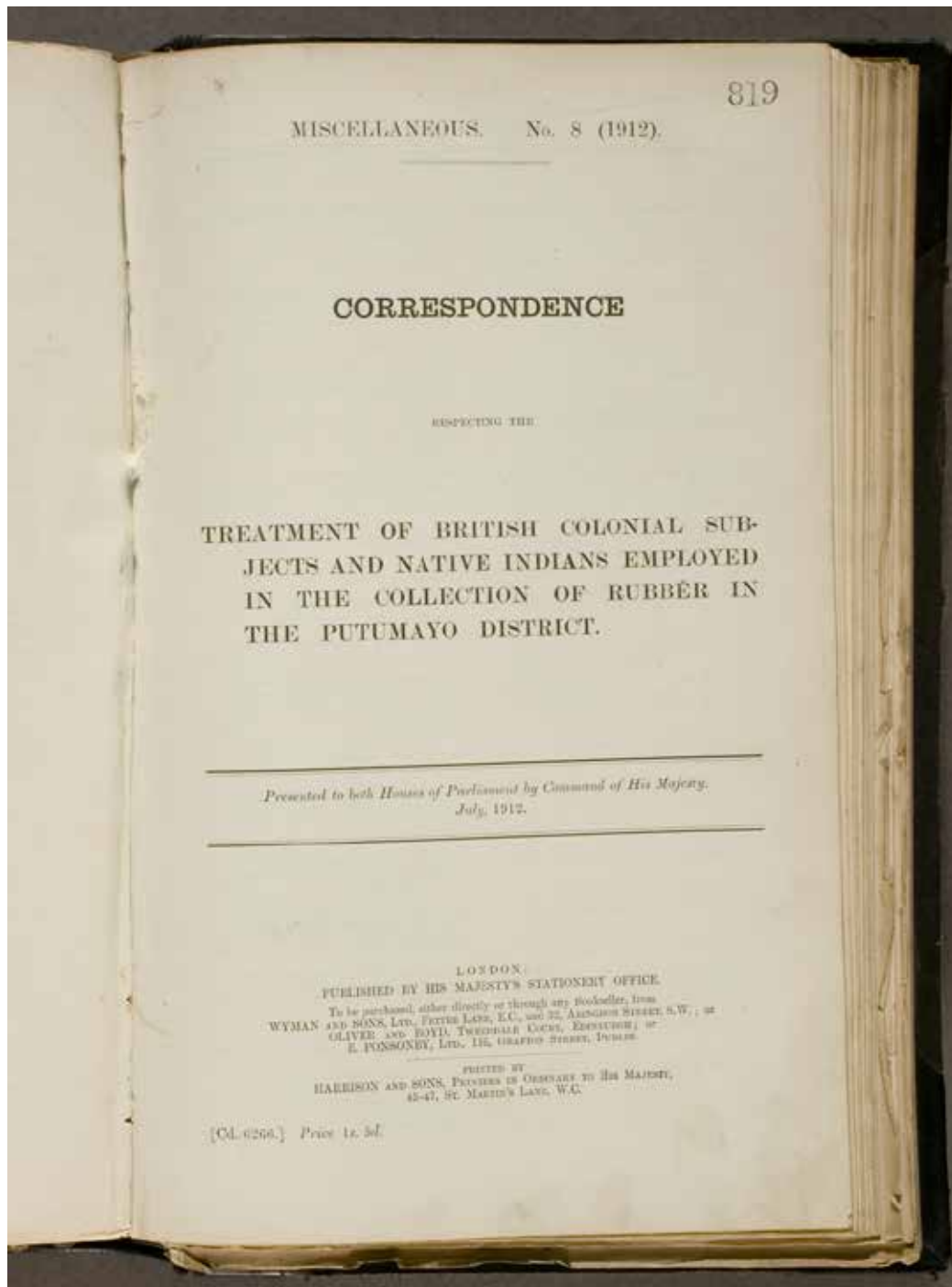
Roger Casement as a young man. (Ms. 21,536, Biggar Papers).

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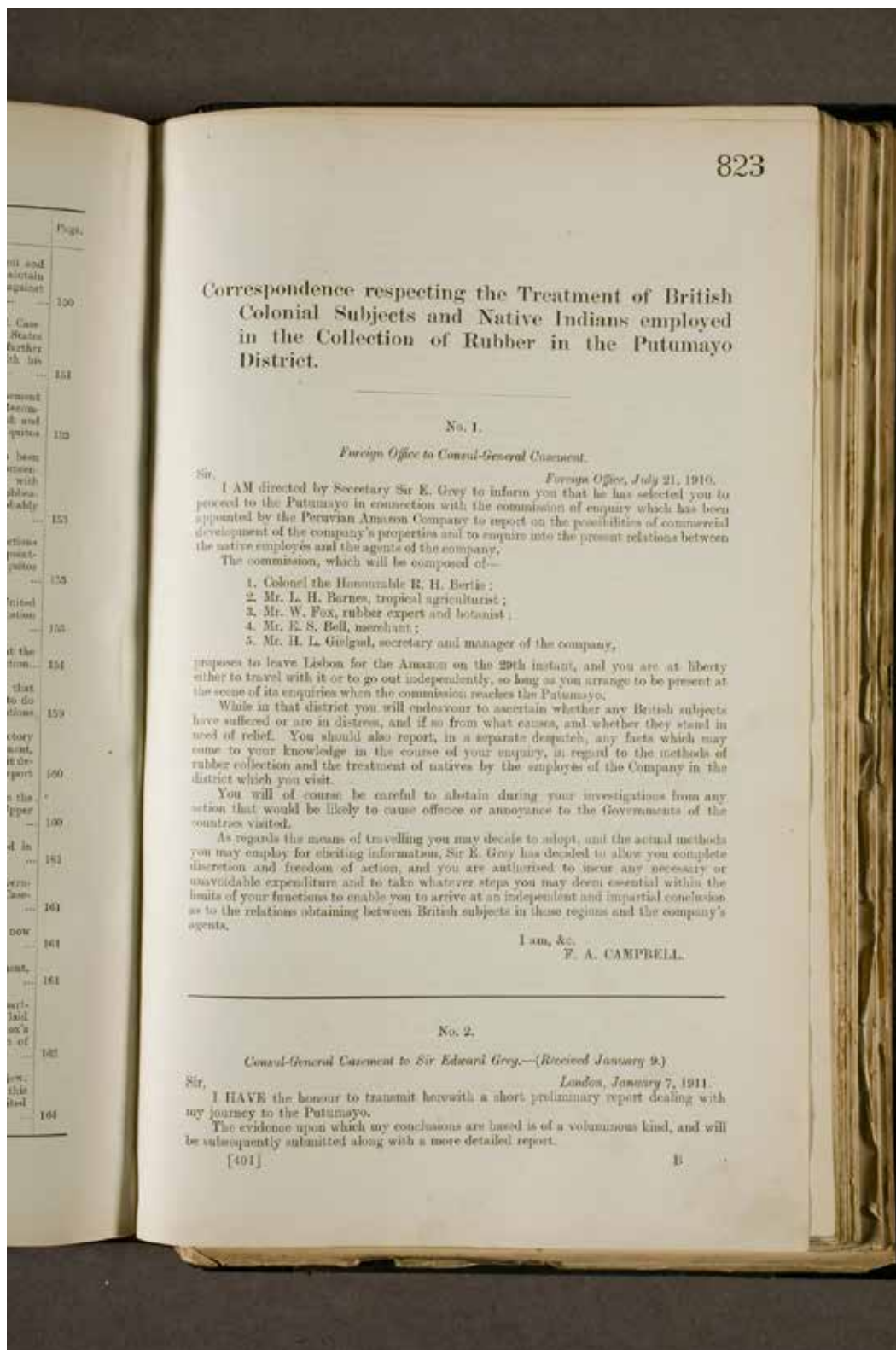
Insignia of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George awarded to Casement in June 1905. (Heraldic Museum).

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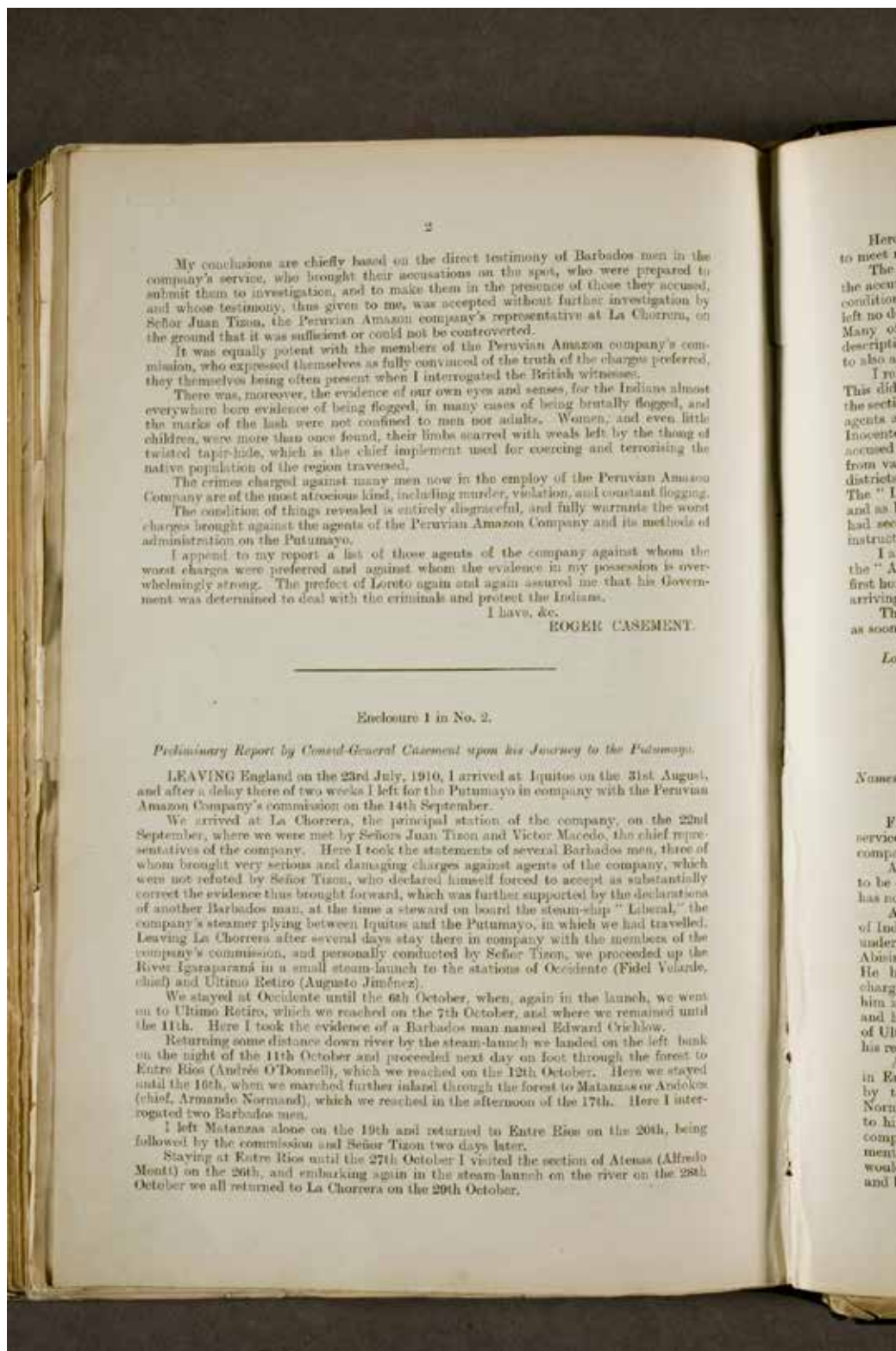
Pages from the official published report by Casement on the treatment of workers in the rubber industry in the Putumayo basin in Peru, July 1912.





Pages from the official published report by Casement on the treatment of workers in the rubber industry in the Putumayo basin in Peru, July 1912.

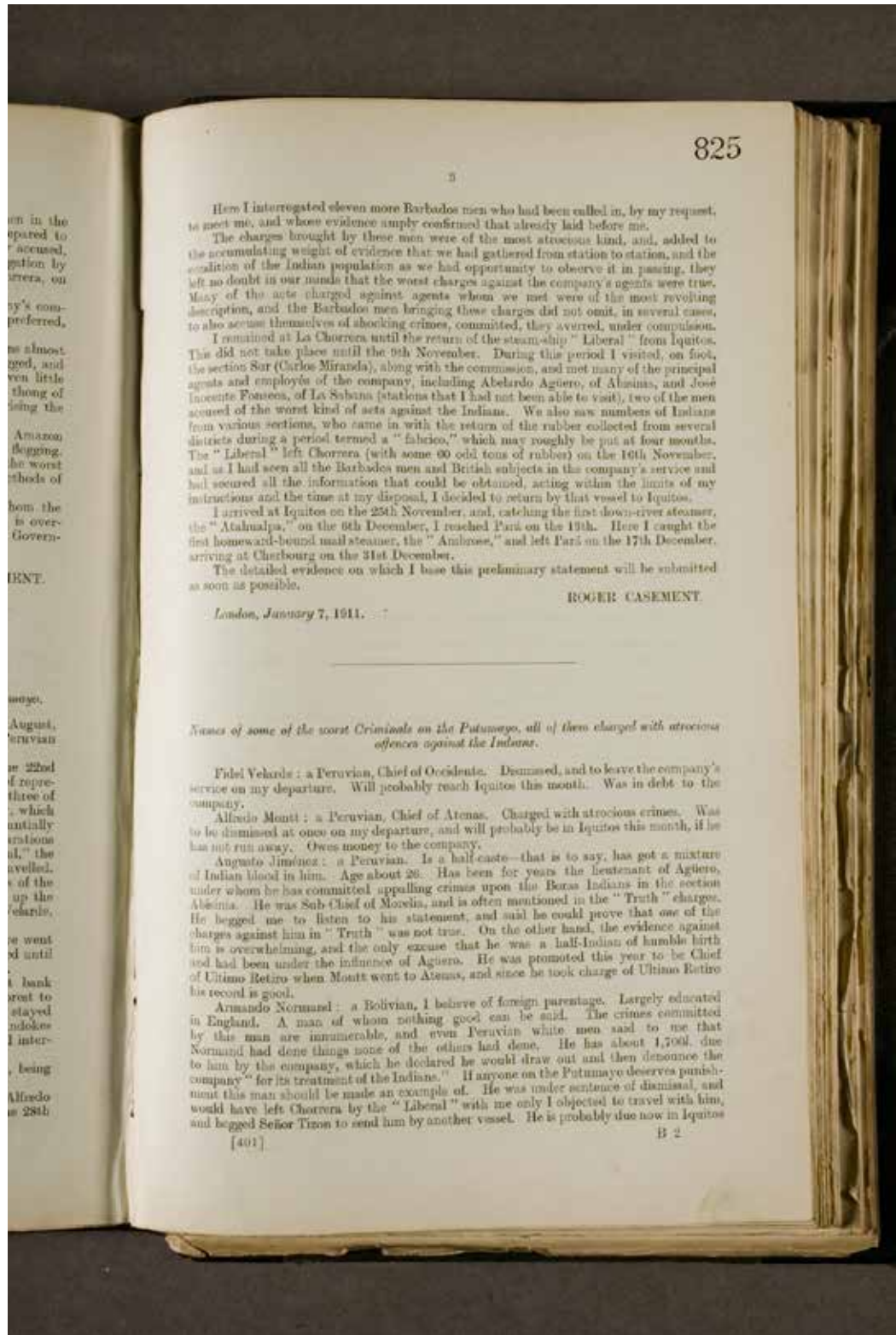
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Pages from the official published report by Casement on the treatment of workers in the rubber industry in the Putumayo basin in Peru, July 1912.

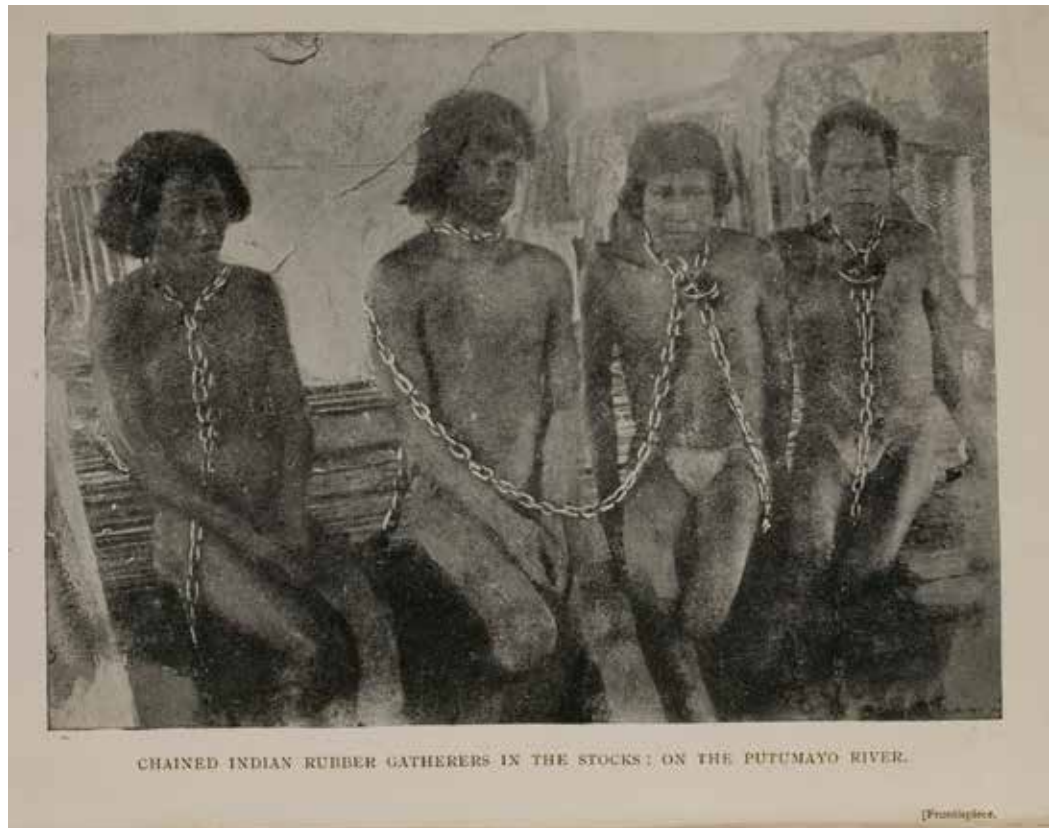


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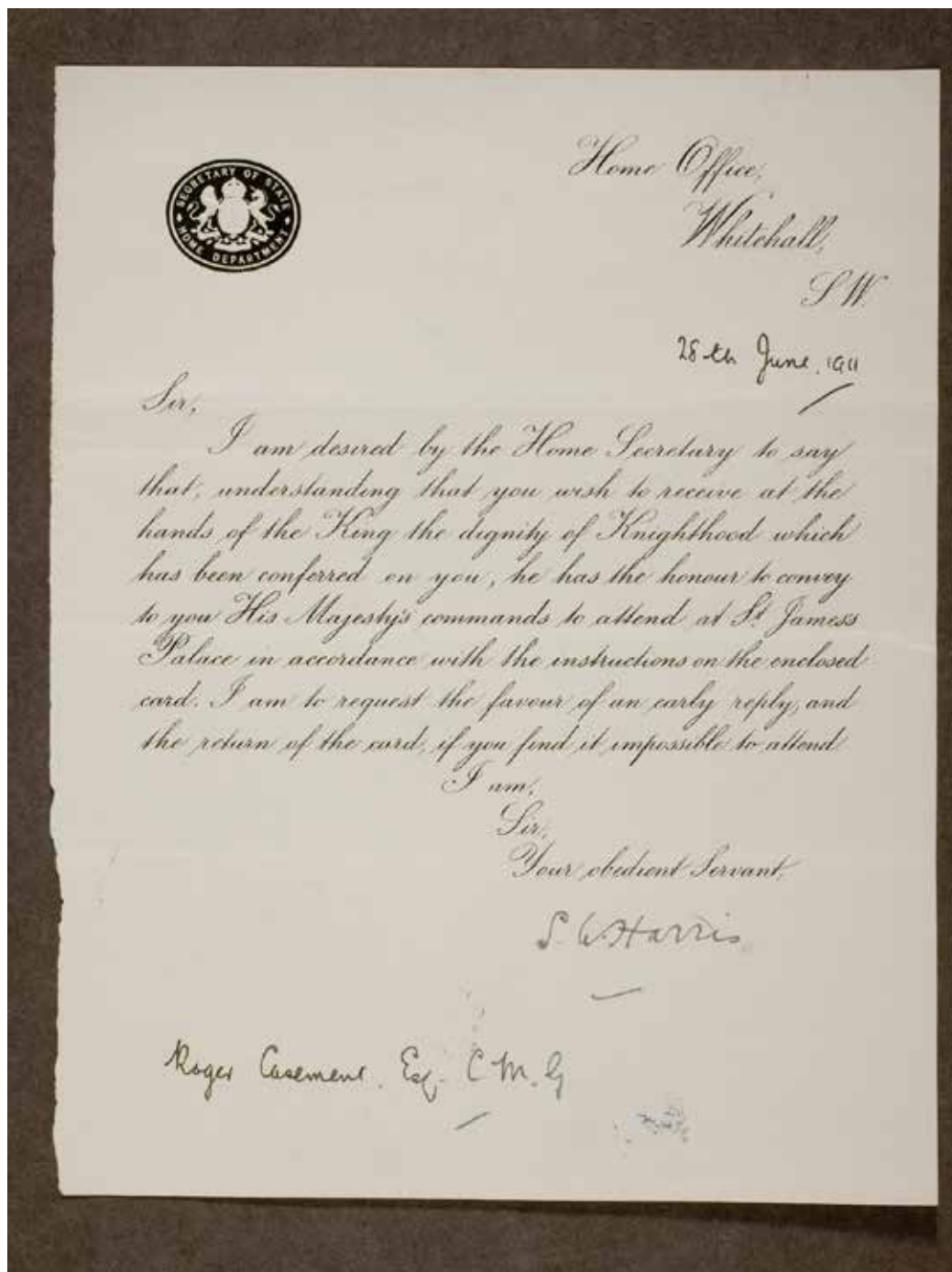
Pages from the official published report by Casement on the treatment of workers in the rubber industry in the Putumayo basin in Peru, July 1912.

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Indian rubber-gatherers in the stocks on the Putumayo. (From W.E. Hardenburg, *The Putumayo: The Devil's Paradise*, 1912).

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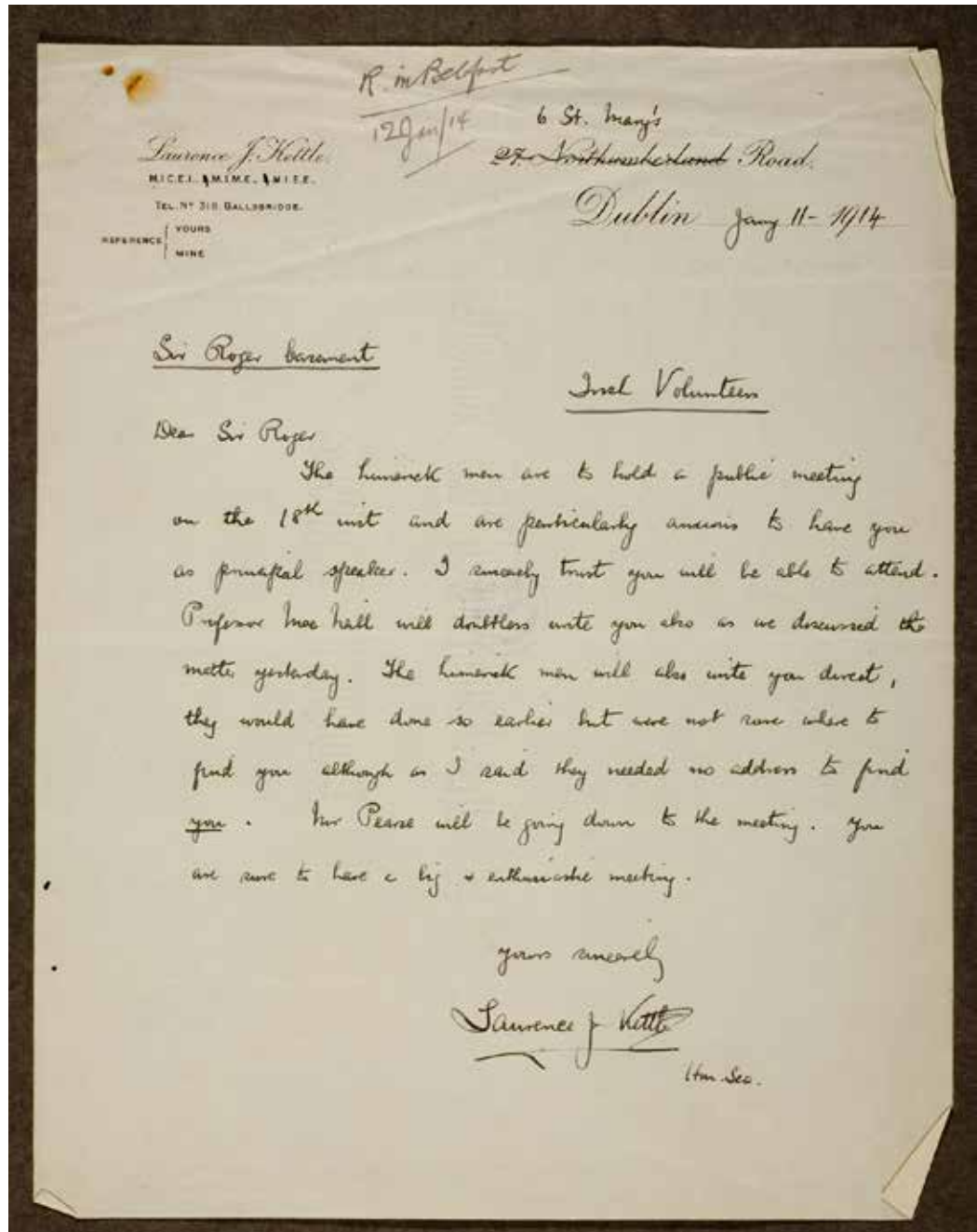
Invitation to Casement to attend for his knighthood, 28 June 1911. (Ms. 13,073).

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Casement in formal dress, possibly on the occasion of his knighthood.  
(Ms. 21,536, Biggar Papers).

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Invitation to Casement to address the Irish Volunteers in Limerick, 11 Jan. 1914.  
(Ms. 13,073(9)).



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SEE NOTICE AT BACK.  
 POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.  
 (Inland Telegrams.)

No. of Telegram

For Postage Stamps.  
 To be affixed by the Sender.  
 Any Stamp for which there is no room here  
 may be placed on the back of this form.

Office 27 July 1914

A Receipt for the Charges on this Telegram  
 can be obtained, price one Penny.

Prefix Code

Office of Origin and Service Instructions.

Philadelphia

Words.

Sent

At

By

Charge.

7.8 am

TO { MacNeill of Herbert Par. Dublin

When a reply is to be received,  
 the address must be "Reply To"  
 in the space below. These  
 words are not charged for.

12 words including the word in the address.

6 D. Every additional word.

1 1/2 D.

FROM {

Cable full particulars today events. Irish America has  
 blood as well as money gold to give to the cause of Irish freedom  
 and those killed today are the first of thousands prepared to die  
 for Ireland.

Casement 5412 Springfield Ave Philadelphia

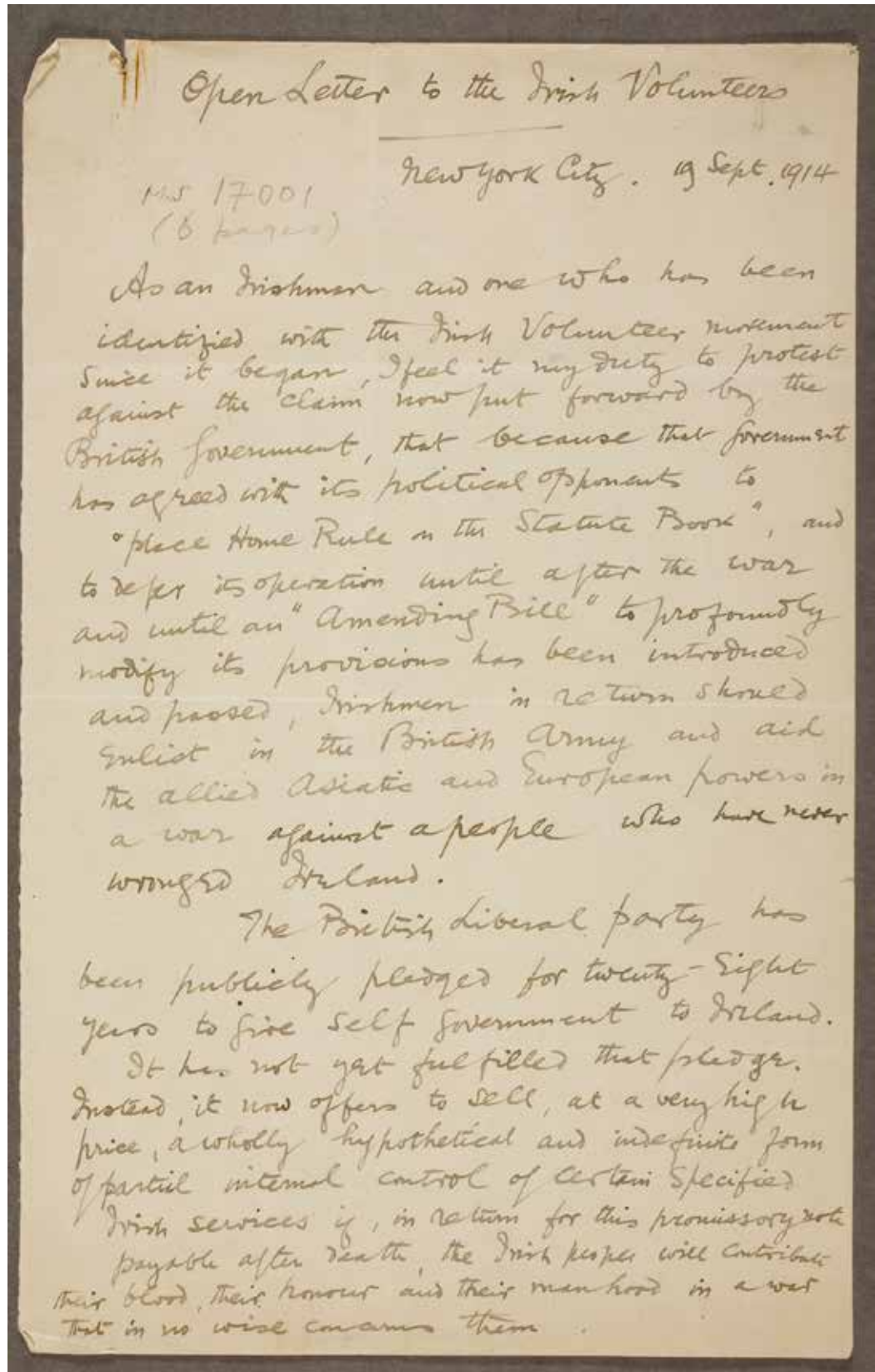
The Name and Address of the Sender, IF NOT TO BE TELEGRAPHED, should be written in the Space provided at the Back of the Form.

(This Paper Manufactured and Printed by McGOUGHDALE & CO. Limited.)

Wt. 2558 1402. 7.50/1000 11.12. Sch. 2

Telegram from Casement in Philadelphia to Eoin MacNeill requesting information regarding the shooting of people in Dublin by police and military following the landing of arms at Howth; 27 July 1914. (Ms. 13,174(6), Hobson Papers).

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Ireland has no quarrel with the German people or just cause of offence against them.

I will not pronounce an opinion upon the British standpoint in this war, beyond saying that the public protestations under which it was begun, namely to defend the violated neutrality of Belgium, is being daily controverted by the official spokesmen of Great Britain.

The London Times, in its issue of the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. declared that Great Britain would not consent to peace on any terms that did not involve the "dismantling of the German Navy" and the permanent impairment of Germany's place in the world as a great sea-faring nation. That may or may not be a worthy end for British Statecraft to set before it and a warrant for the use of British arms against Germany, but it is no warrant for Irish honour or common sense to be involved in this conflict. There is no gain, moral or material, Ireland can draw from assailing Germany. The destruction of the German Navy or the sweeping of German commerce from the seas will bring no profit to a people whose own commerce was long since swept from land and sea.

Ireland has no blood to give to any



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land, to any Cause but that of Ireland.

Our duty as a Christian people is to abstain from bloodshed; and our duty as Irishmen is to give our lives for Ireland. Ireland needs all her sons. In the space of sixty eight years her population has fallen by far over 4,000,000 souls and in every particular of national life she shows a steady decline of vitality. Were the Home Rule Bill all that is claimed for it and were it freely given today, to come into operation tomorrow, instead of being offered for sale on terms ~~that~~ of exchange that only a fool would accept, it would be the duty of Irishmen to save their strength and manhood for the trying tasks before them, to build up from a depleted population the fabric of a united national life.

Ireland has suffered at the hands of British administrators a more prolonged series of trials, deliberately inflicted, than any other community of civilized men.

Today, when no margin of vital strength remains for vital tasks at home, when its fertile fields are reduced by set design to producing animals and not men, the

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Remnant of our people are being urged to lay down their lives on foreign fields, in order that great and inordinately wealthy communities may grow greater and richer by the destruction of a rivals' trade and industry.

Had this been the highest moral aim in view, as its originators claim for it, it would still be the duty of Irishmen to keep out of it.

If Irish blood is to be "the seal that will bring all Ireland together in one nation and in liberties equal and common to all" then let that blood be shed in Ireland where alone it can be righteously shed to secure those liberties. It was not Germany destroyed the national liberties of the Irish people and we cannot recover the national life struck down in our own land by carrying fire and sword into another land.

The Cause of Ireland is greater than the Cause of any party; higher than the worth of any man; richer in its poverty than all the riches of Empire. If we sell it now we are unworthy of the name of Irishmen.

If today we barter that Cause in a sordid bargain, we shall prove ourselves a people unworthy of freedom — a dwindling



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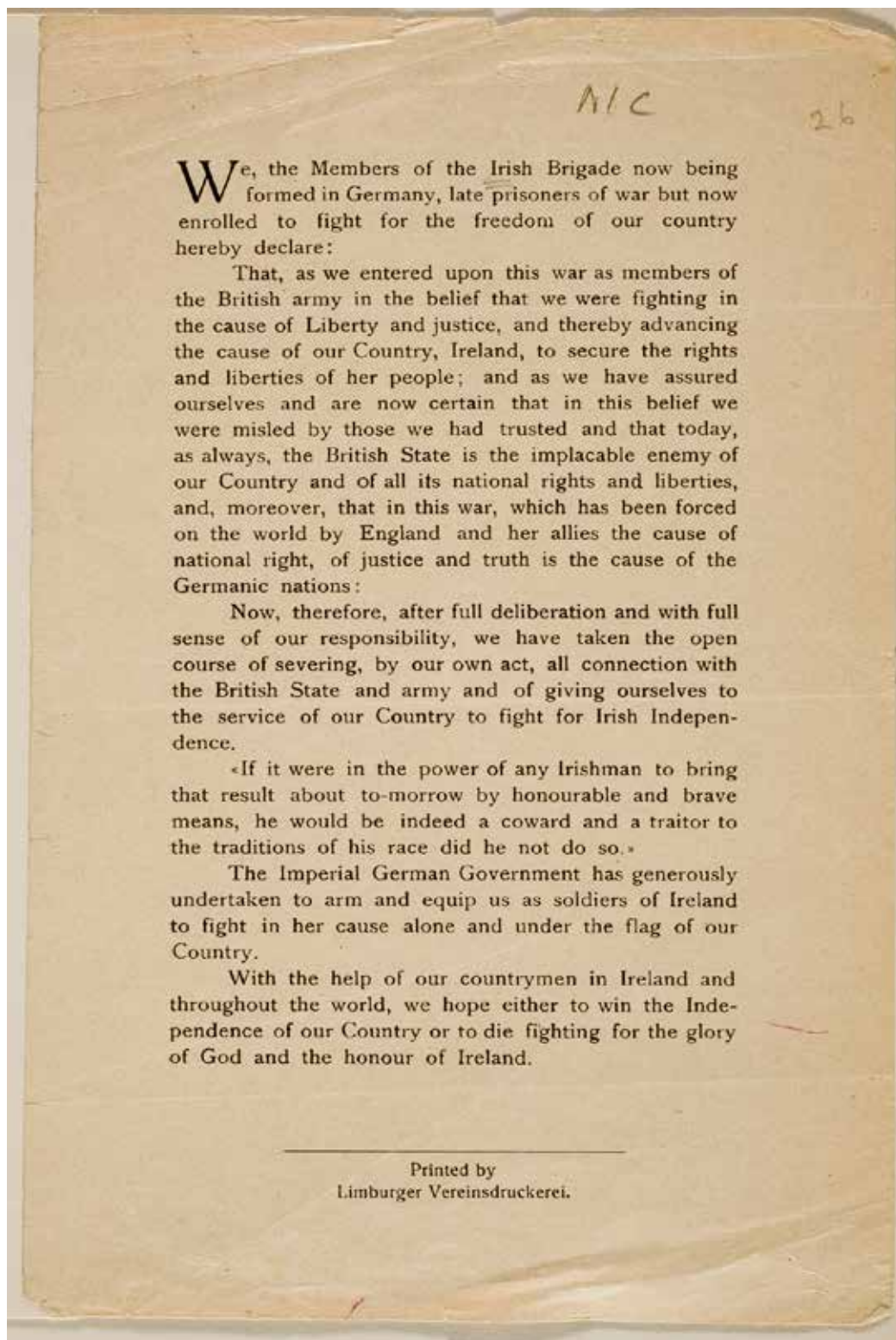
Race of cravens from whose veins the blood  
of manhood has been drained. If to now  
fight is our duty, then let us fight on that  
soil where so many generations of their Irishmen  
lie in honour and fame. Let our graves  
be in that patriot grass whence alone the  
corpse of Irish nationality can spring to life.

Ireland will be "false to her  
history, to every consideration of honour, good  
faith and self interest" if she now willingly  
responds to the call of the British Government  
to send her brave sons and faithful hearts to  
fight in a cause that has no glint of  
chivalry or gleam of generosity in all  
its line of battle. If this be a war  
for the small "nationalities", as its planners  
term it, then let it begin, for one small  
nationality at home.

Speaking as one of those who helped to found  
the Irish Volunteers I say, in their name, that no  
Irishman fit to bear arms in the cause of his  
country's freedom can join the allied millions  
now attacking Germany in a war that at the  
best, concerns Ireland not at all and that can  
only add fresh burdens and establish a new  
drain, in the interest of another community upon  
a people that has already been bled to the verge  
of death.

Robert Casement

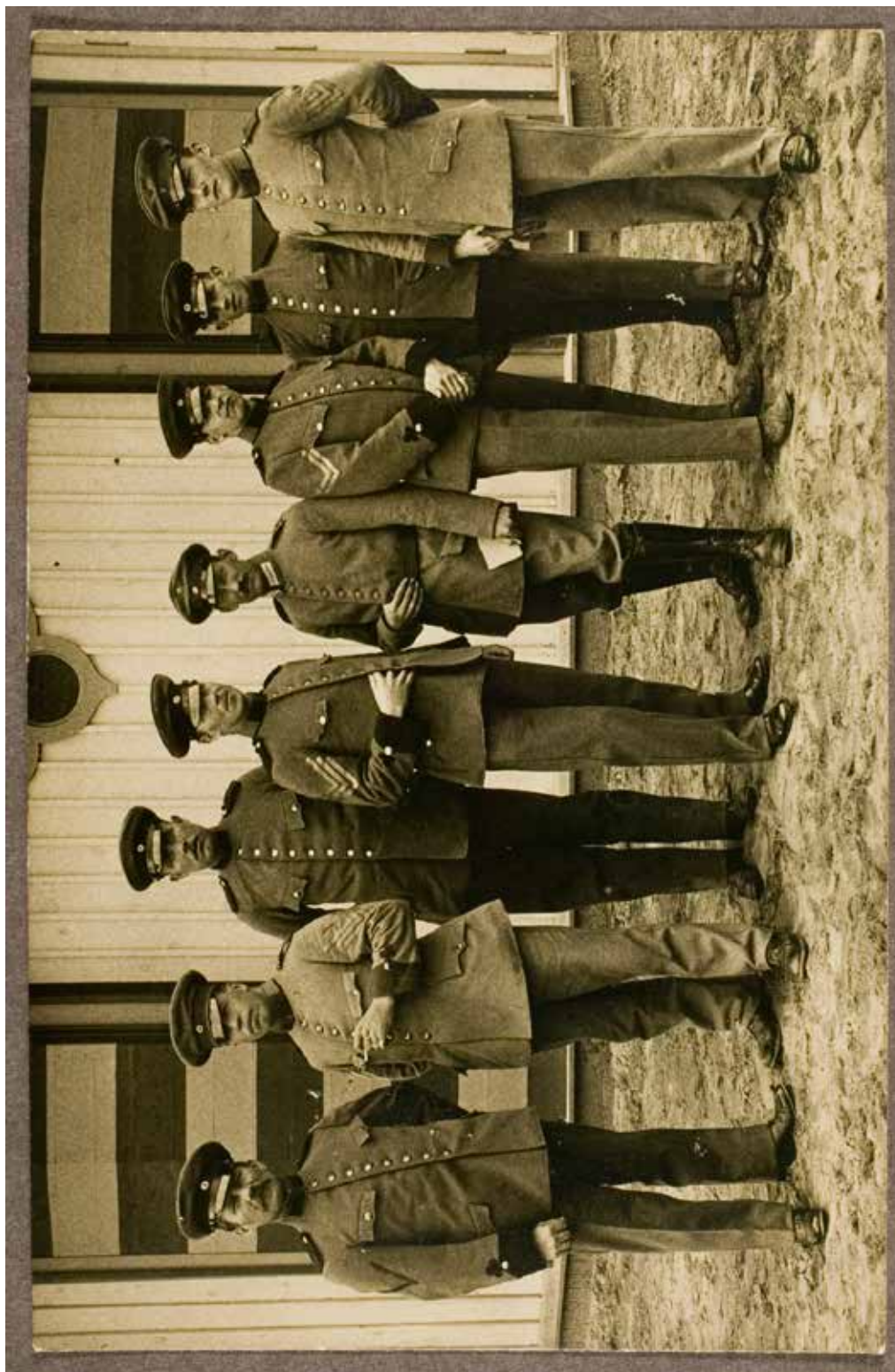
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Printed text of declaration by members of Casement's Irish brigade in Germany; the text was drafted by Joseph Plunkett.



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Non-commissioned officers of Casement's Irish brigade at Zossen, Germany, 1915.  
From left: Corporal Peter Golden, Sergeant-Major Keogh, Corporal O'Mahony, Sergeant Daniel Julian Bailey (alias Beverley), Interpreter Zerhussen, Corporal Kavanagh, Corporal O'Callaghan and Quartermaster-Sergeant H. Quinlisk. (Ms. 18,081(10)).

THE DAILY MIRROR, Wednesday, July 19, 1916.

FURTHER PROGRESS BY THE BRITISH NORTH OF OVILLERS

# The Daily Mirror

CERTIFIED CIRCULATION LARGER THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER DAILY PICTURE PAPER

No. 3,974      Shipping at the Docks at a Glance      WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1916      One Halfpenny.

ROGER CASEMENT'S APPEAL FAILS: "HE WAS THE KING'S LIEGE WHEREVER HE MIGHT BE."



Casement, seated in the dock, during the appeal case concerning



Sir John Sullivan, who was complimented by the judges in his speech.



Casement, escorted by a soldier, leaving the court after his appeal had been dismissed.

The five Judges forming the Court of Criminal Appeal yesterday dismissed Roger Casement's appeal against his conviction for high treason without the trial. He was the King's liege, wherever he might be, and he might confer his allegiance to a foreign power and act so as to make trouble in this country, said Mr. Justice Darling in

dealing with the main plea raised by Sir John Sullivan, Casement's counsel, who addressed the Court for about seven hours. He argued that the statute of Edward III under which Casement was indicted, did not purport to legislate for any treason that was against the King's person.

The reference to 'the king's liege' in the Daily Mirror relates to Casement's unsuccessful defence that as his actions took place outside the area of the king's jurisdiction they did not constitute treason.



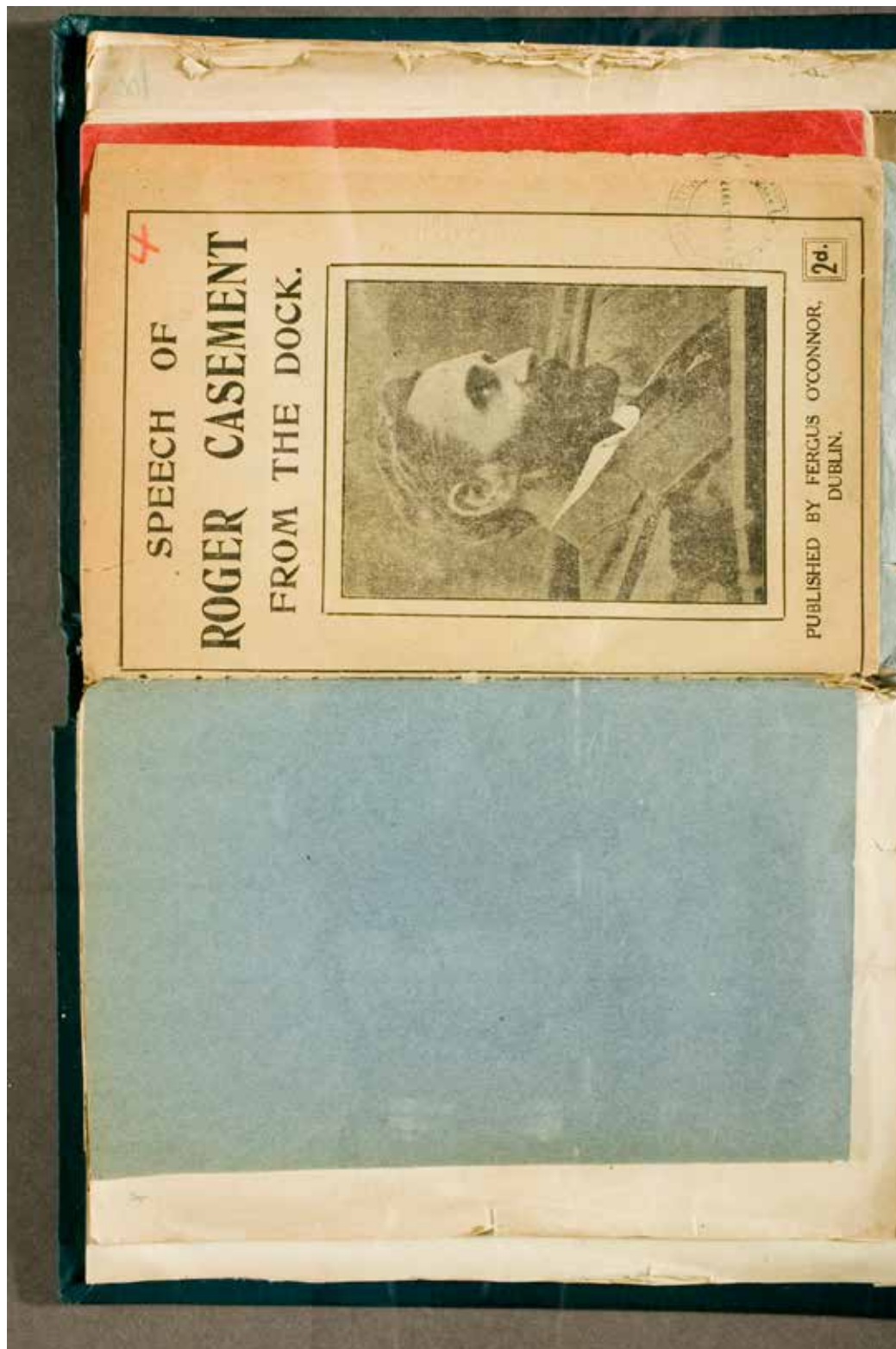
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New York Freeman's Journal: Casement's reputation as a humanitarian was such that his trial and sentence made international news.

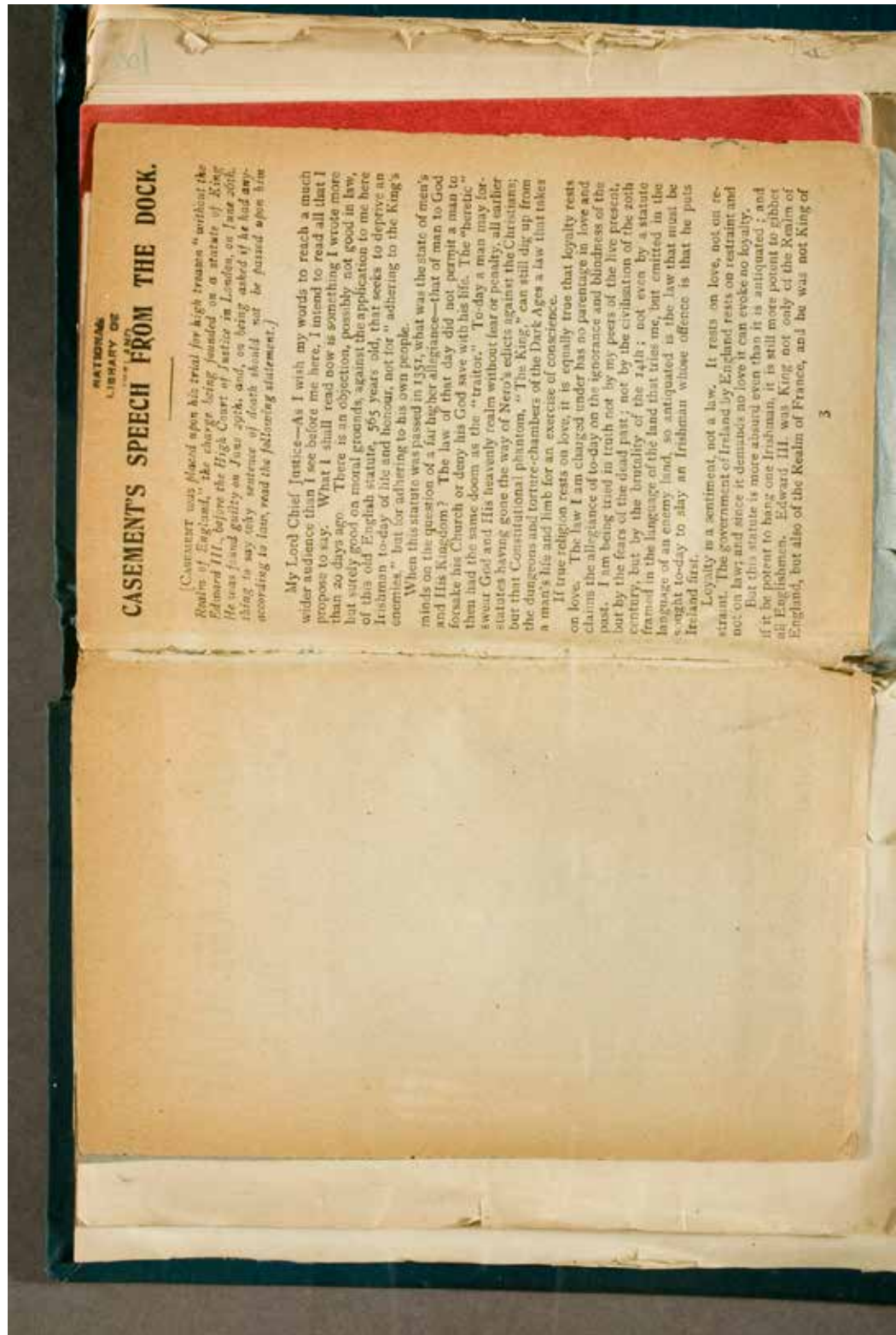


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One of many printed editions of Casement's speech from the dock; undated but probably 1916.

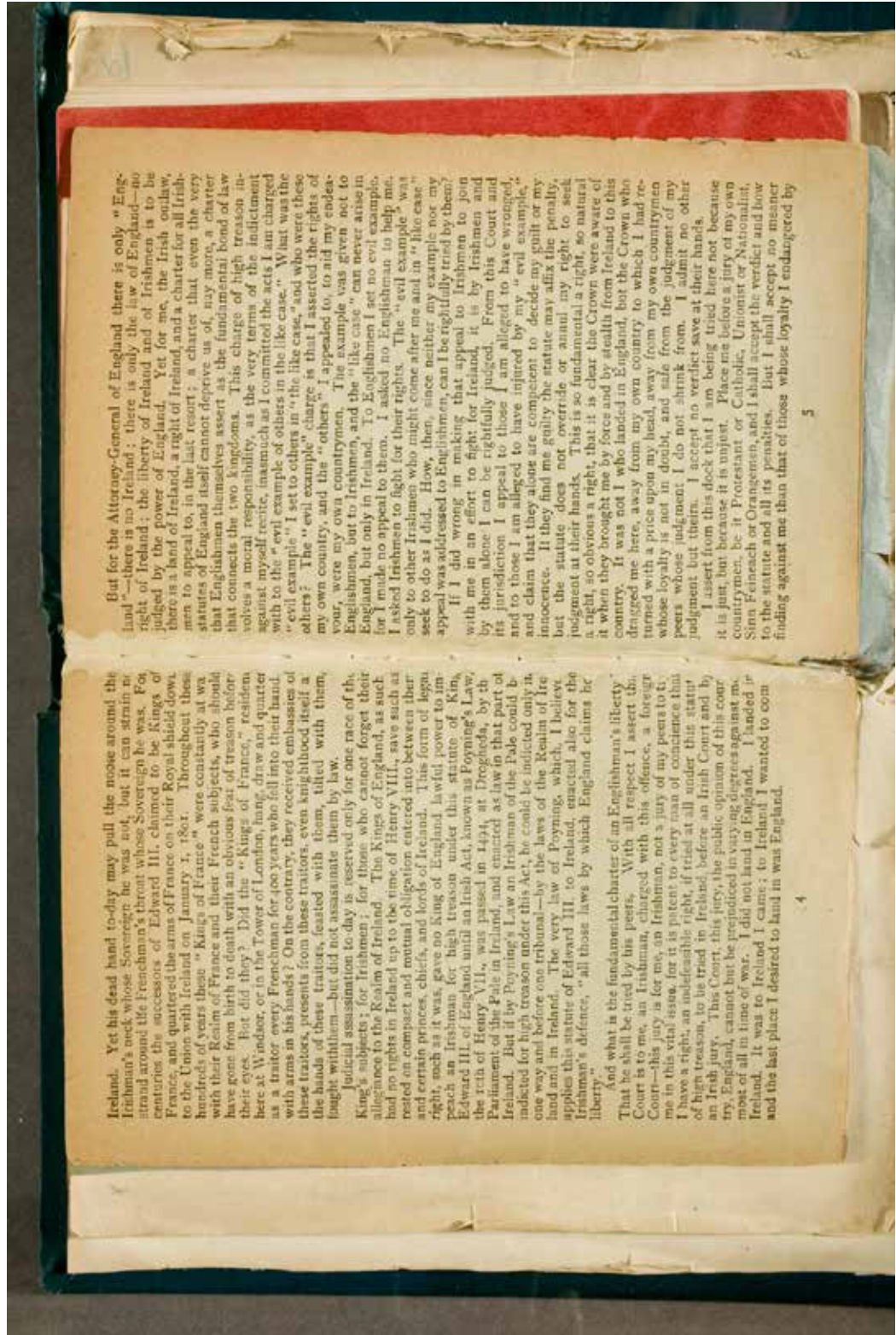
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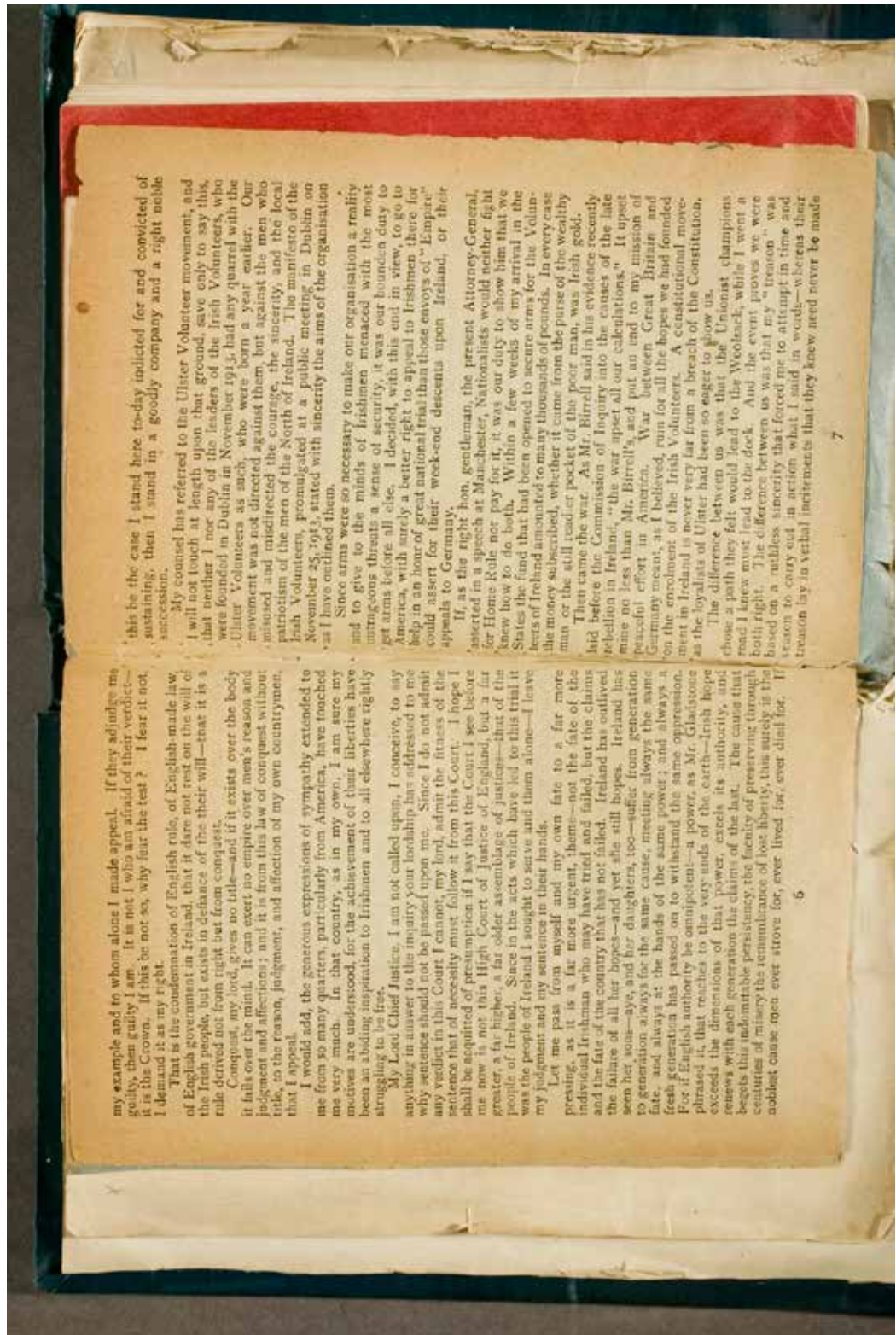


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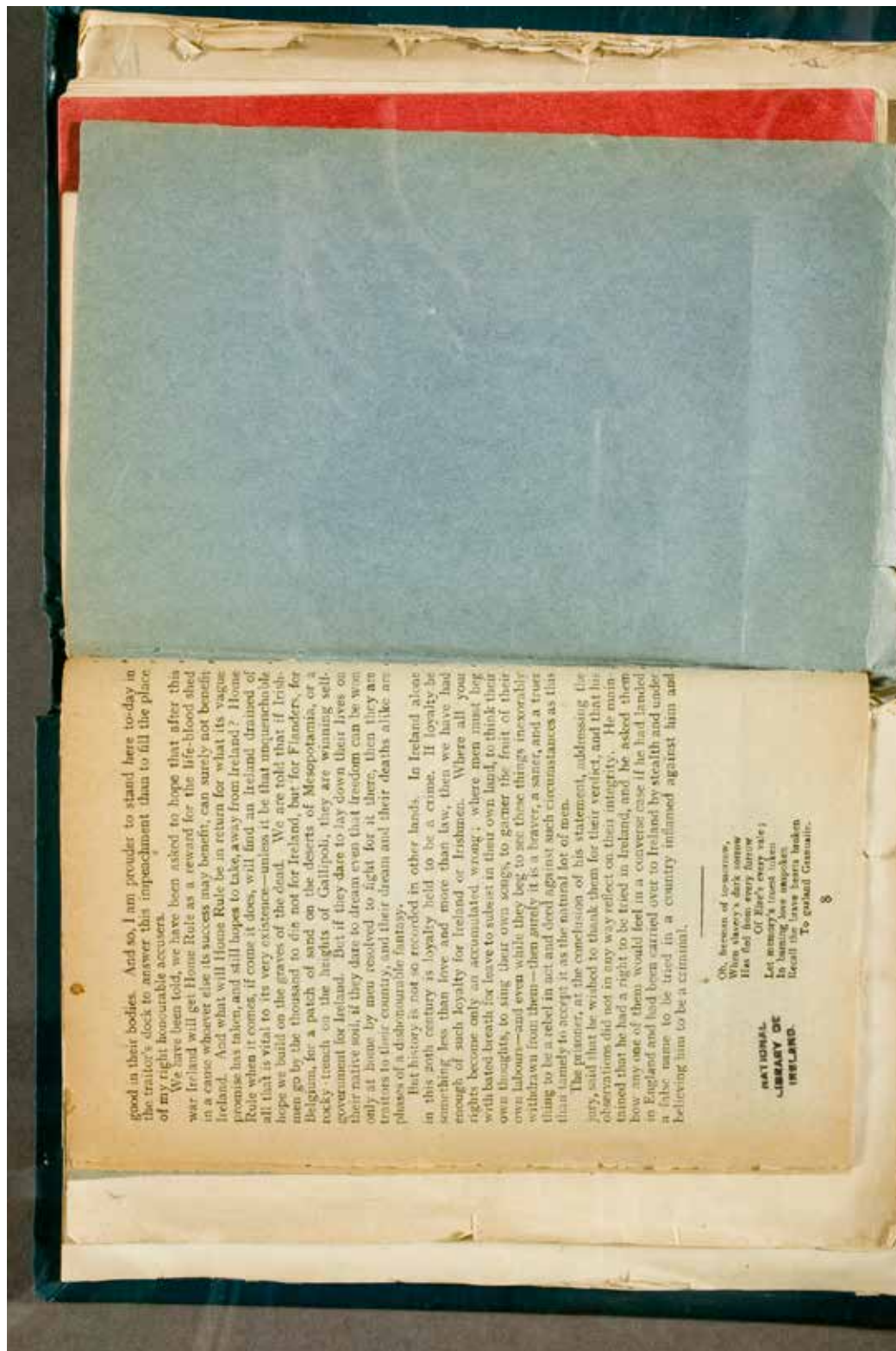
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