



3.0 Those who Set the Stage

3.3 Those with other agenda: Sinn Féin and the labour movement

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army

Larkin contributed indirectly to the Rising by highlighting the lack of social justice and the plight of workers in the current system. He also made a direct contribution by establishing the Irish Citizen Army.

James ('Big Jim') Larkin (1874-1947) was born in Liverpool of Irish parents. He worked as an organiser for the National Union of Dock Labourers in Liverpool and from 1907 to 1909 in Belfast. The Belfast branch was badly organised and bedeviled by sectarianism. By means of his organisational ability and fiery oratory Larkin revitalised the union. When the employers attempted to curb its power by means of a lockout and the use of 'blackleg' labour, the British leadership of the union capitulated. Larkin was transferred to Dublin, where he established the National Union of Dock Labourers.

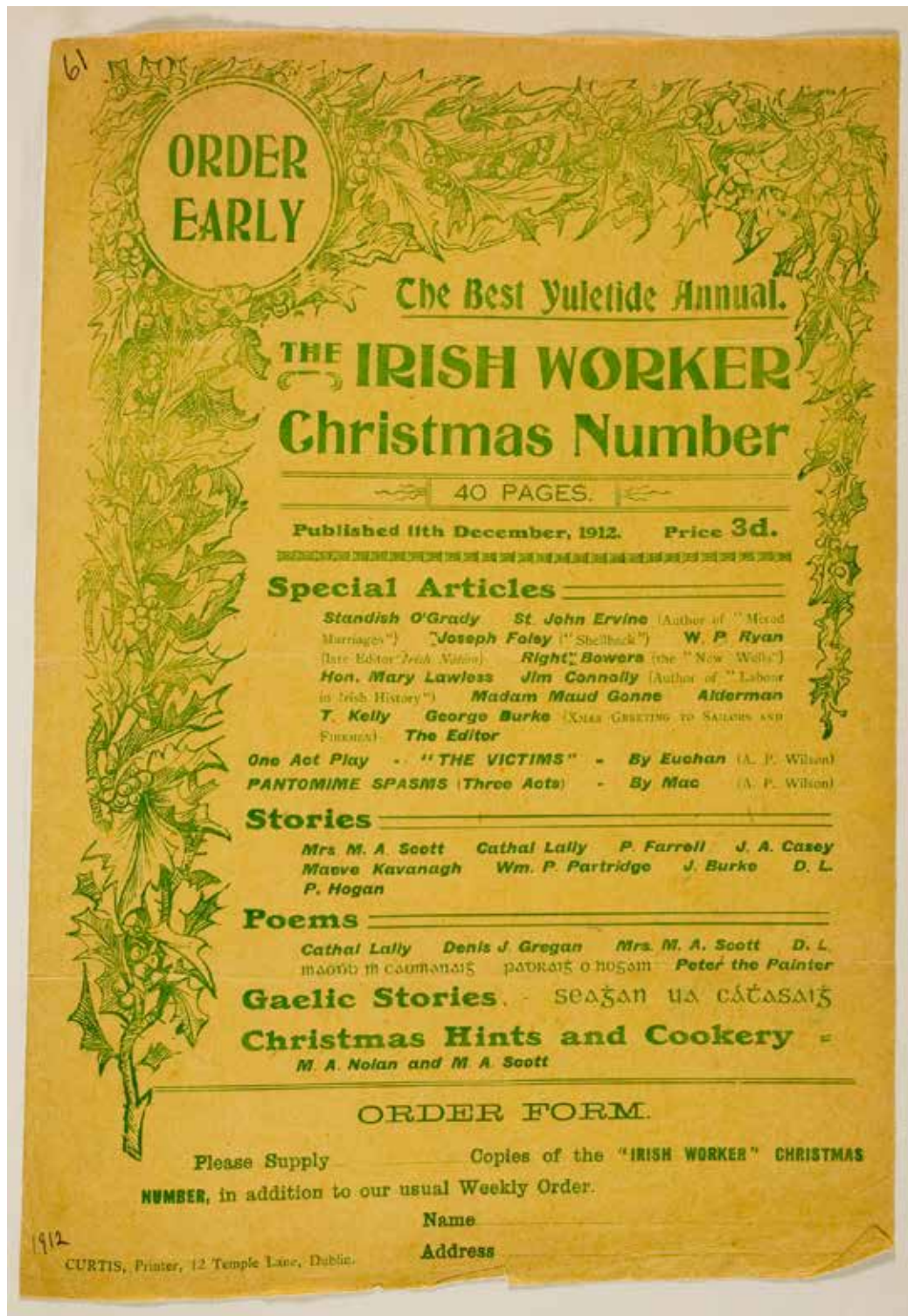
Larkin's militant approach to labour relations in Dublin resulted in his suspension by the union leadership. He then formed the Irish Transport & General Workers Union. In May 1911 he published the newspaper the Irish Worker, which savaged capitalism, imperialism, employers and the Irish Parliamentary Party, being eventually suppressed for its anti-war policy. His use of strikes brought him directly into conflict with employers. In 1913 in response to his demands for discussions on wages and conditions, almost four hundred employers combined as the Employers' Federation. The Federation organized the lockout of those workers who would

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army

not undertake not to join a union. Over 20,000 workers (with 80,000 dependants) were involved. There was considerable strife, including a notorious baton charge by police on workers and by-standers on O'Connell Street. Larkin was imprisoned for a period.

On 19 November, 1913 Larkin and James Connolly established the Irish Citizen Army as a force to protect workers from the excesses of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. It had a membership of about 350, the majority being members of unions. The force had a distinctive uniform and trained openly; some arms were secretly acquired and held at the ITGWU headquarters at Liberty Hall, near the Custom House. Following the capitulation of the workers and Larkin's departure for the United States early in 1914, the ICA remained in existence. Connolly acted as commandant; at a later stage Michael Mallin, who led the force in the 1916 Rising, became chief of staff.

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



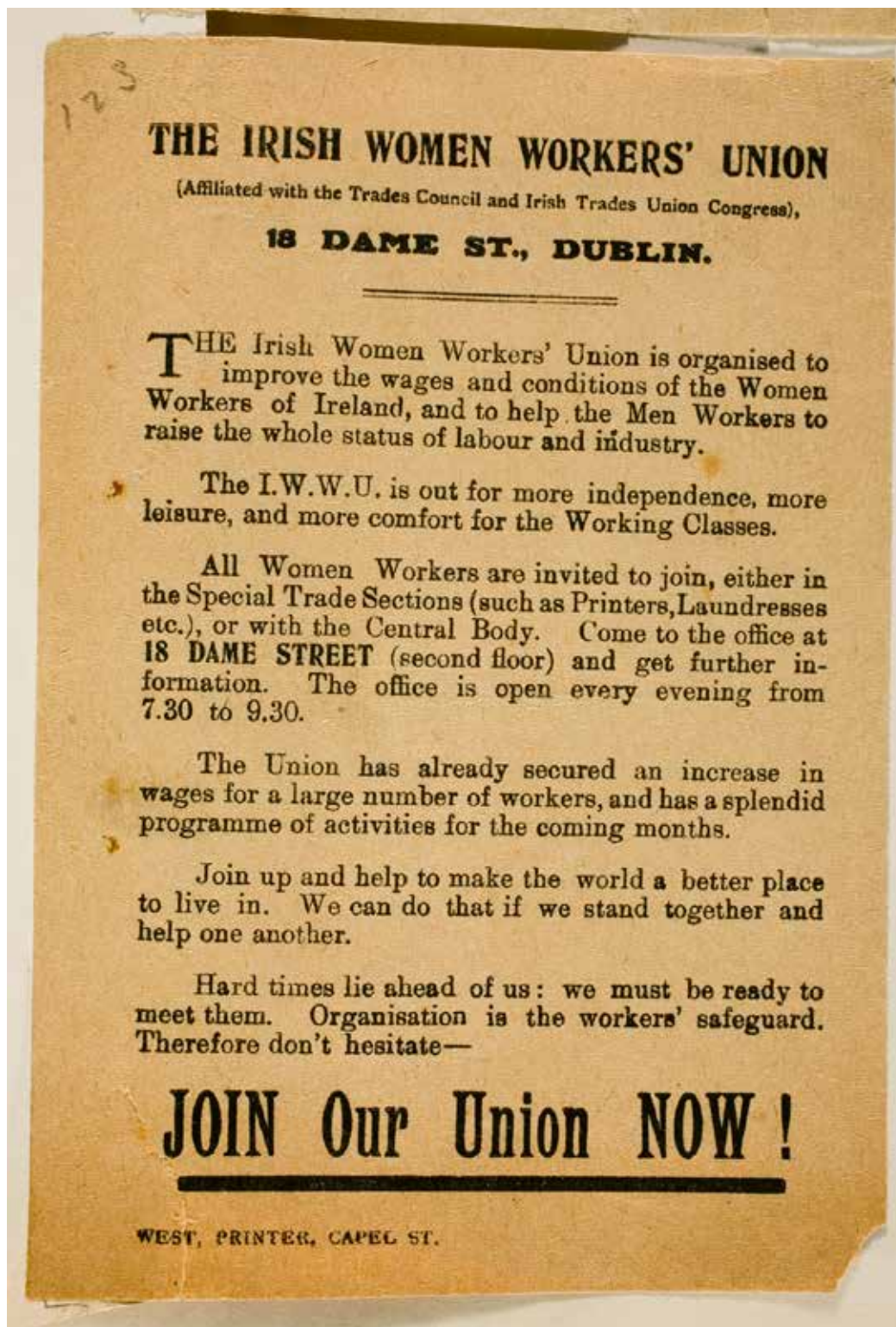
Advertisement for the Irish Worker which Larkin launched in June 1911. The paper lambasted slum landlords, sweat-shop employers, lying journalists and corrupt politicians; the Christmas number was more in a literary vein.

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



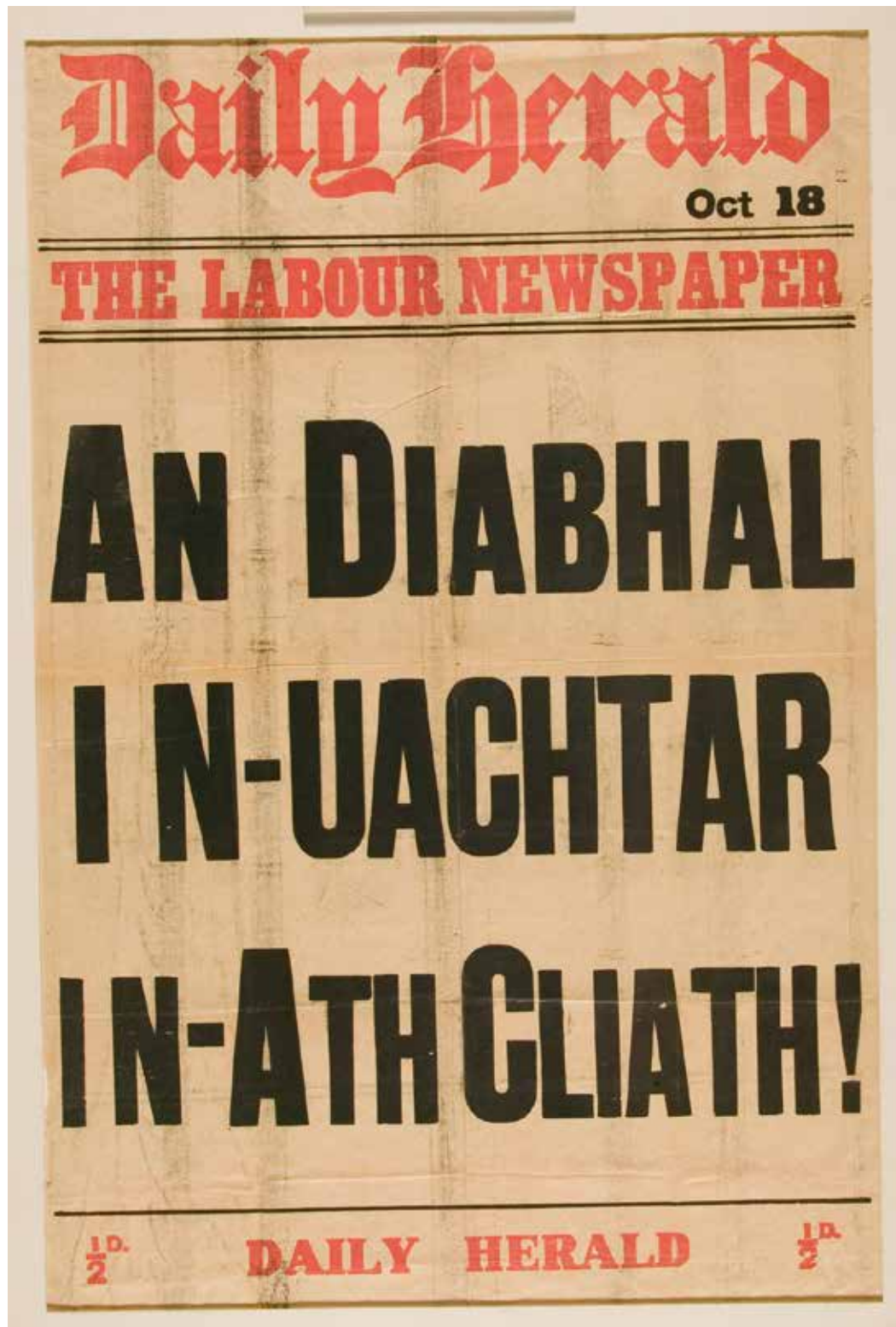
Liberty Hall, Dublin; Larkin and the ITGWU moved to Liberty Hall in 1912. The banner recommends the Irish Worker, 'the only labour paper in Ireland'. (Keogh 202).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



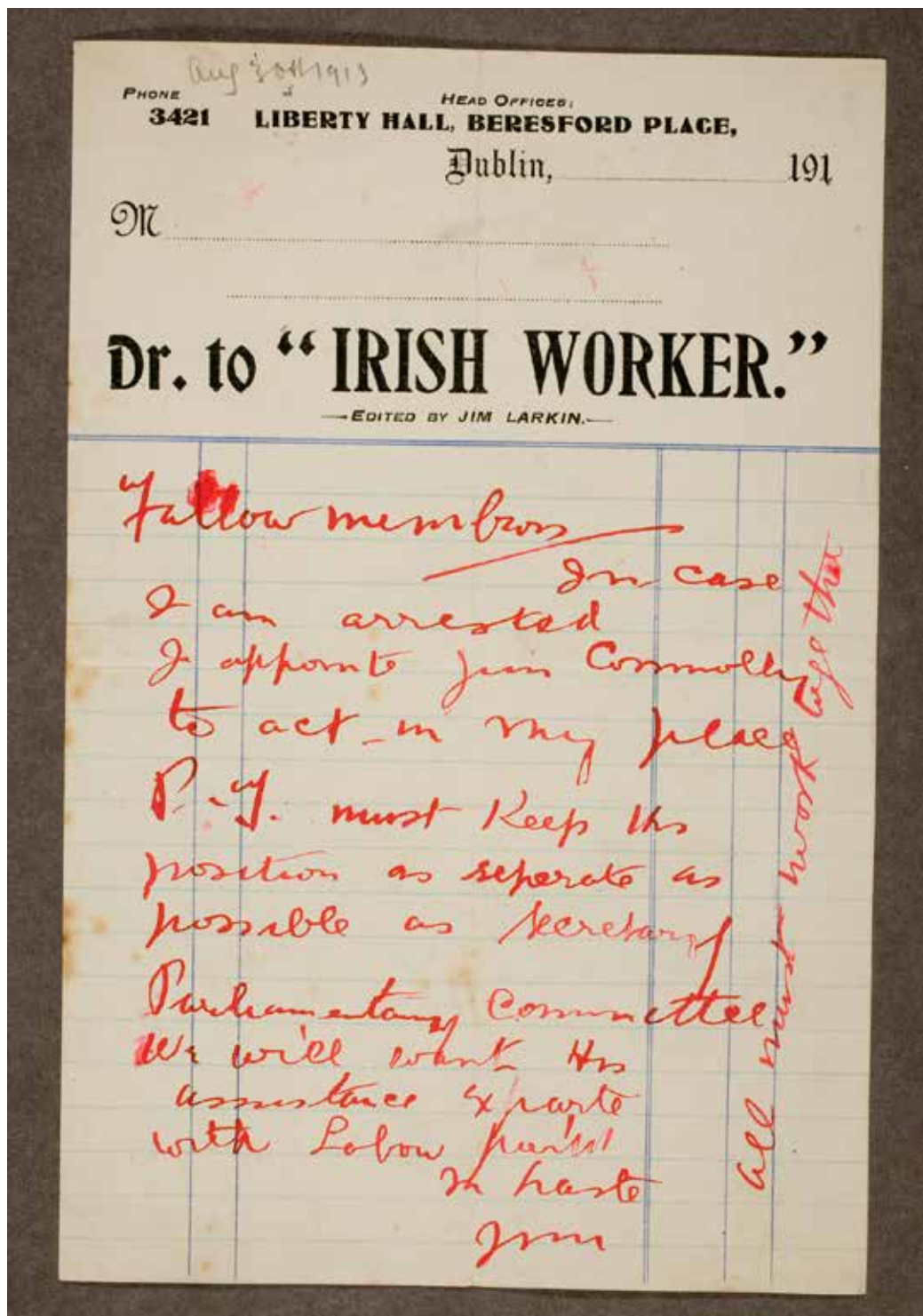
The Irish Women Workers' Union was launched in Sept. 1911 with Larkin as president and his sister Delia as secretary. (LOP 113/123).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



Billboard referring to the 1913 lock-out: 'the devil has the upper hand in Dublin'. (Proclamations).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



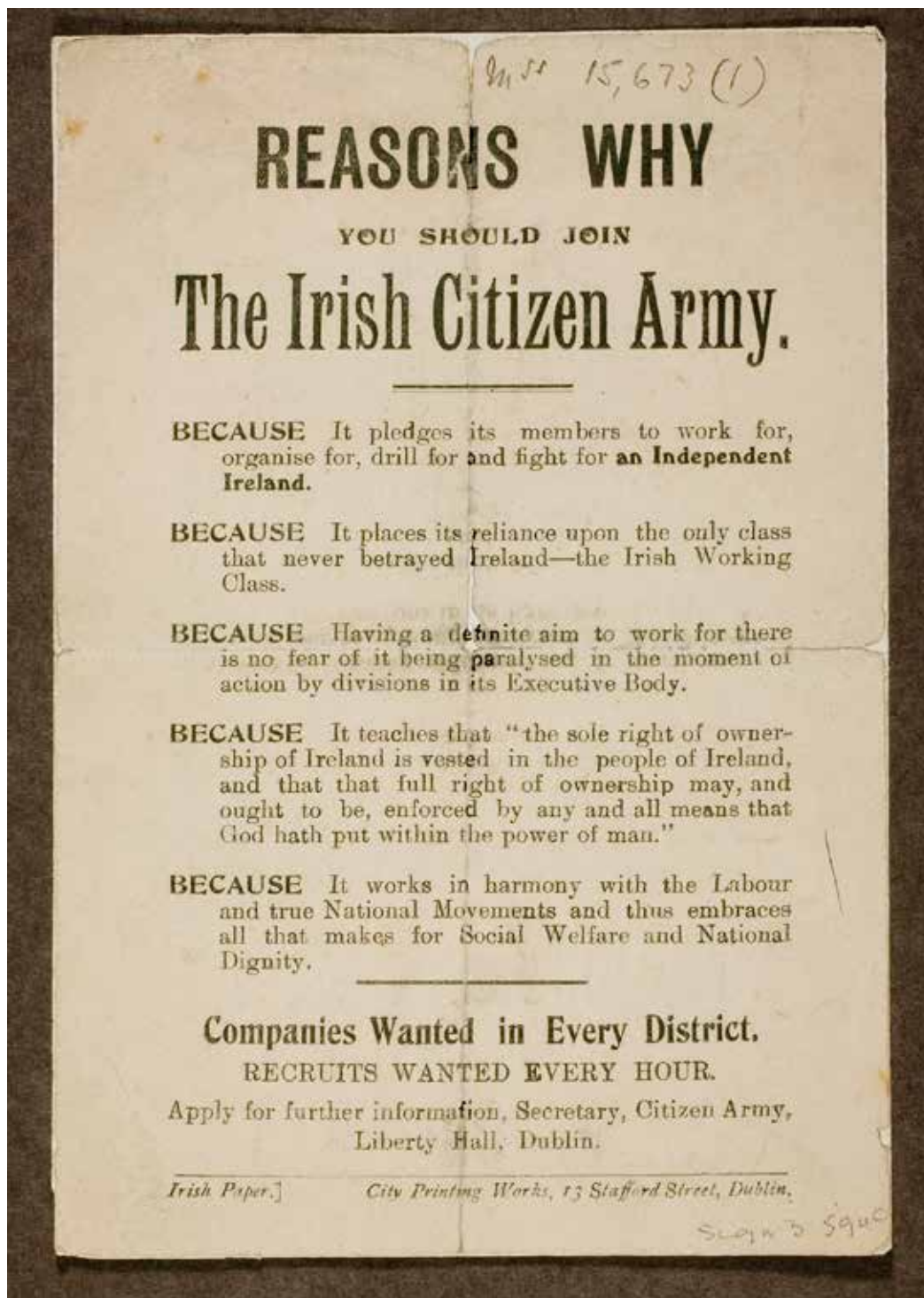
Letter by Larkin appointing James Connolly in his place if he were to be arrested, 30 Aug. 1913. (Ms. 15,679).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



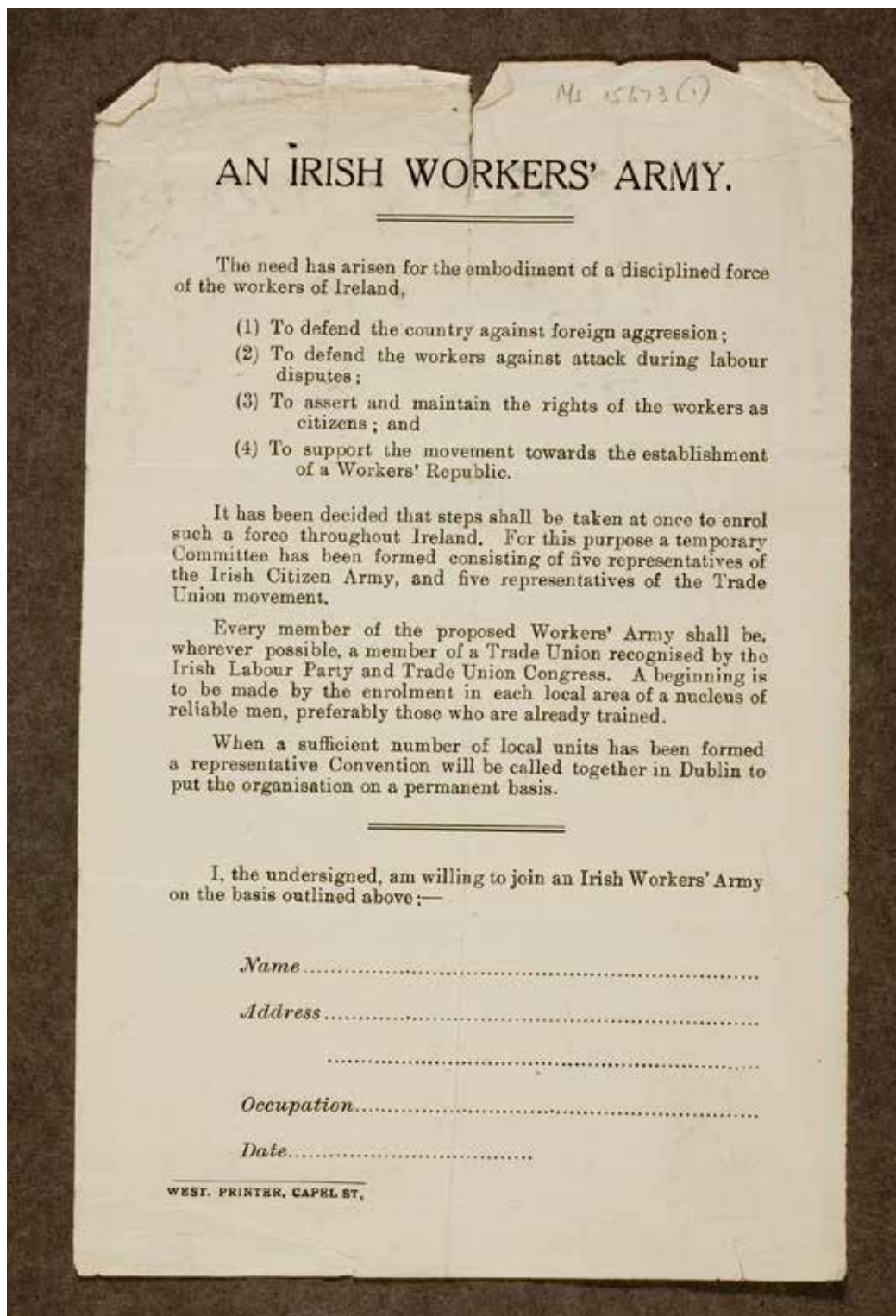
Larkin addressing a crowd in Manchester. (Evening Herald, 15 Sept. 1913).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



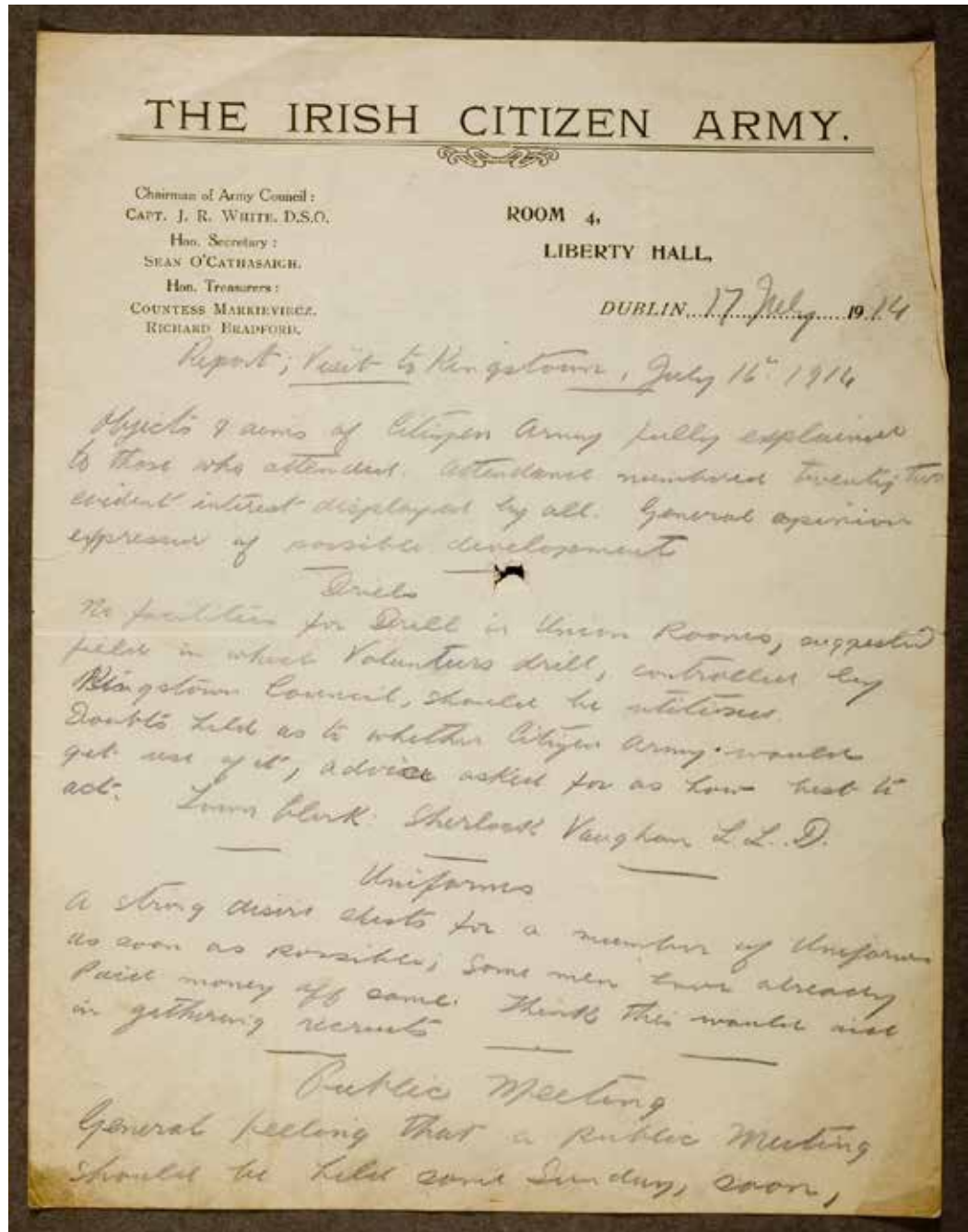
Advertisement for the Irish Citizen Army. (Ms. 15,673).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



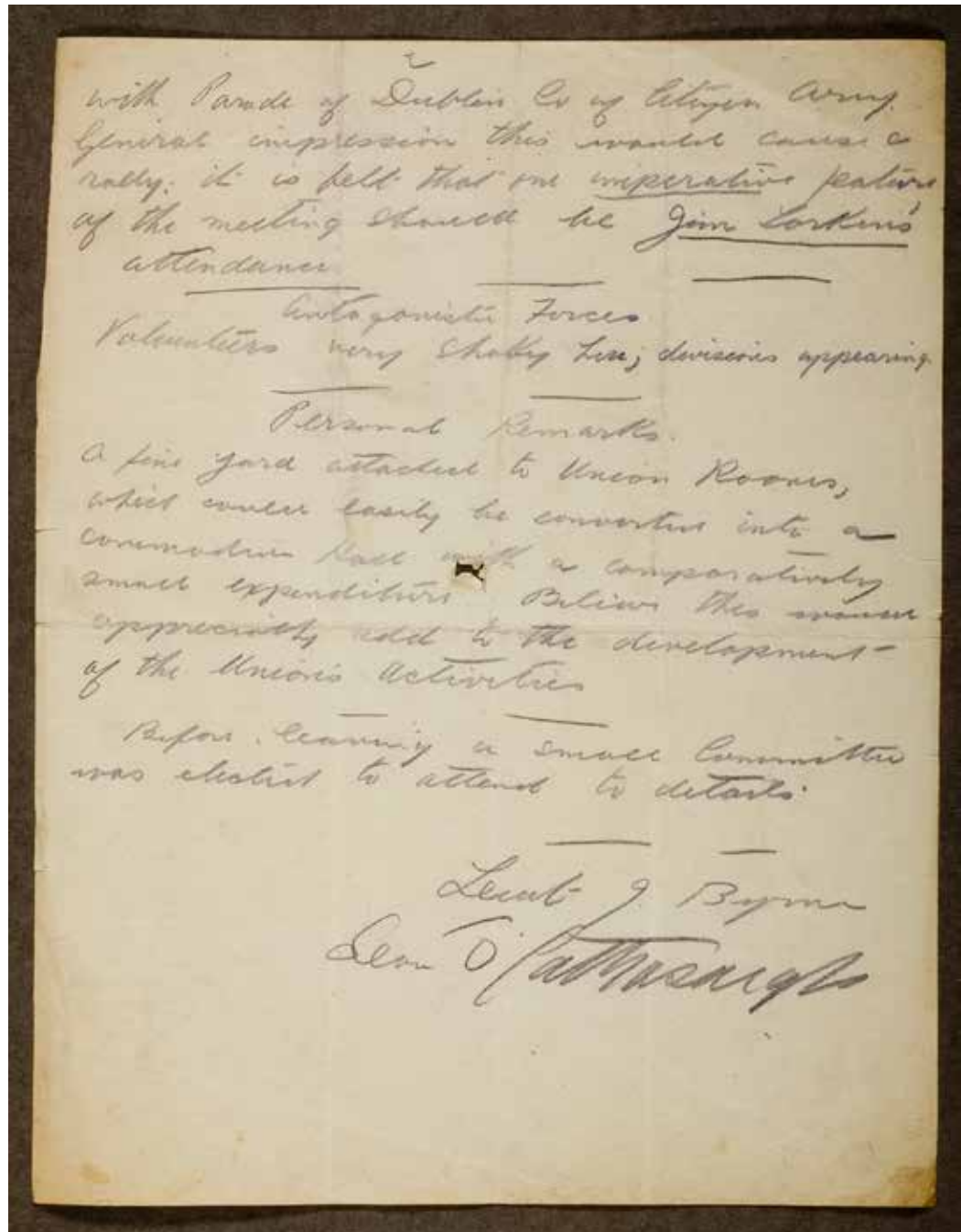
Advertisement for the Irish Citizen Army. (Ms. 15,673).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



Report on a visit by the Irish Citizen Army to Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin). The signatory Sean Ó Cathasaigh was the playwright Sean O'Casey, who was secretary for a period. (Ms. 15,673/2).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army



Report on a visit by the Irish Citizen Army to Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin). The signatory Sean Ó Cathasaigh was the playwright Sean O'Casey, who was secretary for a period. (Ms. 15,673/2).

3.3.2 Jim Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army

Transcript

The Irish Citizen Army

Objects and aims of Citizen Army fully explained to those attending. Attendance numbered twenty-two. Evident interest displayed by all. General opinion expressive of possible development.

Drill

No facilities for drill in Union rooms, suggested field in which Volunteers drill, controlled by Kingstown Council, should be utilised. Doubts held as to whether Citizen Army would get use of it, advice asked for as how best to act. Tom Clark: Sherlock, Vaughan L.L.D.

Uniforms

A strong desire exists for a number of uniforms as soon as possible. Some men have already paid money off same. Think this would aid in gathering recruits.

Public Meeting

General feeling that a public meeting should be held some Sunday, soon, with parade of Dublin Company of Citizen Army. General impression this would cause a rally. It is felt that one imperative feature of the meeting should be Jim Larkin's attendance.

Antagonistic Forces

Volunteers very shaky here, divisions appearing.

Personal Remarks

A fine yard attached to Union Rooms, which could easily be converted into a commodious hall with a comparatively small expenditure. Believe this would appreciably add to the development of the Union's activities.

Before leaving a small committee was elected to attend to details.

Lieut. J Byrne, Sean Ó Cathasaigh.