

# Friends of Irish Freedom Hark Back to Clan-na-Gael

## Taint of "Who Killed Cronin?" Found in Organization Whose Propaganda Has Become Hopelessly Associated With Pro-Germanism in the U. S.

By John J. Leary, Jr.

Carlyle, I think it was, once declared that a pair of crickets in the barnyard could be depended upon to make more noise than all of the cattle in the barn. I am reminded of the remark by the activities of the so-called Friends of Irish Freedom.

Nominally this organization is little more than a year old. Actually it is much older, for it is nothing more nor less than the recrudescence of the old Physical Force party, which reached the apex of its power when Lord Cavendish and Mr. Burke were murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin, back in the early '80s. The Physical Force party at that time was loosely organized, but led and controlled by a most compact organization, with branches the world over—the Clan-na-Gael.

**They Fought Parnell**

This organization, its members and its followers were ever the opponents of those of the Irish people who sought remedy for the wrongs of their land through educational and parliamentary action. They bitterly opposed Sir Isaac Butt, the father of the modern Home Rule movement, and they as bitterly fought Parnell, just as John Redmond and his associates are being fought today.

The immediate effect of the Phoenix Park tragedy was a set-back to the Home Rule movement. It was followed by numerous dynamite outrages in England, financed in the main from this country and often executed by men sent abroad for that purpose. To finance these expeditions large sums were collected in this country, and to this day it is an open scandal among the older Irishmen that much of this money never reached the object for which it was intended—was, in plain words, deliberately stolen. The system of collections and disbursements was necessarily loosely written. Records of such things are too dangerous to keep. This state of affairs made easy the work of the grafter and the "professional Irishman," whose sole stock in trade is an "O" or "Mac" in front of his name and a more or less glib tongue.

**The Cronin Scandal**

This state of affairs led to a serious row within the organization, in which Dr. Cronin, a prominent Chicago physician, led the opposition to those who were in control. As a means of silencing Cronin and terrorizing his associates he was murdered, his body being found in a sewer in the Windy City. Cronin's death, however, had the converse effect to that expected. It created so great a scandal that while the real leaders in the plot escaped hanging the Clan-na-Gael membership dropped to the vanishing point. Incidentally, honest Irish-Americans suffered through the aroused public opinion.

The strength of the organization had been its appeal to the Irishman's love of his native land and his desire that it be given self-government. The exposure of its real workings incidental to the Cronin case took thousands of its members off the books. The preponderant majority of the Irish in this country, hard working, law abiding and honest, were able to see that the organization was not for such as they. Comparatively few, equally honest but fanatical on the matter of Irish af-

airs, either refused to view the facts as they were or held that no matter what was involved the end justified the means.

**Politicians Thrived on It**

This left the organization weak, but did not destroy it. In the larger cities along the Atlantic seaboard it remained in the hands of saloonkeepers and politicians. Where there was a large Irish population it worked more or less in the open. Thus, in Boston, Clan-na-Gael Hall, a well known meeting place and candidates for political office found it worth while to state on their campaign literature that they were members of the Clan-na-Gael.

In other places the work was less open. The "camps" had the name of literary associations or clubs, named after leaders in Irish revolutionary movements or after things that had figured in them. The members of these groups, however named, were more often than not also members of other Irish organizations, notably the Land League and its successor, the United Irish League, but, while they donated some local branches of the league, they were never strong enough to get control of the general organization.

**Emigration Falls Off**

The second severe blow that the organization received was gradual, but none the less deadly. It should, perhaps, be described as a series of blows. I refer to the hard-won efforts by the British Parliament for the improvement of the conditions of the Irish peasant. The effect of these acts was to decrease Irish emigration. This was manifested in the fact that the Irish servant girl and the Irish laborer, in the fifteen years prior to 1915 the immigration from Ireland averaged less than 50,000 a year. This meant inability to get new blood into the country, and the old members who had remained loyal dying off, its decay was gradual but sure. What was almost worse, the younger Irishmen who did come over were not at all friendly to the movement. They had experienced none of the rigors that their forebears had, but, on the contrary, had lived in a different sort of Ireland than the older persons knew. They saw that whatever the cause had been, the physical force movement and there are many friends of England to-day who justify the use of dynamite in other days—the time had passed.

**Old Queen's Shrewd Move**

An incident of the Boer war—almost unnoticed at the time by non-Irishmen—gave wonderful strength to the arguments of these young Irishmen who refused to be fanatically anti-English. One of the stories the physical force agitator was prone to use in arousing his audiences was of Irishmen in the British army being fogged for putting sprigs of green in their caps on St. Patrick's Day. It may be probably was true. At any rate, it was generally believed to be true. And because it was believed to be true, the action of Queen Victoria in sending shamrocks to some of her Irish troops in South Africa had more effect than the shrewdest of her advisers could have imagined.

However intended, this gracious act landed square on the target. It appealed to the sentiment of the sentimental people and was accepted as proof by many of them that times had indeed changed.

About this time Germany, casting about for possible help in the struggle she was then preparing for, began to cultivate the Irish in America. The Kaiser's famous cablegram of sympathy to Oom Paul was the basis of the German appeal to the dissatisfied. On it the German-Irish Alliance was built in Boston.

Just what the Irish and Germans could have in common was not exactly apparent to many of Irish blood, particularly those who were born in this country. The two races had never been over friendly even in this coun-

# TWO NEW YORKERS NAMED IN BERNSTORFF EXPOSURE



Justice Daniel F. Cohalan, of the New York Supreme Court, who has long been prominent in Irish-American circles.

Jeremiah A. O'Leary, of the American Truth Society and editor of "Bull," a magazine attacking the war.

Who, for example, that has lived in an Irish district has not heard the youngsters sing:

The Irish ain't much,  
The Irish ain't much,  
But they're a whole lot better  
Than the dirty old Dutch.

In this movement men who had been openly and prominently identified with the Clan-na-Gael took prominent part. The organization had plenty of money sources, never publicly stated, but somehow it made very little progress. There is no doubt, to the natural lack of affinity of the two races. It continued in existence, but it was never a lusty infant. The important fact remained perhaps the most important, that the connection between the Irish irrecconcilables who constituted the "physical force" group in this country was continuing.

Matters remained in this state, with the Clan-na-Gael becoming weaker and weaker, until the outbreak of the war in Europe. So far as the well informed could see, the movement was dead save in a few sections. It was so weak that for months it made no open effort to line up, or appear to line up, the Irish people in this country against the Allies. Under cover, however, it was active, and the attempt to use the longshoremen in an effort to deprive the Entente of munitions and supplies was largely based on the theory that the Irish, long dominant in this craft, could be depended upon to get into line.

The fact that an Irishman, T. V. O'Connor, of Buffalo, was the chief of this organization, that the Irish dominated the longshoremen in this and other cities, appealed to the propagandists. It was for this reason that the effort was made to bribe O'Connor and his people and to use Matthew Cummins, of Boston, in the attempt. The failure of this movement is fresh in the public mind.

**Called Meeting Here**

By the spring of 1916 sufficient headway had been made by the propagandists to warrant a public movement, and in March a meeting was called in the Hotel Astor. This meeting was preceded by much discussion in the public prints, such eminent Irishmen as Patrick Egan denouncing the movement as against the best interests of the Irish people, Dr. Albert, president of the Land League in the days when it was a world-wide force, publicly challenged the claims of those managing it to pretend to speak either for the Irish people or for Irish freedom.

The meeting, however, was held, the attendance being strictly limited. As a result to attendance one either had to receive a direct invitation from the engineers in charge or be elected by organizations, like those directly invited, carefully selected. To these cards were sent credentials for the morning of the meeting. To further guard against the appearance of any opposed to the movement the holders of the credentials had to pass some sets of files. In a varied experience with conventions and secret societies I never saw a meeting so carefully tiled.

This care in selecting delegates at the start tended to result in two conventions of Friends of Irish Freedom. Matthew Cummins, as a former national president of the A. O. H., was, on general principles if nothing else, entitled to sit in such a convention. When he arrived he found he was barred. Those in charge of the deal had nothing against him personally, but as he had been unfortunate enough to receive more or less publicity in connection with Germany's attempt to bribe the longshoremen it was thought best to bar him, lest his presence give color to the charge of German taint.

Cummins had suspected some such thing and was prepared. He quietly collected some five hundred of the so-called delegates' cards and submitted an ultimatum. If he was not admitted and his five hundred would hold a convention of their own, he said. John D. Moore, secretary and general manager of the affair, then and there surrendered.

At the same time Cummins, as all others admitted, was given a circular bearing several scores of names of eminent Irishmen who were said to be in favor of the movement. The names of these men were scattered all over the United States. Few of those from other cities appeared.

In the hall there were perhaps one thousand men and women. Of these two-thirds were residents of this city. Most of these were court attendants or small politicians. There were also present Justice Goff, who was the chief speaker, and Justice Daniel F. Cohalan, a few clergymen, mainly of the elder type, whose education was obtained in Ireland at the time of her greatest poverty or immediately thereafter. There was likewise a sprinkling of professional men from this and other cities.

Judge O'Neil, Ryan, of St. Louis, was chairman. As chairman he was a decided success, for not once was anybody not on the programme to speak allowed the floor. Even with hand-picked delegates no chances were taken on any one throwing a monkey wrench into the machine. Just once was an error made, and that at the afternoon

# Governor Has No Power to Oust Cohalan

## Says Legislature Must Act if Charges Are Brought

## Bar Association Cannot Expel Him

## Justice Refuses to Speak; Devoy, Also Accused, Is Silent

Governor Whitman declared yesterday that he would take no action in the matter of the message alleged to have been sent by Justice Daniel F. Cohalan to the Kaiser for land men and officers in Ireland and bomb England in aid of the Irish revolt. The opinion was expressed by a lawyer that the Bar Association also would have to ignore the charge.

"The Governor can do nothing in a case of this sort," said the Governor. "It is up to the Legislature if action is to be brought to remove Cohalan from the bench."

Only an illegal act, in the opinion of a former official of the Bar Association, could serve as the basis of charges on which Cohalan could be expelled from that organization.

"If Justice Cohalan is guilty of the offense charged against him at Washington," he said, "nothing can save him from the contempt of the people. But for the Bar Association to move against him he must have committed an illegal act. He has not done this. The disclosures allege that he intrigued with Bernstorff at a time when we were neutral in the war, and that he was controlled by the neutrality laws.

"Under the statutes then in force the plotting charged against Justice Cohalan could not be construed as a violation. About the only way an American citizen could have violated those laws would have been to organize an armed

force for service against a country at peace with us.

In the circumstances, I do not believe the Bar Association can take action against Justice Cohalan."

Justice Cohalan, having denied on Saturday the truth of the revelations made by the Committee on Public Information, so far as they referred to him, went off to play golf yesterday. He left word that he had nothing to add to his first statement.

John Devoy, editor of "The Gaelic American," who also was accused of dealings with German plotters, was not at home. He did not even leave word whether he had gone to the golf links or to Tralee.

Justice Daniel F. Cohalan's reputed connection with the Irish rebellion was known to the British long before the raid on the German Embassy's propaganda headquarters, at 69 Wall Street.

**Formerly Owned "Gaelic American"**

According to the testimony given at the Sinn Fein revolt in May, 1916, Justice Cohalan and D. A. Spillane, a New York lawyer, had sent upwards of \$100,000 in gold to the rebels. While Spillane at the time admitted the truth of the charges, Justice Cohalan denied them.

Justice Cohalan has long been identified with the movement to free Ireland. When Sir Roger Casement arrived in New York shortly after the war broke out Justice Cohalan and some of his friends here, according to reports made by secret service agents of a foreign government, held several conferences.

From words dropped by some of the men who attended these meetings, it was learned that the object was to raise money to finance a revolution in Ireland.

Justice Cohalan was for many years the owner of the "Gaelic American," then and now edited by John Devoy, the von Igel disclosures. For several years, before he went on the Supreme Court bench, Justice Cohalan was president of the Gaelic-American Publishing Company, and the Gaelic attacks on England that have distinguished the "Gaelic American" since the outbreak of the European war, were mild compared to the time when Justice Cohalan was its owner.

Although its readers are mainly of the Roman Catholic persuasion, that did not prevent "The Gaelic American," when Justice Cohalan owned it, from bitterly attacking Cardinal Gibbons because of an address delivered in Westminster, in which the Catholic prelate spoke feelingly of the relations between the Catholic Church in England and the Catholic Church in America. This was in 1908, and the attack was not waged on Cardinal Gibbons alone, but on the English people.

Justice Cohalan made several speeches in the middle Atlantic and New England states after the arrest of Sir Roger Casement. In all these he paid glowing tributes to Sir Roger and attacked the English, in one of his

speeches declaring that England was the only foe of the United States.

The Justice was in town yesterday, but inquirers at his home were told that he would have nothing to add to his statement of Saturday.

**O'Leary Still Missing**

Jeremiah A. O'Leary, editor of "Bull," who was also exposed in the von Igel papers as one of the anti-Irish and pro-German plotters, and who has been "somewhere out of town" since his letter to Bernard Ridder was made public early last week by Postmaster General Burleson, was out of town again yesterday. Mrs. O'Leary said last night that she did not expect him to return before Tuesday.

Marcus Braun, editor of the Teutonic "Fair Play," was still absent from his home and the haunts of the Hungarians on the East Side, where he has for years been a political power.

# Wrote Notes to Trap Bernstorff, He Says

HARTFORD, Sept. 23.—Timothy J. Dowling, whose letters to Ambassador von Bernstorff offering to blow up various munition plants were revealed yesterday, was employed until a short time ago by the Colt Patent Fire Arms Company here, and is still living at 107 Franklin Avenue, with his sister. The letters were part of a trap, he declared to-night, in which he and three companions hoped to, and almost did, catch the German Ambassador. In Dowling's opinion, the capture or destruction of the Bremen was all that saved von Bernstorff.

"Robert McConnell, a detective, who used to have an office in the Hudson Terminal Building and later in Twenty-eighth Street, near Seventh Avenue, was the one who conceived the scheme of trapping Bernstorff," said Dowling. "McConnell died about five months ago at Black Rock, near Buffalo.

"The count did not dare trust the cables in asking Berlin to take the responsibility for my plan and we were kept waiting for the necessary letter from Berlin which we thought might have come on the Deutschland's third trip or perhaps was seized or sunk with the Bremen.

"Up to the eleventh hour, when von Bernstorff sailed for home, we were waiting for him to trap himself so that he might be held here. As for Collins and Burns, the last I heard of them was last week when they were leaving to handle a big Chicago case."

# Von Papan's Flirtation With Girl Detective Reveals Plot

Dr. Wm. T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park, and trustee of the American Defense Society, tells how the German agents in this country were lured by a newspaper man. He makes the revelation in a monograph, "The Blunders of Germany." He says: "There are times when blundering of German 'statesmen' are so crude and raw that, when they harm no one, they are comical. Even amid the horrors of war America is laughing over the wholesale discomfiture and final undoing of Dr. Dumba, Count von Bernstorff and Captains Boy-Ed and von Papan by a restless American newspaper man with a taste for amateur detective work and amateur crooks.

"One lonesome and harmless American newspaper man, John R. Rathom, of the Providence Journal, had the gall to plant an employe in a secretarial position at the Excellency von Bernstorff's elbow. Also, he put a bright American girl stenographer (with a red pencil) in the office of the Austrian Consul General in New York. And, not content with those outrages, he generated a German fake passport factory in New York instead of on one side only.

"And it was a 'Providence Journal' man who, with most criminal carelessness, changed portfolios with the astute Dr. Albert of Austria, and staged a fight in a streetcar—without extra charges—while that horrible mistake was being made. And the saddest part of it all is that nearly forty-eight hours elapsed ere the lynx-eyed doctor noticed the substitution and made a fuss about it.

"Mr. Rathom's most delightful story is that of his girl stenographer sitting demurely on a big box of incriminating papers just prior to its shipment to Germany, sharing her frugal lunch with the 'shrewd' von Papan and dreamily drawing two large red hearts on the box cover, to which the sentimental von Papan thoughtfully and tenderly added a red transfixing arrow. This spooning led to the cheap and easy identification of the box in 'Merrie England.' It reads like a foolishly impossible romance, but the joke of it is it is quite true."

Commenting upon the campaign of the American Defense Society, Dr. Hornaday said:

"Germany to-day is mobilized to the last man and woman, and if America is not only the men at the front but those at the rear. One of the first things we should do is to concern ourselves with the desperate activities of the German Empire in this country. Some of these activities are political; others are attempts at dynamiting our war plants, spreading German propaganda through the medium of peace talk or infecting our people through deadly germs sold, or given away, in the guise of medicine."

session, when some careless person allowed a young man not present at the morning session to enter and take a front seat. A reporter who recognized him joked with Justice Cohalan about his presence.

"All Irish here," said the reporter. "It's a fine bunch of Irishmen, every one representative."

"Yes," went on the reporter. "I notice that eminent Irishman, George Sylvester Viereck, sitting down front."

Cohalan laughed and strolled to the side of the hall—he had been in the rear. A moment later a henchman left his side, and in another moment Viereck was on his way out—to appear no more.

The programme at this meeting involved among other things the election of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, head of the clan of which the Irish together and backed with their dollars every movement calculated to advance the cause of Ireland, had ignored, when they have not actively denounced, the efforts to enlist them. They have, instead, chosen to follow the lead of the emigrant Irish in Irish affairs, and, in things American, remain pro-American. From them not much has been heard in public print or public protest. As a rule, they have been content to let the organization alone, content that it would be recognized as it is, and not as it would like to be.

But, cricket-like, the members of the organization have been noisy. They have sought to make up in noise what they lack of numbers.

**Embargo on Coin in Manila**

MANILA, Sept. 23.—Qwing to the shortage of silver currency in the Philippines the National Bank, acting under government authority, has contracted with the government printing bureau for several million peso and smaller notes.

The government has ordered the arrest of all persons discounting paper currency and is preparing coastguard vessels to prevent the exportation of silver peso and bullion. Small coins are now being sold in the streets at a 10 per cent premium.

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