

# Stand Up and be Counted!

## *Suffrage and gender in Ireland during the Decade of Centenaries and beyond*

# DOCUMENT PACK 2: Suffrage and Nationalism

This document pack includes:

- A letter from Frank Sheehy-Skeffington, husband of suffragist Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington. Hanna formed the first militant suffrage society in Dublin, the Irish Women's Franchise League, in 1908. Frank was the editor of the suffrage newspaper *The Irish Citizen*.
- Papers of Andrée Sheehy-Skeffington, who was the daughter-in-law of Frank and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington. These include articles from *The Irish Citizen*.
- Poems and documents from Charlotte Despard's papers. Despard established the socialist and suffragist Women's Freedom League (WFL) in Ireland.
- Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers.
- Extracts from a House of Commons debate on the future of the Irish Volunteers.
- Cumann Na mBan constitution, resolutions and rules.

8, Airfield Road  
Rathgar.  

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24/12/3.

My Dear Annie,

I hope the postal arrangements will not ~~so~~ so detain this letter as to make it too late to wish you a happy Christmas; ~~in~~ in any case, I am in excellent ~~tune~~ ~~and~~ with good wishes for the coming year. I hope I shall see you in the course of it, - either here or in Downpatrick. It was impossible for us, ~~and~~ with the limited time at our disposal, to include Downpatrick in our

Letter from Frank Sheehy Skeffington to a friend the Christmas after his marriage to Hanna, with reference to the suffrage struggle (24<sup>th</sup> December, 1903). Image 1 of 5. PRONI Reference: D3074/1/1

wedding - but, & since then we  
have been so busy that only since  
the Christmas holidays began have  
we had time to look about us &  
consider what correspondence remains  
unanswered. I am still, of course  
at University College as Registrar  
which takes up all my pre-dinner  
hours. Then I write regularly for  
New Ireland (I hope you read  
it religiously every week!), as well  
as writing irregularly for a few  
other papers & reviews. I take  
that took up a great deal of time,  
& was the most important of the  
our return from the south, was the  
preparation of an essay on 'Gaelic  
which, as I suppose you noticed,  
I won the University Gold Medal  
for English Prose in October last.  
There was a very interesting little  
controversy in connection with this  
essay; some of the examiners didn't  
want to award me the prize, on  
account of the political opinions  
expressed in the essay! & if I publish  
it (which I shall, though not at  
my own risk if I can help it),  
I am directed to make it quite  
clear in a preface that the Medal  
was awarded for literary merit  
only, & that the donors of the  
University is not responsible for  
my opinions! I should think  
not, indeed! I am now trying  
(so far, with but little success)  
to find time to read for a summer  
to 'Belvedere', offered in October 1905,  
~~but~~ there is only one  
Belvedere, & there are eight

Letter from Frank Sheehy Skeffington to a friend the Christmas after his marriage to Hanna, with reference to the suffrage struggle (24<sup>th</sup> December, 1903). Image 2 of 5. PRONI Reference: D3074/1/1

you tell him, please, that I shall expect him to call here when he is on his way back, if he has any time in Dublin at all? But it is very necessary that he should send me a postcard telling me what day to expect him, as otherwise he might easily find us ~~and~~ not in, - which would be particularly unsatisfactory, since this house is half-an-hour's tram-journey from Nelson's Pillar.

There is one item of news in your last letter which surprised & at first pained me, - you will easily understand which I mean, - but I think, with my imperfect information I shall be wisest if I refrain from any comment on it till we meet. I will only say this, - that I think

Letter from Frank Sheehy Skeffington to a friend the Christmas after his marriage to Hanna, with reference to the suffrage struggle (24<sup>th</sup> December, 1903). Image 3 of 5. PRONI Reference: D3074/1/1

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and am glad to think, that your  
summy temperament is capable of  
happines even under great trials.  
I hope your father & mother, grand-  
dall the rest are well, & in good  
form for Christmas. I should particularly  
like to hear about my old pals  
Alphie & Jim. How are the girls  
getting on in France? I suppose you  
know or guess, that I have great sym-  
pathy with the action of the French  
Government towards the religious  
orders? Even if one cant approve  
every extreme measure M. Combes  
adopts, his policy is refreshing  
reading for us in this priest and-  
nun-ridden country.  
By the way, are you a Woman's  
Suffragist? - that is to say, are  
you in favour of conferring a  
vote on women whose husbands  
would entitle them to vote, but  
who are disqualified because of  
their sex? I think I remember  
you used to favour this reform.  
If so, will you join the Irish  
Women's Suffrage Association? (The  
subscription is nominal, - a shilling  
yearly.) We hope to get up a  
fairly vigorous campaign in  
favour of the suffrage in the near  
year. There will be a meeting in  
the Dublin Mansion House in the  
first week in January, at which  
I expect to speak; - look out for it.  
I believe Tom Gallagher is in a  
very pitiful position, - my mother  
keeps a good deal about her. Has  
Jim deserted her altogether?  
I shall be very grateful if  
you can find time, either during  
or after the holidays, to send me

Letter from Frank Sheehy Skeffington to a friend the Christmas after his marriage to Hanna, with reference to the suffrage struggle (24<sup>th</sup> December, 1903). Image 4 of 5. PRONI Reference: D3074/1/1

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a few lines, with any interesting news about yourself or Down-patrick friends generally. That letter from Willie Devlin which you feared might forestall yours, never arrived!

With best wishes from Hanna & myself,

yours affectionately

Frank Sheehy Skeffington

D 3074 / 1 / 1

Letter from Frank Sheehy Skeffington to a friend the Christmas after his marriage to Hanna, with reference to the suffrage struggle (24<sup>th</sup> December, 1903). Image 5 of 5. PRONI Reference: D3074/1/1

#### The Rights of Irishwomen

Sir Edward Carson received on Monday a deputation of women representing the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation; they reminded him of his promise that the municipal register (which includes women) should form the basis of the Ulster provisional Government, and asked whether he was prepared to demand that the same register should be taken as the basis in any settlement of the Home Rule crisis. To this Sir Edward replied in the negative, saying he himself was not a suffragist, and the Unionist Party were divided on the question. How like this reply is to Mr. Asquith's stock answers to suffragist deputations!

#### The Referendum on Exclusion

The second question related to the proposed referendum to be taken as to exclusion from the Home Rule Bill. The women asked that if Sir Edward Carson accepted this proposal in any form, he should stipulate that the referendum should be on the municipal register, so as to include the women's vote. Sir Edward said that he would like to consider the question. We shall await with interest the result of his consideration. In the meanwhile, we hope that the Ulster women, who, equally with the men, are prepared to risk everything on the result of the struggle, will take every means of expressing to him their determination to share in deciding the issue.

#### A Possible Bill in the House of Lords

Lord Selborne is credited by the Press with the intention of introducing into the House of Lords a Bill to enfranchise women on the basis of the Conciliation Bill. We confess to a misgiving as to the wisdom of these tactics, for the acceptance or rejection of a franchise Bill by the Lords will equally serve as an argument to a Liberal House of Commons for refusing to have anything to do with it. Perhaps Lord Selborne himself has come to the same conclusion (or the rumour may have been entirely without foundation), for the Bill was not introduced on the date which the Press had predicted, and up to the present nothing has been heard of it.

#### Prisons and Prisoners

Suffragists who have more than a hazy acquaintance with the police courts will do well to examine very closely the Bill dealing with prisons and prisoners introduced by Mr. McKenna into the House of Commons on Tuesday in last week. No adequate description of the clauses of this Bill has appeared in the Press, and unless we are very much mistaken an attempt will be made, on account of some good provisions which it contains, to rush it through into law without due scrutiny of several

of the provisions. Our original objections apply with still greater force to the extension of the statute.

#### Police Courts to be Used as Prisons

An amazing proposition contained in the Bill is that by which it is ordained that sentences of four days and under shall be served in the police-court cells instead of in the prison. To those who have experienced a night in the police-court cells, with their filthy insanitary condition, the constant surveillance of the police, with only one woman—an utterly downtrodden and subservient "matron"—in attendance, the idea that men, let alone women, should be shut up for three days and nights in them appears an outrage on every sense of decency.

#### Limiting Trial by Jury

Another provision of the Bill showing a highly dangerous tendency is the increase of the jurisdiction of police courts to offences of greater magnitude with the option of inflicting heavier fines. This is directly contrary to the protests which we have made from time to time in this paper. We have emphasised the slipshod methods of the police courts, the partiality of magistrates to police evidence, their disregard of clear testimony brought forward by the general public. Instead of limiting the powers of the police courts the Home Secretary proposes to widen them. He proposes, in effect, to abolish trial by jury in all these cases which he brings into his purview. We hope that a vigorous protest will be made against this proposed alteration, which strikes at the foundations of the liberty of the people of this country.

#### Equal Pay for Equal Work

We publish this week, in further discussion of the question of equal pay for equal work, two important letters, one from Miss Eva Gore-Booth, in which she gives facts with regard to the situation in the Post Office in Canada, which she compares with that in the English Post Office, and the other from Miss Isitt, who quotes facts culled from her own experience in Sydney (Australia). From these letters our readers will realise the importance of withdrawing the restrictions at present resting on women, in order to secure to them a fair remuneration for their labour. But this is not likely to be brought about till women get the vote.

#### Events in America

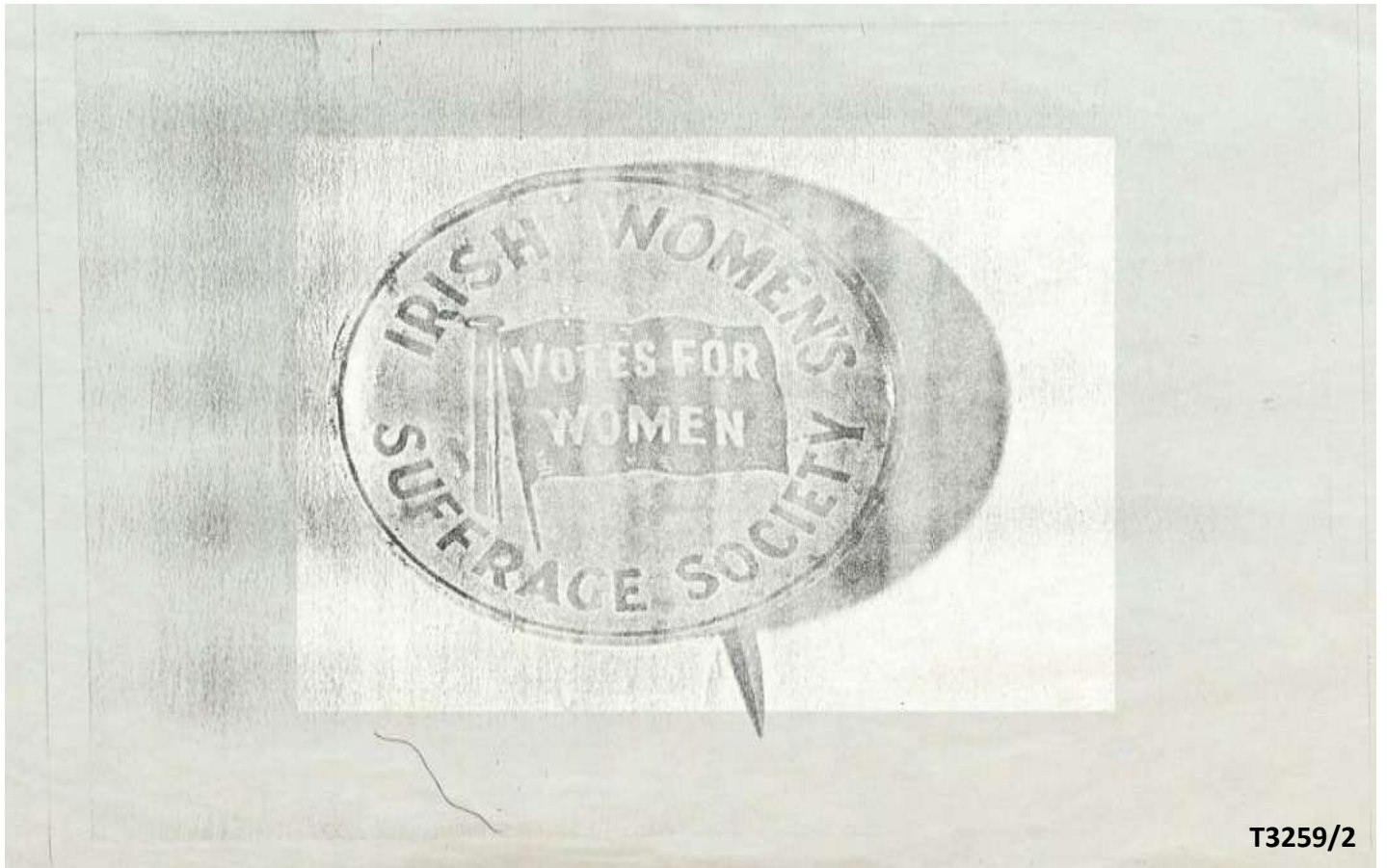
The U.S.A. Senate has rejected the equal suffrage amendment by 34 votes to 33 (a two-thirds majority being required for effective action). This result is a disappointment to suffragists, but is attributable largely to the refusal of the Senator who had charge of the motion to delay the vote as he had

Article published in the *Irish Citizen* newspaper. From the personal papers of Andrée Sheehy Skeffington. (No date)

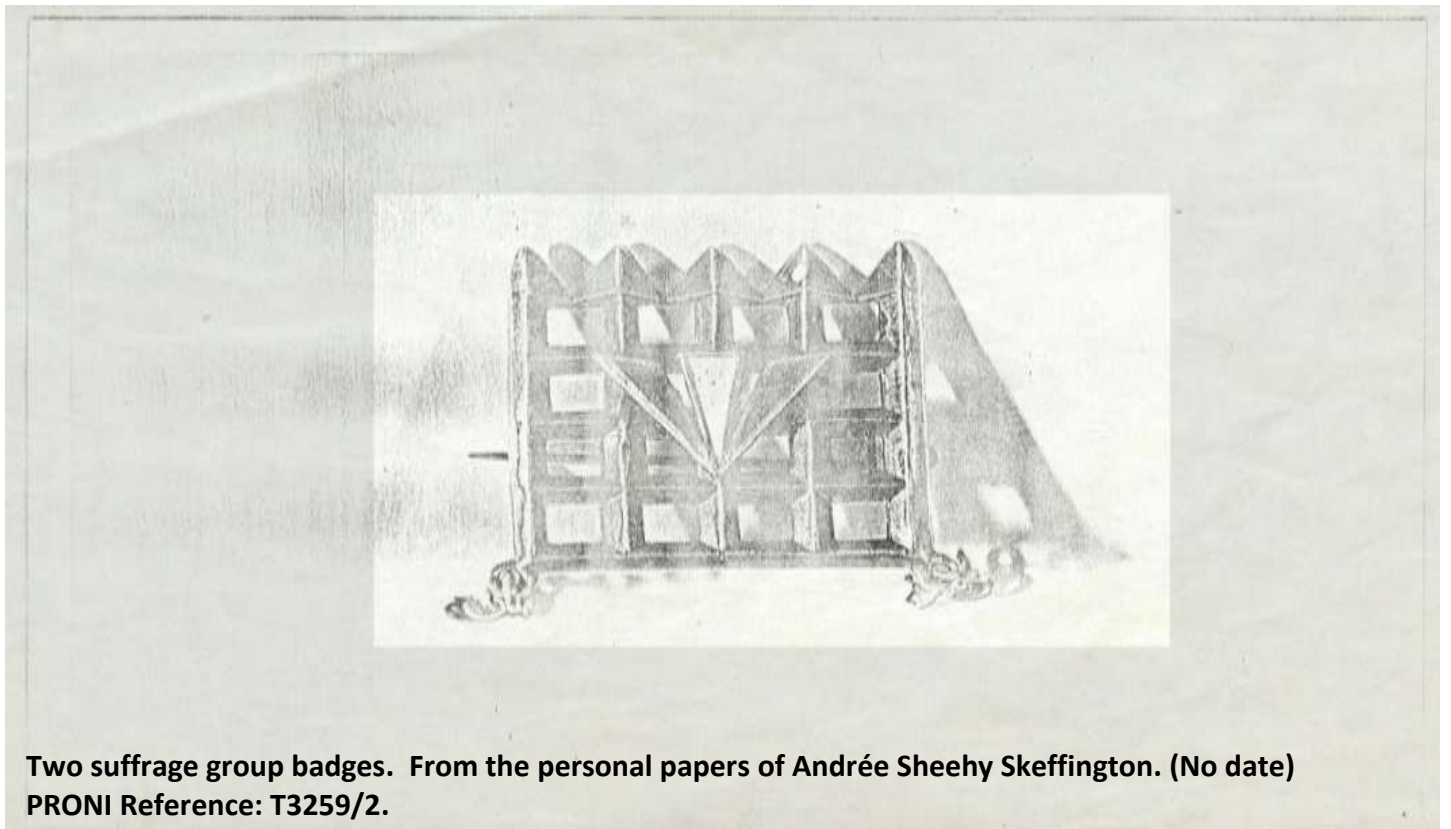
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'Votes for Women'

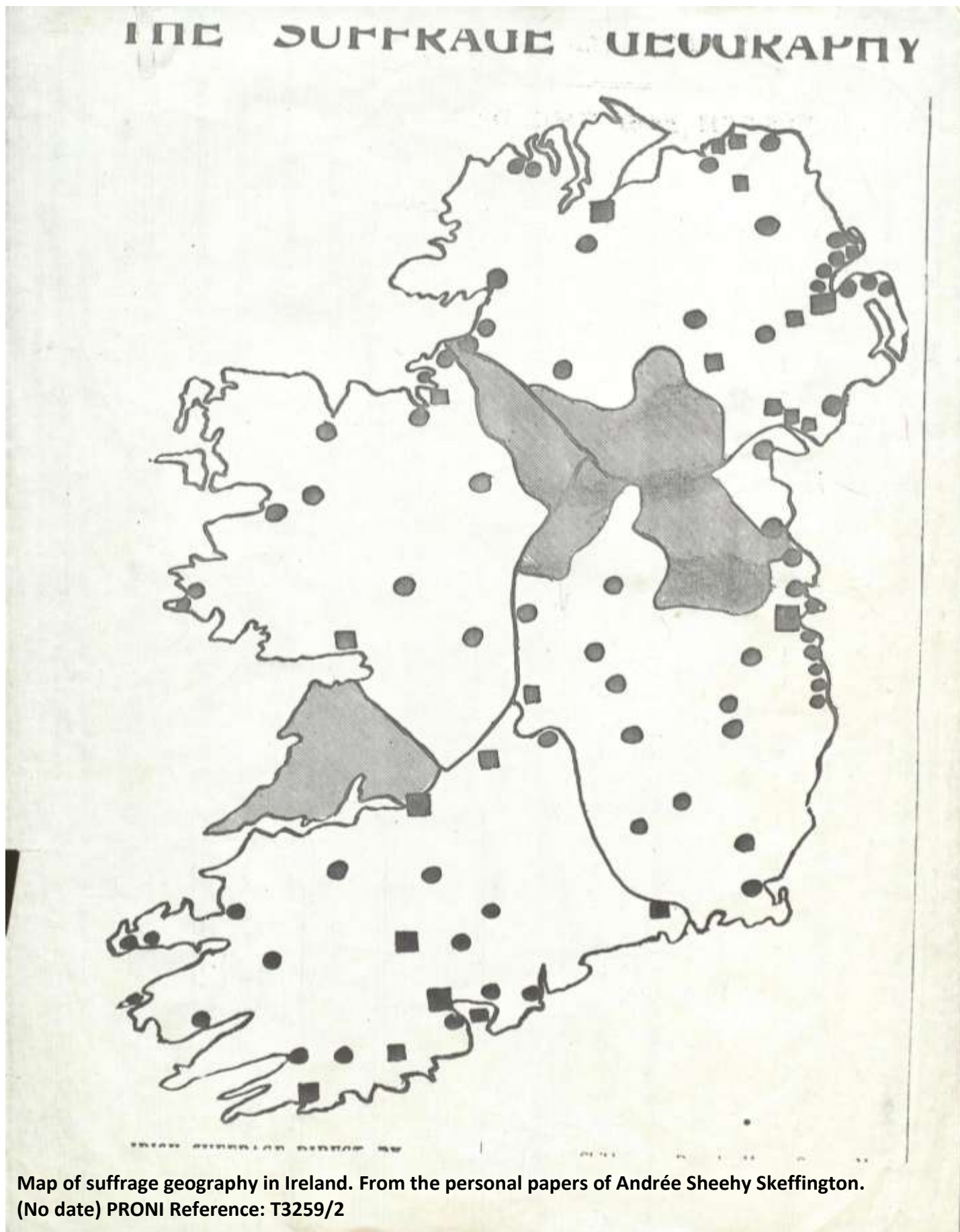




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**Two suffrage group badges. From the personal papers of Andrée Sheehy Skeffington. (No date)  
PRONI Reference: T3259/2.**



Map of suffrage geography in Ireland. From the personal papers of Andrée Sheehy Skeffington.  
(No date) PRONI Reference: T3259/2

January 9, 1915.

THE IRISH NEWS

Evans and Miss Muir were arrested on a charge of having explosives in their possession—a ludicrous charge in view of the notorious accumulation of explosives and other war-munitions in Belfast by men. From that time Miss Evans fought a heroic fight against the attempts of the authorities to break her spirit. When remanded without bail, Miss Evans and Miss Muir secured their release by the Hunger-Strike. They were finally returned for trial in July. When the time of the trial came off, Miss Muir, who had meantime been arrested on another charge, had secured her release by hunger-strike, and had vanished, was not to be found; Miss Evans held up the Court, by speaking continuously, and ultimately Judge Dodd, being unable to secure order, adjourned her case till the December Assizes, ordering that she be kept in custody meantime. Miss Evans was removed to Tullamore, whence she had shortly to be released owing to the continuance of the Hunger Strike.

Article published in the *Irish Citizen* newspaper. From the papers of Andrée Sheehy Skeffington. (9<sup>th</sup> January, 1915)  
PRONI Reference: T3259/2

usual, and showed that he did not absolutely exclude the possibility of including women in this referendum.

On May 14th, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence visited Dublin, and addressed a meeting for the I.W.F.L., at which Mr. James Connolly also spoke, and messages were received from Mr. Larkin, Mr. Lindsay Crawford, and others.

In June, Mr. Larkin, in presiding at the Irish Trades Congress, referred to the exclusion of Irishwomen from the franchise as the greatest blot on the Home Rule Bill. Subsequently the Congress unanimously passed a resolution demanding that the Bill should be so amended as to include Votes for Irishwomen.

Owing to the prospect of an Amending Home Rule Bill, a Joint Committee of Irish Suffragists was formed in June, and asked Mr. Asquith and Mr. Redmond to receive a deputation at Westminster on the question of Votes for Irishwomen in the Amending measure. Both refused to receive the deputation, which nevertheless presented itself at the House of Commons on June 17th. On its not being received, Mrs. McCoubrey and Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington made a protest in St. Stephen's Hall. They were removed by the police, but not arrested. On the same evening, they and Miss Mellone spoke at a meeting of the United Suffragists in London.

On July 1st, the Belfast Corporation passed a resolution approving of Votes for Women—a remarkable moment at which to associate themselves with the movement, when militancy in an active form was at its height in Belfast and the neighbourhood.

On July 20th the Newtownards Race-course stand was burned down. On 1st August, four suffragettes were arrested in Lisburn on a charge of causing an explosion in the Cathedral there. They were returned for trial, and released after a few days owing to the Hunger Strike. This was the last conflict of the W.S.P.U. with the law, the Truce having been declared immediately afterwards.

The Amnesty, which was extended to Suffrage prisoners in England and Scotland, was never formally applied to Ireland. The cases pending against Miss Evans and others, including the Lisburn cases, were allowed to come up for trial in December; but the Crown then entered a nolle prosequi. As a result of the militant campaign in Ulster, accordingly, not a single one of the accused has been made effectively liable or compelled to serve her sentence—thanks to the Hunger Strike.

The I.W.F.L. demanded that the amnesty should be applied to the three Irish Mice—Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Ryan, and Miss Walsh—and that their sentences, hanging over them since July, 1913, should be remitted. No reply was at first paid to this demand, but when, in a letter of October 2nd, the I.W.F.L. threatened militant action if the remittal were not conceded, it was conceded on October 5th. This was the last public act of Sir James Dougherty as Under-Secretary for Ireland. There are, accordingly, at the end of the year no women in Ireland liable to re-arrest for suffrage militancy.

On the outbreak of the War, the W.S.P.U. withdrew its forces from Ireland. This left Belfast without a militant suffrage society, as the I.W.S.S. had been dissolved earlier in the year. Accordingly, a new Ulster Centre of the I.W.F.L. has been formed in September, and has been active since, being much in evidence on the occasions of the visits of Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Redmond to Belfast, and allowing no opportunity to remind them of their duty to Irish women.

The I.S.F. has devoted itself mainly to relief work since the outbreak of war, having formed the Suffragists' Emergency Corps for that purpose. The I.W.F.L. has continued to do suffrage work only. On the occasion of Mr. Asquith's recruiting visit to Dublin on September 25th, it asked him and Mr. Redmond to receive deputations, which they refused to do. Their meeting in the Mansion House was carefully guarded

against any female intrusion; and two women who protested in the streets outside were arrested, and detained till the conclusion of the meeting, when they were released without being charged.

The passing into law of the Home Rule Act attracted attention to the fact that "after three years from the passing of this Act" the Irish Parliament can enfranchise women. This affords a possible opportunity for Ireland to lead the way in the matter of suffrage; and the correspondence on the subject which has taken place in the *Irish Citizen* shows that Irish Suffragists are keenly alive to the importance of the prospect.

The various movements for peace which have been initiated by Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Mme. Rosika Schwimmer, Miss Dorothea Hollins, and other women, have excited much interest in Ireland, and suffragists generally have recognised the close connection that exists between the cause of women and the cause of peace.

The losses which the Irish Suffrage movement has sustained by death during the year include Mrs. Claud Cane, Mrs. Farrell (wife of Alderman Farrell, who accompanied him to London when, as Lord Mayor of Dublin, he went to present the petition of the Dublin Corporation on behalf of the Conciliation Bill), T. D. Sullivan, Rev. McVittie Taylor.

The year closes with the Irish Suffrage movement on the alert, watching for its opportunity when the Amending Home Rule Bill comes up for discussion, and meantime losing no occasion of pressing forward the claims of women to their share of citizenship. Looking back on the year as a whole, it is not a cheerful retrospect; we see the bureaucracy gradually being driven to the wall, almost unable to resist any longer the attacks of the women, and faced by the imminence of a General Election—then suddenly saved by the frightful calamity in which they and other governing powers, equally irresponsible to women, have involved Europe. It makes the fight for the future bigger, but affords no reason for despondency. America is forging ahead; and Ireland has kept its head, amid the war-fever, better than any other part of the United Kingdom. There is every reason why Irish Suffragists should look forward to a successful year's work in 1915. The year that has passed, if it has temporarily saved the bureaucracy, has, on the other hand, given the Suffrage Movement a much better grip on the sympathies of the masses of the Irish people than it ever had before.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

Mrs. E. Sanderson writes: It is stated in the *Irish Citizen* of January and that the "Joint Committee of Women's Organisations was formed to organise Women Patrols in Dublin." This is an error. The Joint Committee, inaugurated by Mrs. Haslam, the veteran President of the Irishwomen's Suffrage and Local Government Association, was formed for the "salting of women of every opinion for the betterment of the condition of women generally, and for the promoting of their interests in Municipal affairs." The establishing of Women Patrols—the authority for which is now, we trust, an accomplished fact—comes under this heading, but is only a small part of the work the committee yet hope to do.

#### THE CITIZEN'S DIARY.

- Jan. 11—Monday, 8 p.m. 2 College Square, East, Belfast. I.W.F.L. Ulster Centre.
- 12—Tuesday, 8 p.m. Westmoreland Chambers, Dublin. I.W.F.L.
- 13—Wednesday, 4 p.m. 29 St. Ann's Street, Dublin. I.R.L.
- 14—Saturday, 8 p.m. Westmoreland Chambers, Dublin. Speakers' Club. Public. Irish. I.W.F.L.

The Anti-Suffrage movement in Ireland was even less in evidence than during the previous year. It held a meeting in March, at which no balance sheet or list of members was disclosed. In April a debate between the Antis and the I.R.L. took place in Blackrock, in which the former got much the worse of the argument and the voting. The English Anti-Suffragist movement was divided in opinion over the question of Votes for Women for subordinate Parliaments, which was raised in connection with the Government's Scottish Home Rule Bill. Mrs. Humphrey Ward declared herself in favour of Votes for Women for subordinate Parliaments; but did not explain why she had opposed the Snowden Amendment to the Irish Home Rule Bill. No pronouncement on the subject was made by the Irish Anti-Suffragists, though they were repeatedly invited to do so.

In April the I.W.F.L. held a very successful Daffodil Fete, with Feminist Tableaux and a Suffragist Play.

In April the I.S.F. asked Messrs. Asquith, Bonar Law and Redmond to receive deputations with reference to the position of women in case a referendum was set up. All three refused; but Mr. Asquith's letter of refusal was couched in a milder tone than

Mrs. Marie A. Johnson  
wrote the following memories of the Suffrage Movement in Belfast to Andrée Sheehy Skeffington in January 1972. She was then 97. She died less than two years later. She was the widow of Tom Johnson, Labour leader and ex-Senator.

"One John Wesley Burns, of good Wesleyan Non-Conformist stock, was attending a service in St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. The Dean intoned the Litany:  
...."all women labouring of child, all sick persons and young children ...  
and pray to show Thy Pity on all prisoners and captives.."

Before the congregation could reply, up jumped John Burns on a chair in the middle of church and shouted after the Dean intoned "captives":

"especially Edith Baker and Dorothy Evans !"

These two were militant Suffragists, arrested and detained. There was great commotion and John Burns was hustled out of the Cathedral, not very gently."

John Burns, a chemist, went to Dublin later, where he continued to be a militant, and married a Suffragette, Miss Cahalan.

Mrs Johnson was a member of the Ulster Suffrage Centre.

"We had Unionists like Dr. Bell, Nationalists like Winifred Carney and the Misses Boylan, Liberals: Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Russell, Mrs. McCracken; the Labour, and so was Mrs. Adamson; Mrs. Kavanagh was Sinn Fein. It was doubly hard on the Liberal women, for our actions were directed against the Asquith government.

The militant side developed when members of the Women's Social & Political Union (Mrs. Pankhurst's) came to Belfast and captured many of the more ardent and active ones. Among the W.S.P.U. organisers was Dorothy Evans."

Extracts from the memoirs from Mrs. Marie Johnson, who was a member of the Ulster Suffrage Centre. From the personal papers of Andrée Sheehy Skeffington. (No date)

PRONI Reference: T3259/2

# THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

*(To be sung to the tune of "Scots wha hae")*

Have you heard the word that's flying fast  
Through murky dark on whistling blast?  
Daylight breaks: we're awake at last  
'Tis the Voice of the People.

Ireland beloved, in grief and shame  
We're fain to confess, we've tarnished your fame  
Slave-State, not Free State now is thy name  
Says the Voice of the People.

Slave-State no longer, together we stand  
As we face the foes who have robbed our land  
They're in flight already, the coward band  
At the Voice of the People.

Now is our moment; remember we well  
Our brave sons and brothers in Arbour Hill Hell  
Yes, year after year their story we'll tell  
Cries the Voice of the People.

Do they dream we are dumb, 'reft of reason and mind,  
Ignorant, brutish, selfish and blind?  
An answer we tell them they'll speedily find  
In the Voice of the People.

We've the Voice! We've the Vote! 'Tis for us to decree  
If our Ireland forever a Slave-State's to be  
Or to march on in joy to glad Liberty  
On the Voice of the People.

From the personal papers of Charlotte Despard. (No date) PRONI Reference: D2479/3/1

D/2479/3/1

## *Connolly House*

It was not a lordly mansion,  
With tessellated floors,  
Marble pillars at the entrance,  
And heavy oaken doors.  
But only an unused factory,  
In a little side-way street  
That echoed night and morning  
To the tread of the workers' feet.  
Connolly House we called it  
In honour to the name  
Of the worker who fought and gave his life  
To save his land from shame.  
There a band of men and women  
With a noble creed to spread,  
And in kinship close with all of those  
Who toil for their daily bread  
Gathered themselves together  
To bring the people light,  
To make them see, and know, and feel  
Their miserable plight.  
Simple it seemed, but rumour travelled  
Of things that happened there.  
The clerics scented danger  
And rank poison in the air.  
Suddenly, in a moment  
A wild affray began,  
Trampling, yelling, cursing, singing,  
Fierce men and women ran.  
"Communists! Hunt them! Burn them!"  
Came in howls from the angry crowd.  
"They have stamped on our sacred symbols,  
They would rob us of our God."  
Four days the gallant little band,  
Were beleaguered by their foes,  
As higher still and higher  
The wild confusion rose.  
One by one, by ways of peril,  
Some hit by missiles hurled  
From the fooled and blinded victims  
Of this passion-driven world.  
Escaping notice, lay concealed  
Till the storm had swept away.  
Their home was wrecked and looted  
Were they then disheartened? Nay!  
For their eyes beheld the dawning  
Of a brighter, happier day.  
In that hour of joy and triumph  
On the house of Connolly's name  
Shall be raised a people's temple  
Where the workers will proclaim  
That those who sow, and reap, and weave,  
Who delve, and dig, and mine,  
Who make this earth our dwelling-place  
Productive, rich and fine.  
Shall reap the harvest—call the tune.  
Shall live as free men ought,  
Enjoying the abundance  
That they themselves have wrought.  
Enough! Dark lords of exploitation,  
We have found a better way,  
Life, sweet life, is calling us—  
We cannot but obey.  
We have worked and you have idled,  
We are pinched and you're well fed,  
We have been beasts of burden,  
In bitter bondage led.  
But now the chain is broken,  
We have learned a better way  
For ourselves and for our children  
We work gladly day by day.  
(Can these, indeed, be Communists?  
By all that's just tis true!  
Wild people, cease from cursing—  
We build that world for you.

C. Despard.

D/2479/3/1  
From the personal papers of Charlotte Despard (No date) PRONI Reference: D2479/3/1

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## Indian - Irish Independence League

44 Parnell Square,  
Dublin.

Conditions in India under British Rule are appalling. Scientific robbery and exploitation have been so successful that in one of the richest countries in the world the average length of life of the natives has been reduced to 23½ years through long starvation.

The British Conquest of India was possible only because these Eastern races did not understand the dangers and methods of Western Imperialism and welcomed the English as many Irish Chieftains and Clansmen did in the 10th Century never realising what the relinquishment of their Clans right to the land meant till it was too late and the invader had been able to establish himself and divide the people, and play native Chieftain and Princes one against another.

Even to-day millions of Indians kept in enforced illiteracy bow their heads in resignation to the Will of God and let themselves die of famine as one million Irish people did in our own country in 1846, without realising that Famine and Starvation are the direct result of British rule and exploitation and opposed to the Will of God, who has made the earth fruitful enough to feed all.

Ireland has realised that the only road to prosperity and honour is complete severance from the British Empire; India is realising this also. The English also know that a free Ireland and a free India is the end of the British Empire and are employing every weapon in their armoury of force and hypocrisy to retard the inevitable event.

The very vastness of India, with her 300 million inhabitants weakened by starvation and the majority deprived of education make her problem harder than ours, though distance from the English base should make it easier.

The Ordinances - Coercion Acts - being applied in India to-day, are the same as those applied to Ireland, India is now suffering all the horrors of the Black and Tan warfare we experienced, plus aerial bombardments with explosive bombs on villages, incendiary bombs on Crops to ensure famine. Jails and Internment Camps are over-crowded, only the necessity of feeding the prisoners restricts the numbers and causes a certain discernment to be exercised in picking out leaders of thought and action for jail, deportation and flogging of the less dangerous.

The conditions in most of the jails defies description, corrugated iron sheds, to touch the roofs of which raise blisters on the skin in hot weather, house many of the captives, many have died from prison conditions, forty-nine prisoners in the Andaman Island, went on hunger strike as a protest, three of whom died as a result of forcible feeding.

Ireland as a Christian Country has a duty, what can we do to help India in her struggle which is ours also? One obvious way is to help India to bring her case before the world. We know the power of British propaganda, it has been used against ourselves, we have learnt in some measure how to counter it, let us put all our propaganda genius at the disposal of India, let Ireland voice India's appeal to the conscience of the Western World.

Indian Leaders have come to Ireland and asked our aid, let them not have asked in vain, at their request we have set up an Indian-Irish Independence League and are publishing a monthly Bulletin, giving Indian news. We ask the aid of the Irish Press in Dublin, and also the Provincial, we ask the millions of our race in America, and scattered over the world, and also of their newspapers. We ask the aid of all Republicans and we feel sure they will not refuse.

MAUD GONNE MacBRIDE, President.  
M. F. WOODS, )Hon.  
J. J. HEALY. )Secs.

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From the personal papers of Charlotte Despard (No date) PRONI Reference: D2479/3/1

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Christmas, 1931

## A Song of Liberty

*(Dedicated to Mrs. Gilmore)*

I arise, I arise, I the dream of the Peoples  
Cleaving the darkness, eternally free.  
I am here, I am there, no power can restrain me,  
And my name it is Liberty, sweet Liberty!

Hearken, oh! hearken, Earth's sorrowful children  
From the slave-sleep of ages, the call is—Arise!  
Fighters and workers linked closely together  
Fire in your hearts, and joy in your eyes.

I alight, I alight on my limitless journey  
On a fair little isle in the western sea  
'Tis a land that has oftentimes struggled and suffered  
For seeking and loving sweet Liberty.

I descend to find still the old battle raging.  
Fear's at the helm: power-lust draws the bolt  
"Once for all, and forever, by pious endeavour"  
They cry out together, "we'll strangle revolt."

In the heart of the tempest my children are waiting.  
They yield not an inch, firm and dauntless they stand.  
Tortured, imprisoned, sent homelessly wand'ring,  
Ah! they are to-day the Felons of their land.

Day after day, from township and hamlet  
Into icy cold prison they're secretly driven  
At the gates stand pale women, wives, sisters and mothers  
To be turned away hopeless. No news can be given!

Breathe not a word—the tribunal is sitting,  
Three men of mystery, secret as hell.  
To them and their minions full power has been given  
They can sentence to death those who love me too well.

Men and women of Ireland! I pray you consider,  
Is it your will that such things should be?  
It is not; it is not, you cry out in chorus  
Oh! we seek thee, we love thee, sweet Liberty.

*Chorus:*

Breathe not a word: the tribunal is sitting,  
Three dark men of mystery, secret as hell.  
To them and their minions full power has been given  
They can sentence to death those who love me too well.

C. DESPARD.

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# THE FRIENDS OF SOVIET RUSSIA

This Organisation was founded on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the magnificent victory of the working and peasant population over the Czarist régime; over Russian landlordism and capitalism. This world-shaking event liberated 150 million people from the yoke of despotic tyranny and ended capitalist exploitation by placing the country under the rulership of the working and peasant population. The former territories of the Czar in which many races, nationalities and ethnic groups were kept divided and forced to war upon each other is now united voluntarily into a series of autonomous republics and Socialist Soviet Federations known compositely as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics—a gigantic beginning to the world federation of free working populations on the basis of common ownership and planned socialist economy.

## Workers in Power.

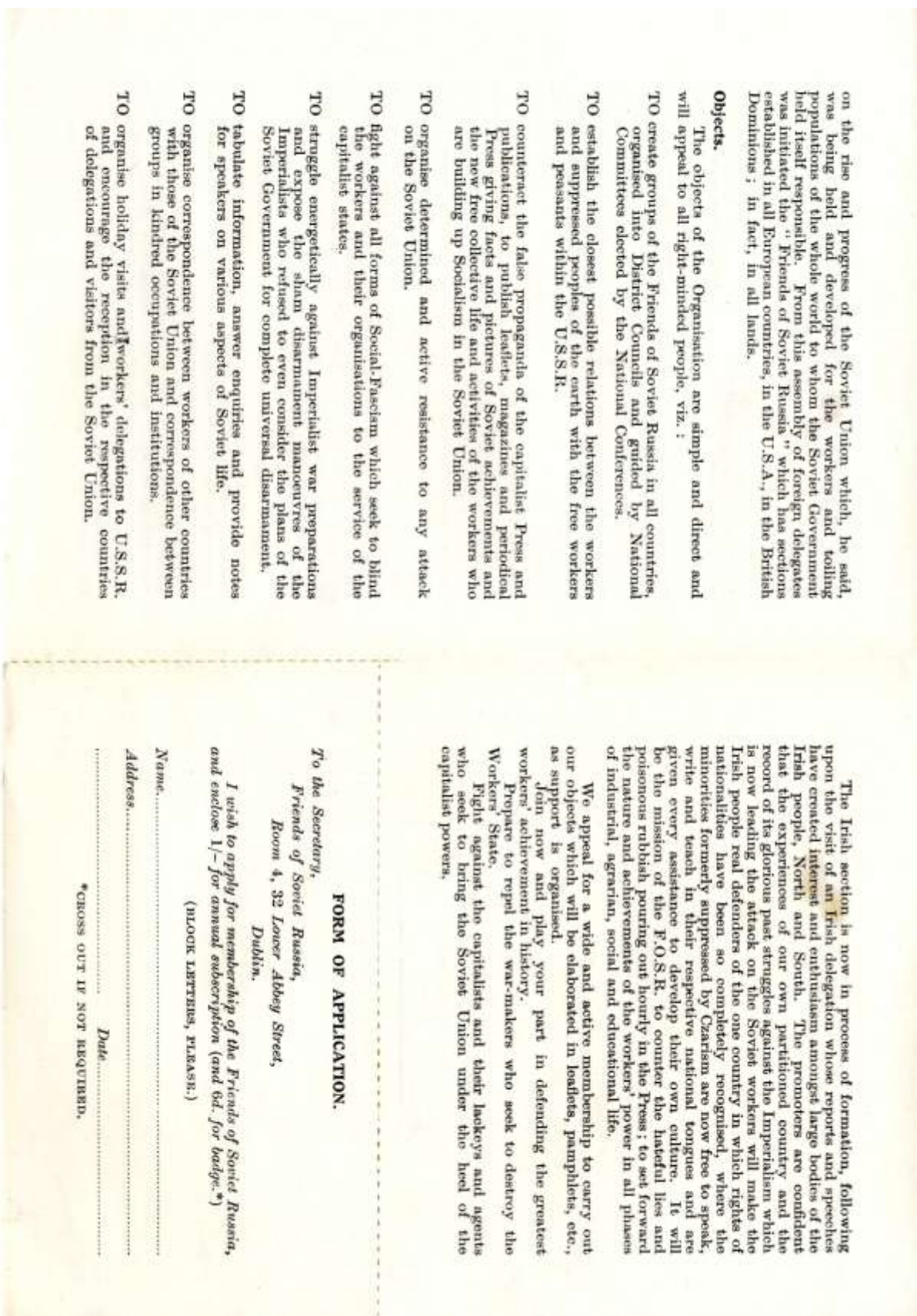
Needless to say the advent of the workers to power over their country and their lives was met by the most bitter and malignant hostility of the capitalist-Imperialist world, while on the other hand it was hailed with delight by the toilers of all lands, in the great exploiting capitalist nations and by the subject and oppressed peoples suffering under the frightful armed might of Imperialist overlordship. The capitalist Press and parliaments of the world called into being every agency of malicious propaganda, political and economic pressure, military intervention, espionage, etc. They mobilised prejudice, credulity and ignorance against the first Workers' State; but with all, their efforts were powerless to prevent the consolidation of the power of the workers and the development of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics towards a planned socialist economy.

## Seeking the Truth.

As reaction and counter-revolution were overthrown it became more and more possible for the workers of various countries to see the New Russia for themselves and from their own enquiries and experience to form their own opinions and carry the truth about their Russian fellow-workers to all the corners of the earth. So that at the Tenth Anniversary a thousand delegates from all the countries of Europe, and far beyond it, were the honoured guests of their fellow workers in the Soviet Union. At a great demonstrative meeting convened by request of the British, German and other delegations the Chairman of the Peoples' Commissars, Comrade Rykoff, reported

*The Friends of Soviet Russia* pamphlet. From the personal papers of Charlotte Despard (No date) Image 1 of 2. PRONI Reference: D2479/3/1

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**The Friends of Soviet Russia pamphlet. From the personal papers of Charlotte Despard (No date) Image 2 of 2. PRONI Reference: D2479/3/1**

THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN.

The People want songs! I'll sing one to thee  
Land of vast vistas, valiant and free  
Seeing before thee a great destiny  
'Tis the land of the rising sun.

Rising, not risen; but hope's in the air  
It is scatt'ring the clouds of human despair  
True men and true women are welcome there  
In the land of the rising sun.

Of sorrows untold, of torture and prison,  
Strangely born, the soul of a nation has risen  
It has caught at the skirts of a glorious vision  
In the land of the rising sun.

Each for all; all for each, they practise and preach  
They work and they play, they heal rule and teach  
Seeking ever life's fullest perfection to reach  
In the land of the rising sun.

From the true heart of love it has come to be  
Of life and of love in full harmony  
Tracing pictures and plans that are fair to see  
For the land of the rising sun.

Capital, Empire, reigning supreme  
Look on aghast as men in a dream  
'Tis a fable, they cry, things are not as they seem  
In the land of the rising sun.

Hearken ye Peoples, the powers you made  
That have given you order, prosperity, trade,  
Are being mis-called, insulted, betrayed  
By the land of the rising sun.

The Ignorant rule; the Workers are slaves,  
Art, manners, religion, they throw to the waves,  
Men and women sink early to honourless graves  
In the land of the rising sun.

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Are they appalled - do they tremble? Nay, Nay,  
The church bells are ringing; our children are gay  
We live out our lives in our own simple way  
We, the folk of the rising sun.

We work for ourselves, no profiteer here  
Drinking our lives as men drink strong beer  
No dread of tomorrows - our path straight and clear  
In the land of the rising sun.

Dear comrades, dear friends, across the wide sea  
We meet you, we greet you in sweet amity  
May the day soon arrive when all Nations shall be  
As the land of the rising sun!.

.....  
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## Manifesto of Irish Volunteers.

AT a time when legislative proposals universally confessed to be of vital concern for the future of Ireland have been put forward, and are awaiting decision, a plan has been deliberately adopted by one of the great English political parties, advocated by the leaders of that party and by its numerous organs in the Press, and brought systematically to bear on English public opinion, to make the display of military force and the menace of armed violence the determining factor in the future relations between this country and Great Britain.

The party which has thus substituted open force for the semblance of civil government is seeking by this means not merely to decide an immediate political issue of grave concern to this Nation, but also to obtain for itself the future control of all our national affairs. It is plain to every man that the people of Ireland, if they acquiesce in this new policy by their inaction, will consent to the surrender, not only of their rights as a nation, but of their civic rights as men.

The Act of Union deprived the Irish nation of the power to direct its own course and to develop and use its own resources for its own benefit. It gave us, instead, the meagre and seldom effective right of throwing our votes into the vast and complicated movement of British politics. Since the Act of Union a long series of repressive statutes has endeavoured to deal with the incessant discontent of the Irish people by depriving them of various rights common to all who live under the British Constitution. The new policy goes further than the Act of Union, and further than all subsequent Coercion Acts taken together. It proposes to leave us the political franchise in name, and to annihilate it in fact. If we fail to take such measures as will effectually defeat this policy, we become politically the most degraded population in Europe, and no longer worthy of the name of Nation.

Are we to rest inactive, in the hope that the course of politics in Great Britain may save us from the degradation openly threatened against us? **British politics are controlled by British interests, and are complicated by problems of great importance to the people of Great Britain. In a crisis of this kind, the duty of safeguarding our own rights is our duty first and foremost. They have rights who dare maintain them.** If we remain quiescent, by what title can we expect the people of Great Britain to turn aside from their own pressing concerns to defend us? Will not such an attitude of itself mark us out as a people unworthy of defence.

Such is the occasion, not altogether unfortunate, which has brought about the inception of the Irish Volunteer movement. But the Volunteers, once they have been enrolled, will form a prominent element in the national life under a National Government. The Nation will maintain its Volunteer organisation as a guarantee of the liberties which the Irish people shall have secured.

**If ever in history a people could say that an opportunity was given them by God's will to make an honest and manly stand for their rights, that opportunity is given us to-day.**

The stress of industrial effort, the relative peace and prosperity of recent years, may have dulled the sense of the full demands of civic duty. We may forget that the powers of the platform, the Press, and the polling booth are derived from the conscious resolve of the people to maintain their rights and liberties. From time immemorial, it has been held by every race of mankind to be the right and duty of a freeman to defend his freedom with all his resources and with his life itself. The exercise of that right distinguishes the freeman from the serf, the discharge of that duty distinguishes him from the coward.

To drill, to learn the use of arms, to acquire the habit of concerted and disciplined action, to form a citizen army from a population now at the mercy of almost any organised aggression—this, beyond all doubt, is a program that appeals to all Ireland, but especially to young Ireland. We begin at once in Dublin, and we are confident that the movement will be taken up without delay all over the country. Public opinion has already and quite spontaneously formed itself into an eager desire for the establishment of the Irish Volunteers.

The object proposed for the Irish Volunteers is to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland. Their duties will be defensive and protective, and they will not contemplate either aggression or domination. Their ranks are open to all able-bodied Irishmen without distinction of creed, politics or social grade. Means will be found whereby Irishmen unable to serve as ordinary Volunteers will be enabled to aid the Volunteer forces in various capacities. There will also be work for women to do, and there are signs that the women of Ireland, true to their record, are especially enthusiastic for the success of the Irish Volunteers.

We propose for the Volunteers' organisation the widest possible basis. Without any other association or classification, the Volunteers will be enrolled according to the district in which they live. As soon as it is found feasible, the district sections will be called upon to join in making provision for the general administration and discipline, and for united co-operation. The provisional Committee which has acted up to the present will continue to offer its services until an elective body is formed to replace it.

A proportion of time spared, not from work, but from pleasure and recreation, a voluntary adoption of discipline, a purpose firmly and steadily carried through, will renew the vitality of the Nation. Even that degree of self-discipline will bring back to every town, village, and countryside a consciousness that has long been forbidden them—the sense of freemen who have fitted themselves to defend the cause of freedom.

In the name of National Unity, of National Dignity, of National and Individual Liberty, of Manly Citizenship, we appeal to our countrymen to recognise and accept without hesitation the opportunity that has been granted them to join the ranks of the Irish Volunteers, and to make the movement now begun not unworthy of the historic title which it has adopted.

*(Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers, issued at first turn-out in Dublin, November, 1913, re-issued June, 1914.)*

Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers, Dublin (November 1913, re-issued June 1914).

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THE FUTURE OF THE IRISH NATIONALIST VOLUNTEERS.

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MR. ASQUITH AT DUBLIN.

September 25, 1914.

"The Empire needs recruits, needs them at once..... That is our immediate necessity, and no Irishman in responding to it need be afraid that he is prejudicing the future of the Volunteers. I do not say, and I cannot say, under what precise form or organisation, but I trust and believe, and, indeed, I am certain that the Volunteers will become a permanent part, an integral and a characteristic part of the defensive forces of the Crown." ("Daily Chronicle", 26/9/14.)

MR. REDMOND AT WEXFORD.

October 4, 1914.

"The Premier declared the other day in Dublin that he wanted..... recruits as the free offering of a free people..... The Prime Minister had declared that after the war was over the Volunteers would remain as the recognised permanent force for the defence of the country. Mark what that meant. Under the provisions of the Home Rule Act they had no power to maintain such a force, and this was a declaration which amounted to a pledge that, when the war was over, that power would be given to them, and that the Volunteers would be a permanent defence force for all time to the country."

("Irish Independent", Oct. 5, 1914.)

EXTRACTS FROM THE HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE, JANUARY 8, 1915.

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LORD MIDLETON:-

"..... What is the position of the Irish Volunteers? Mr. Asquith, as we know, made a recruiting speech in Dublin. According to Mr. Redmond, the Prime Minister promised in that speech that when the war was over power would be given to the Irish Parliament to make the Volunteers a "recognised permanent force for the defence of the country." I should like to know whether such a pledge was given, and if it has been given what authority had the Prime Minister to give it?..."

LORD CREWE:-

"The pledge of the Prime Minister on the subject of the Volunteers has been somewhat misunderstood..... It appears to have been assumed by some that the Prime Minister especially picked out the Nationalist Volunteers as being likely to constitute the Irish Army of the future. The noble Viscount (Lord Midleton) very truly said that the Home Rule scheme does not contemplate the raising or maintenance of an Irish Army by the Government of Ireland. But the Prime Minister never said he was going to amend the Home Rule Bill in that respect. What he said amounts

Extracts from the House of Commons debate on The Future of the Irish Nationalist Volunteers (8<sup>th</sup> June, 1915). Image 1 of 2. PRONI Reference: D1507/A/11/1

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on the general existence of an Irish Volunteer Force in the past would undoubtedly not survive the changed state of things that would be found to exist at the close of the War; and the noble Viscount is not entitled to draw any more definite conclusion than that from the words of the Prime Minister."

LORD MIDLETON:- "Can the Noble Marquess give us a pledge that unless the Volunteers are regularly enrolled and take the oath of allegiance they shall not be given ~~the~~ arms or authority?"

LORD CREWE:- "I am quite sure that that view will have the attention of the Irish Government, and the Military Authorities....."

("Times" January 9th, 1915.)

MR. REDMOND AT KILKENNY, October 18th, 1914.

"I have made a demand on the Government that they should obtain for me immediately a statement from every parish in Ireland as to the number of Reservists and Recruits who have gone to the Colours since the commencement of the War."

("Freeman's Journal" October 19th, 1914.)

MR. REDMOND AT TUAM, December 6th, 1914.

"I asked the Government some little time ago to supply me with a return of men for every portion of Ireland who were serving with the Colours and who had gone to the Colours since the War commenced. I have some of these figures, and I will give them to you now. Remember, these are official figures supplied to me by the Government."

("Freeman's Journal" December 7th, 1914).

LORD LUCAS, replying for the Government to Lord Midleton in the House of Lords, January 8th, 1915.

"Two days ago in reply to Earl Curzon, the Marquess of Crewe had stated in the most categorical terms that the Government were unable to present any figures with regard either to the strength or to the composition of our armed forces in this country or with regard to recruiting.....There was only one course open to the Government in dealing with questions of the kind which had been put to them, and that was rigorously to abstain from mentioning figures in any form whatever."

("Evening Standard" January 8th, 1915).

Extracts from the House of Commons debate on The Future of the Irish Nationalist Volunteers (8<sup>th</sup> June, 1915). Image 1 of 2. PRONI Reference: D1507/A/11/1

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# CUMANN NA mBAN

(THE IRISHWOMEN'S COUNCIL).



Cumann na mBan is a non-partisan and non-sectional National Organisation for women of Irish birth or descent. Its headquarters are at 41 Kildare Street. Women of Irish birth or descent alone are eligible for membership.

The Organisation came into being in November, 1913, and started the work of founding branches in March, 1914. In October, 1914, sixty-three branches were in existence for Ireland, and some in England. Besides the founding of First-Aid and Ambulance Classes, the Organisation as the occasion arises, engages in any vital National work in which its activities are needed. Cumann na mBan initiated the Defence of Ireland Fund for the equipment of the Volunteers.

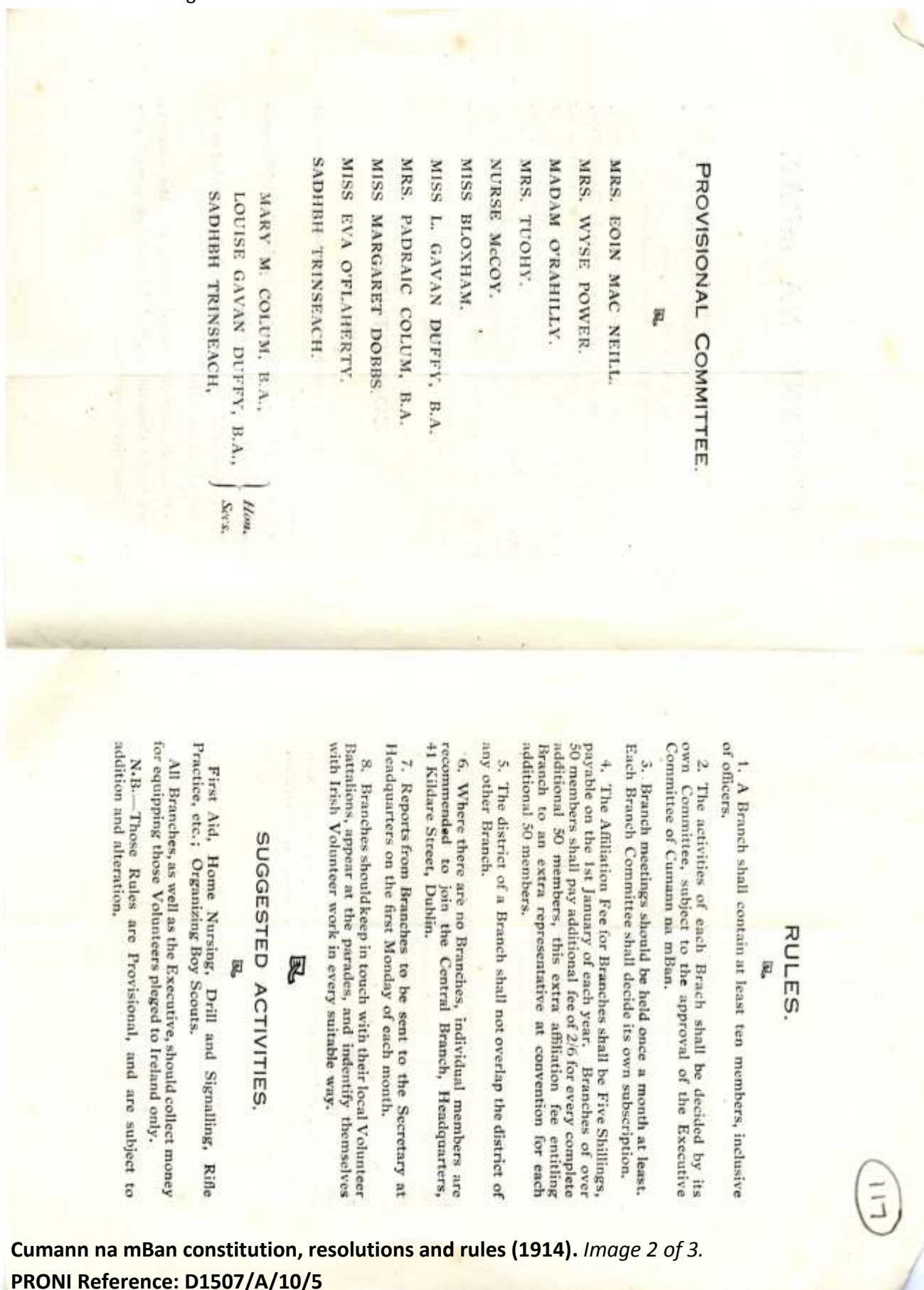


## CONSTITUTION.

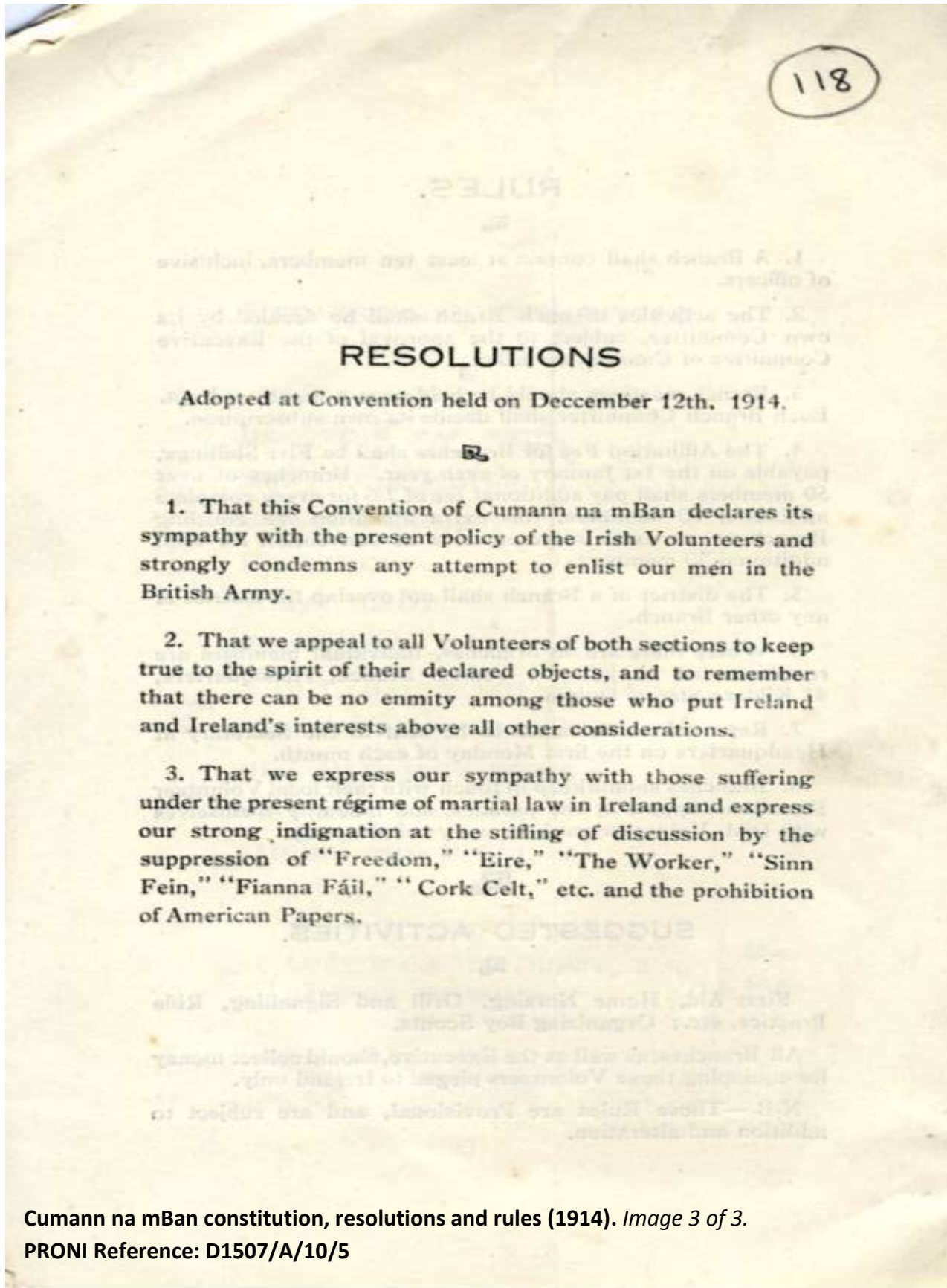


- 1.—Cumann na mBan has been founded to advance the cause of Irish liberty.
- 2.—It is an independent body of Nationalist Irishwomen pledged to work for Ireland only.
- 3.—The direction of the Branches shall be carried on by the Executive Committee.
- 4.—Branches may be formed throughout the country, pledged to the Constitution, and directed in a general way by the Executive Committee.

Cumann na mBan constitution, resolutions and rules (1914). *Image 1 of 3.*  
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Cumann na mBan constitution, resolutions and rules (1914). Image 2 of 3.  
PRONI Reference: D1507/A/10/5



**Cumann na mBan constitution, resolutions and rules (1914).** *Image 3 of 3.*  
PRONI Reference: D1507/A/10/5