

# The Limerick Curfew Murders, 1921

## *Dúnmharuithe Chuirfiú Luimnigh, 1921*

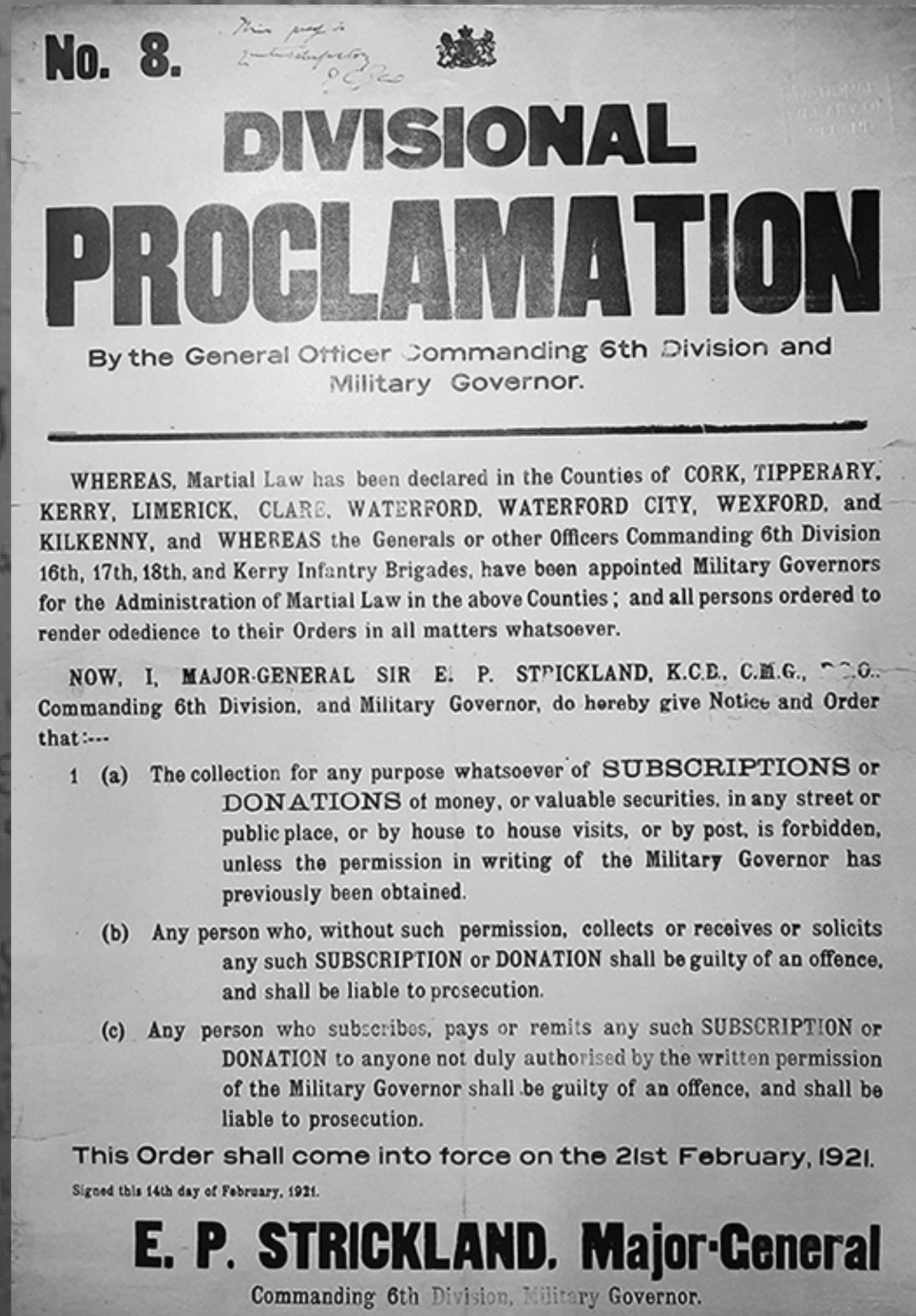


## 'These Callous Crimes'

## 'Na Coireanna Cruachróíocha Seo'



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Limerick was at the forefront of the republican struggle during Ireland's War of Independence in both political and military terms and its citizens paid a high price. The provisions of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act of August 1920 strengthened the hand of the local Crown Forces and, in December, Limerick became part of what IRA chief of staff Richard Mulcahy would call the 'War Zone' – a martial law area mainly comprising the six counties of Munster garrisoned by the 6th Division, British Army. These developments greatly facilitated an ongoing policy of 'unofficial reprisals' against Irish republicans which gave the appearance of a 'dirty war'.

In Limerick, this 'dirty war' culminated on the night of the 6/7 March 1921. Between 11.30pm and 1.30am, three men - the mayor of Limerick George Clancy, his immediate predecessor in that office, Michael O'Callaghan, and an IRA Volunteer named Joseph O'Donoghue – were brutally shot dead at their homes. Although British officialdom attributed what the ranking RIC officer subsequently termed 'these callous crimes' to radical elements of the local IRA, they were in fact the work of members of the Crown Forces, and were widely recognised as such at the time. Dubbed the Limerick Curfew Murders as they took place during a nightly military curfew, they sent shockwaves through the city and country and made headlines around the world. They remain the central event in the social memory of the revolutionary period in Limerick, where the names of its victims are inscribed on the streets.

*Bhí Luimneach chun tosaigh na streachailte poblachtaí i rith Chogadh na Saoirse in Éirinn i dtaobh cúrsaí polaitíochta agus míleata agus d'íoc a shaoránaigh go daor as. Neartaigh forálacha an Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, a achtaíodh i Lúnasa 1920, Fórsaí na Corónach áitiúla agus rinneadh cuid den 'Láthair Chogaidh' de Luimneach i Nollaig faoi mar a thabharfadh Ceann Foirne an IRA, Richard Mulcahy air – limistéar dlí mhíleata ina raibh sé chontae na Mumhan, den chuid is mó, ina raibh garastún an 6ú Rannóg, Arm na Breataine. Rinne na forbairtí beartas 'bearta neamhoifigiúla díoltais' a éascú go mór in aghaidh poblachtaigh Éireannacha, agus bhí sé ina 'cogadh salach'.*

*I Luimneach, tharla an eachtra ba mheasa den 'chogadh salach' seo ar oíche an 6/7 Márta 1921. Lámhachadh triúr marbh go brúidiúil - Méara Luimnigh, Seirse Mac Fhlannchadha, an duine deireanach a bhí i seilbh na hoifige sin, Micheál Ó Ceallacháin, agus Óglach den IRA darbh ainm Iósaef Ó Donnchadha – idir 11.30pm agus 1.30am ag a n-áiteanna cónaithe. Cé gur thug oifigiúlachas na Breataine fios gur poblachtaigh radacacha áitiúla ba chúis leis 'na coireanna cruachróíocha seo', faoi mar a thug an t-oifigeach céime den RIC orthu an oíche sin, ba bhaill d'Fhórsaí na Corónach a rinne iad agus aithníodh go fairsing forleathan sin ag an tráth sin. Tugadh Dúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú orthu mar gheall gur tharla siad i rith cuirfiú míleata a cuireadh i bhfeidhm ar Luimneach. Chuir siad an chathair agus an tír trína chéile agus bhain siad ceannlínte nuachta amach ar fud an domhain. Is é an eachtra lárnach i gcuimhne shóisialta thréimhse an éirí amach i Luimneach go fóill, áit a bhfuil ainmneacha a íospartach greanta go docht ar na sráideanna.*

# Victims: Joseph O'Donoghue – 'the Ideal Volunteer'

## Íospartaigh: Iósaf Ó Donnchadha – 'an Sár-Óglach'



Joseph O'Donoghue was born in October 1895 in Ballinacargy, county Westmeath where his parents, James and Bridget, ran a farm. An ardent Irish nationalist, he became involved with the GAA and the Gaelic League as a young man and he joined the Irish Volunteers in 1917. He was subsequently promoted to section leader with D Company, 1st Battalion, Athlone Brigade IRA, described by his company captain as 'the ideal Volunteer ... a very willing, sober, honest and upright worker for the cause'.

Rugadh Iósaf Ó Donnchadha i nDeireadh Fómhair 1895 i mBaile na Carraige, Contae na hIarmhí, áit a raibh feirm bheag ag a thuismitheoirí, James agus Bridget. Náisiúnaf Éireannach díograiseach a bhí ann agus ghlac sé páirt leis an CLG agus Conradh na Gaeilge nuair a bhí sé ina fhear óg agus chuaigh sé le hÓglaigh na hÉireann sa bhliain 1917. Tugadh ardú céime dó aníos go dtí ceannaire rannóige le Complacht D, an Iú Cathlán, Briogáid Bhaile Átha Luain den IRA, agus dúirt captaen a chomplachta gur 'Sár-Óglach ... oibrí an-toiliúil, an-stuama, an-ionraic agus an-nhacánta ar son na cúise' é.

**QUERIES:**

(1) Between what dates did deceased serve with your Command? *May 1917 To August 1918*

(2) In what capacity did deceased serve? *Section Leader D Coy (Then) Athlone Brigade*

(3) In what area was deceased engaged in Military Service? *Ballinacargy Co. Westmeath*

(4) Did the deceased receive a wound or injury while engaged in Military Service as defined? If so, please give the following particulars of such wound or injury:—

(a) Nature of wound or injury ... *He was wounded by a bullet in the chest on the night of the 2nd of March 1921*

(b) Date on which wound or injury was received ... *2nd March 1921*

(c) Full circumstances in which wound or injury was received ... *By Crown Forces on the night of the 2nd of March 1921*

(d) Particulars of any negligence or misconduct on the part of the deceased which, in your opinion, should be taken into consideration in determining whether the wound or injury was attributable to Military Service ...

(5) Particulars of any other matter in support of the applicant's claim or otherwise, on which you desire to comment ... *During the period which I knew deceased I always found him to be a very willing, sober, honest, & upright worker for the cause. In fact he was the Ideal Volunteer.*

(6) Date of death of deceased ... *I have no personal knowledge of the facts by which he met his death.*

(7) Have you personal knowledge of the facts of the case as set out by you above, or are your replies based on official reports, or on information otherwise received? ...

I declare above statements to be true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Signature *Michael Harrow*  
Organisation and Rank *Coy. Capt. IRA*  
Address *2, ...*  
Date *5/9/33*

**QUERIES:**

(1) Between what dates did deceased serve with your Command? *1919 - 1921*

(2) In what capacity did deceased serve? *Volunteer*

(3) In what area was deceased engaged in Military Service? *E. Coy. (Camp Road)*

(4) Did the deceased receive a wound or injury while engaged in Military Service as defined? If so, please give the following particulars of such wound or injury:—

(a) Nature of wound or injury ... *He was murdered by Royal Troops because of his connection with the IRA. He was one of the victims who were shot to death & bayoneted.*

(b) Date on which wound or injury was received ... *I think April, 1921*

(c) Full circumstances in which wound or injury was received ... *He was taken out of bed by a search party and military, brought from his lodging, bayoneted & shot & left to die in a field.*

(d) Particulars of any negligence or misconduct on the part of the deceased which, in your opinion, should be taken into consideration in determining whether the wound or injury was attributable to Military Service ... *None. He was an exemplary citizen & soldier.*

(5) Particulars of any other matter in support of the applicant's claim or otherwise, on which you desire to comment ... *In this case there is no doubt but he was murdered by the British because of his activities.*

(6) Date of death of deceased ... *Same date as above.*

(7) Have you personal knowledge of the facts of the case as set out by you above, or are your replies based on official reports, or on information otherwise received? ... *I was reported to by my brother, who was one of the most reliable in IRA.*

I declare above statements to be true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Signature *Michael Harrow*  
Organisation and Rank *Coy. Capt. IRA*  
Address *4, ...*  
Date

Military Service Pensions Collection DP3623. Courtesy of the Military Archives.  
Bailiúchán Pinsean Na Seirbhíse Míleata DP3623. Courtesy of An Chartlann Mhíleata

## Victims: Joseph O'Donoghue – 'the Ideal Volunteer' Íospartaigh: Iósaf Ó Donnchadha – 'an Sár-Óglach'

O'Donoghue moved to Limerick city in late 1919 to take up a managerial position with the British & Argentine Meat Company on William Street. There, his well-attested ['easy, courteous and affable disposition'](#) proved popular with colleagues and customers alike. He quickly established a presence in local nationalist circles. Most significantly, he gave 'splendid service' to the city branch of the Gaelic League and was a 'loyal and active' member of E Company, 2nd Battalion, Mid-Limerick Brigade IRA.

Bhog Ó Donnchadha go Cathair Luimnigh go déanach sa bhliain 1919 chun glacadh le post bainistíochta le Cuideachta Feolta na Breataine agus na hAirgintíne ar Shráid Liam, áit ar chosúil go raibh an-chion ag a chomhghleacaithe agus ag custaiméirí ar ['a mheon réchúiseach, cúirtéiseach agus cairdiúil'](#) a raibh bunús maith leis. Ghlac sé páirt gan mórán moille i ngrúpaí náisiúnacha sa chathair. Ba shuntasáí an 'sárfhónamh' a rinne sé do bhrainse áitiúil Chonradh na Gaeilge agus ba bhall 'dílis agus gníomhach' é de Chomplacht E, an 2ra Cathlán, Briogáid Lár Luimnigh den IRA

[Click here to read Bridget Liddy's evidence to the court](#)  
[Clliceáil anseo chun fianaise Bhríd Uí Lidí a léamh](#)



(From Our Special Representative.)  
Limerick, Friday.  
The Military Court of Inquiry into the shooting of the Mayor (Ald. G. Clancy), the ex-Mayor (Councillor M. O'Callaghan), and Mr. Joseph O'Donoghue was held in the Courthouse, Limerick, this morning.

The approaches and interior of the building were guarded by armed forces and a permit was necessary to gain admission.

With the exception of a clergyman, two or three civilian witnesses, and the Press representatives, only officers of the Court and Crown forces were present.

A lady with whom Mr. O'Donoghue lodged stated that at 11.30 p.m. on March 6 she was in her drawingroom chatting with deceased and her son. About 20 minutes to 12 she was about going to bed when a loud knock came to the door. She asked who was there. One or two voices replied sharply, "Open the door." She did so, and two men rushed in. Both had dark, glossy goggles over their eyes. One was tall, wearing a black overcoat and a brown or fawn slouch hat. He was about 25 years of age. The other man was a low-sized, thick man, somewhat stouter and smaller than his comrade.

### MARTIAL LAW LIST:

When they entered the house they immediately ran to the back of the hall-door, and tore away the list of names posted there from underneath an overcoat.

President—Were the men armed?

Witness—They had something resembling pistols in their hands. They quickly scanned the list of names, and asked were all the

Freeman's Journal, 12 March 1921

At around 11.40 on the night of 6 March 1921, a small party of disguised and armed men called to O'Donoghue's lodgings at 'Tigh na Fáinne' on Janesboro Avenue as the household was readying for bed. The men demanded entry of the landlady, Bridget Liddy, and on establishing O'Donoghue's identity, removed him from the house.

Ag thart ar 11.40 san oíche an 6 Márta 1921, thug grúpa beag fear faoi bhréagriocht agus faoi airm cuairt ar Ióistín Uí Dhonnchadha ag 'Tigh na Fáinne' ar Ascaill Bhaile Shinéad fad a bhí muintir an tí ag dul a luí. D'iarr na fir cead isteach ón úinéir, Bríd Uí Lidí, agus i ndiaidh go raibh siad cinnte gur bh é Ó Donnchadha a bhí ann, baineadh den teach é.

### Landlady Described Mr. O'Donoghue as "a Quiet Boy"

Continuing her evidence, witness said the men searched O'Donoghue's bedroom, tossed up the mattress, and looked behind the religious pictures on the wall. On their way down they said, in a loud voice, "Any rebel caught in this house to-night will be shot." They took some kind of an Irish newspaper from the pocket. "I said," witness added, "you are not going to take this poor fellow away like this?" I said he was a quiet, inoffensive boy, and I said he was managing the British and Argentine meat shop, and they said he would not manage it again. The men admired some century-old engravings of the Irish House of Commons in 1708. She went to the door to see O'Donoghue, but the men said if she put her nose outside until after six o'clock she would be shot. They went out then, but said to witness: "We will shoot any member of your family who will go out."

Freeman's Journal, 12 March 1921



Bridget Liddy, with her husband, Joseph. Joseph died one year prior to the murders. Bríd Uí Lidí agus a fear céile, Iósaf. Fuair Iósaf bás bliain roimh na dúnmharuithe. (2)

Victims: Joseph O'Donoghue – 'the Ideal Volunteer' Íospartaigh: Iósaf Ó Donnchadha – 'an Sár-Óglach'

Liddy told the consequent military court of inquiry that she was ordered to remain inside until 6am on pain of being shot and, afraid for herself and her children, she complied. She emerged at 6.45 to discover O'Donoghue's body on the side of the road near her gate. Evidence presented to the court by an army doctor indicated that he had been shot eight times.

Dúirt Bean Uí Lidí don chúirt mhíleata a tionóladh ina dhiaidh sin gur tugadh ordú dóibh fanacht sa teach go dtí 6am nó go ndéanfaí iad a lámhach agus, mar gheall go raibh eagla uirthi agus dá leanaí, chloígh sí leis an ordú seo. D'fhág sí an teach ag 6.45 agus tháinig sí ar chorp Uí Dhonnchadha ar thaobh an bhóthair i ngar dá geata. Thug fianaise liachta le fios gur lámhachadh é ocht n-uaire.

É I R E.  
 Births and Deaths Registration Acts, 1863 - 1880.  
 Certified Copy of Entry in the Register Book of Deaths - See Endorsement.

19  
 Deaths Registered in the District of Limerick Rural in the Superintendent Registrar's District of Limerick County of The City of Limerick

No.	Date and place of Death.	Name and Surname	Sex	Condition	Age last Birthday	Rank, Profession, or occupation	Certified cause of death and duration of illness.	Signature, Qualification and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
74	1921. March Deaths on Seventh Jamesboro Limerick	Joseph O' Donoghue	Mr.	Bachelor	24 years	Manager	Gunshot wounds Homicidal fired by person unknown who are guilty of murder	Certificate received from Military Court of Inquiry. Inquiry held on 12 <sup>th</sup> March 1921	Matthew Graham March Thirtieth 1921	Matthew Graham

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the Entry No. 74 in the Register Book of Deaths.

D. Mc Namara  
 Registrar of Births and Deaths.

of City Hall & Hospital, Limerick of Limerick County Borough 1d Stamp  
 Dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1953

2<sup>nd</sup> witness.  
Maurice Shipsey  
 Capt. R.A.M.C.  
 sworn states:—

On 7 March I examined the body of Joseph O'Donoghue, at Jamesboro, Limerick, in Mr. Kelly's house.

There were 2 bullets in the chest, entrance wounds. One exit wound in the back. The second bullet was lying under the skin at the back of the chest. I produce it, it is a .45 rooster bullet.

There were 2 entrance wounds at the top of the head going straight down & fracturing the skull in both cases. There were no exit wounds to these.

There was a wound of entrance in the right arm.

## Victims: George Clancy – ‘a Sinn Féiner before Sinn Féin’

Íospartaigh: Seirse Mac Fhlannchadha – ‘tacadóir Shinn Féin sula raibh Sinn Féin ann’



George Clancy was born in Grange, county Limerick in 1881. His family had strong Fenian associations and he imbibed what his [Bureau of Military History biography](#) termed ‘militant Irish nationality’ from a young age. Thus, he became a ‘Gaelic Leaguer before the Gaelic League, a Sinn Féiner before Sinn Féin’, who went on to work ‘in every department of Irish National Endeavour – educational, physical, political, economic’. For example, as a student in Dublin’s University College, Clancy was the ‘leading spirit’ in a new Irish sporting and social club, Cumann na bPáirtidhthe (‘The Confederates’), and he established a campus branch of the Gaelic League.

Rugadh Seirse Mac Fhlannchadha sa Ghráinseach, Contae Luimnigh sa bhliain 1881. Bhí a theaghlach go mór ar son na bhFíiníní agus, faoi mar a tugadh le fios i [mbeathaisnéis a scríobh an Biúró na Staire Míleata](#), bhí sé faoi thionchar náisiúnachas cathach na hÉireann óna n-óige. Mar thoradh air sin, ‘tacadóir Chonradh na Gaeilge sula raibh Conradh na Gaeilge ann, tacadóir Shinn Féin sula raibh Sinn Féin ann’ a bhí ann agus d’oibrigh sé ina dhiaidh sin ‘i ngach limistéar de Dhícheall Náisiúnta na hÉireann – oideachas, fisiciúil, polaitiúil, geilleagrach’. Mar shampla, nuair ba mhac léinn i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath é, bhí páirt lárnach aige cumann Éireannach nua sóisialta agus spóirt a bhunú, Cumann na bPáirtidhthe, agus i mbrainse de Chonradh na Gaeilge a bhunú ar an gcampus.



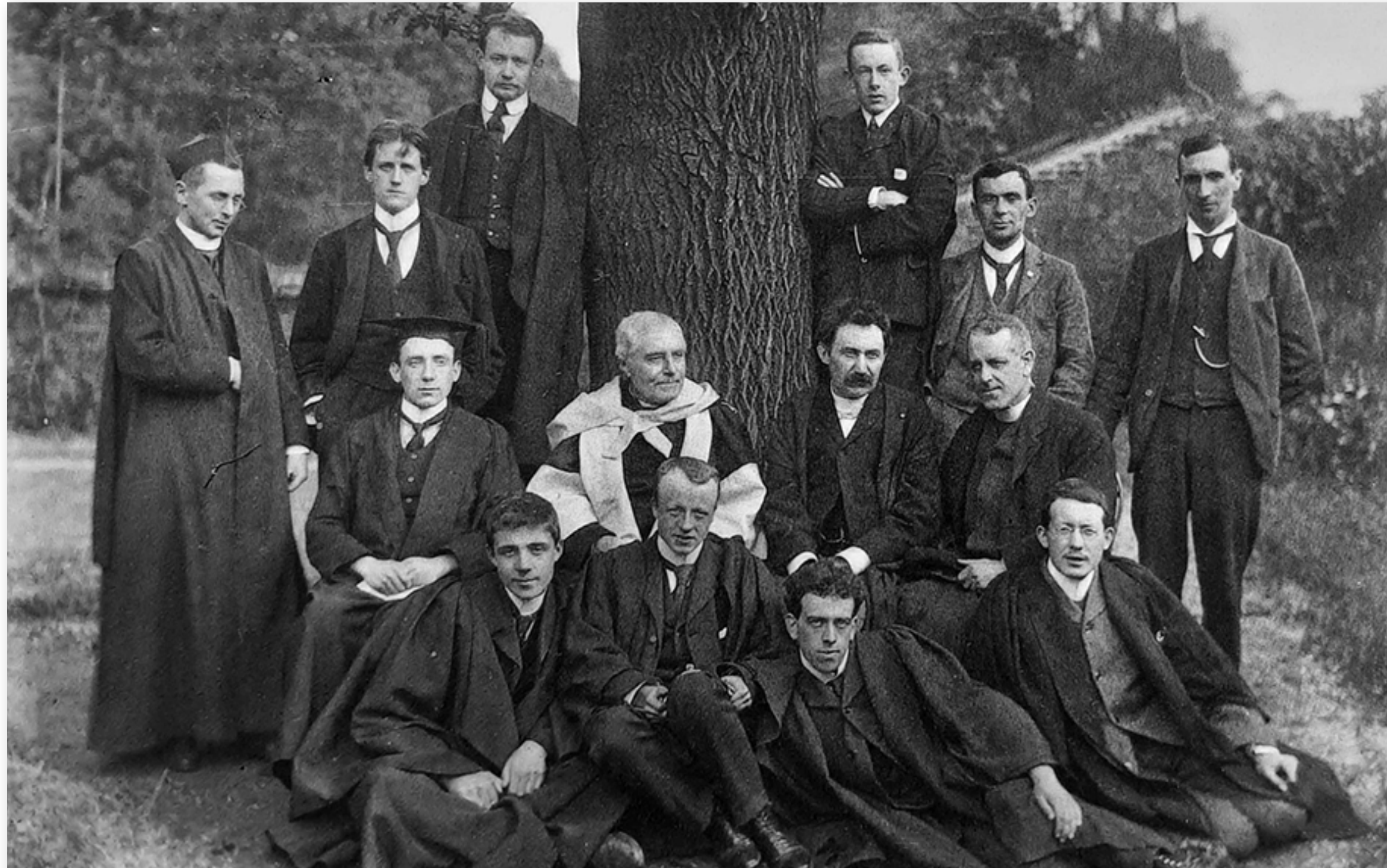
Cumann na bPáirtidhthe hurling club, c. 1902: George Clancy, middle row, 4th from left. (3)

Cumann iománaíochta Chumann na bPáirtidhthe, thart ar an mbliain 1902: Seirse Mac Fhlannchadha, an tsraith láir, an 4ú duine ó chlé.



George Clancy (2nd from left) in University College, Dublin.

Seirse Mac Fhlannchadha i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath (4)



University College graduate class, 1904. George Clancy seated in cap, with James Joyce standing behind. Clancy was Joyce’s model for the character of Michael Davin in Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Joyce described Davin as ‘a young fenian’ who ‘worshipped on the sorrowful legend of Ireland’.

Rang céimithe Choláiste na hOllscoile, 1904. Seoirse Mac Fhlannchadha ina suí agus caipín á chaitheamh aige, agus James Joyce ina sheasamh taobh thiar de. Ba é Mac Fhlannchadha an tsamhail a d’úsáid Joyce don charachtar Michael Davin in Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Dúirt Joyce gur ‘finín óg’ é Davin ‘a rinne adhradh ar sheanscéal brónach na hÉireann’. (5)

Clancy immersed himself in Irish revivalism and republican activism throughout his postgraduate career as a language teacher. He was a key figure in the Gaelic League in Limerick City, where he taught Irish from 1908 until 1918, and he was a founder member of the area branch of the Irish Volunteers in 1914. He was also a local IRB leader and served as adjutant and vice officer commanding with the 1st Battalion, Mid-Limerick Brigade IRA.

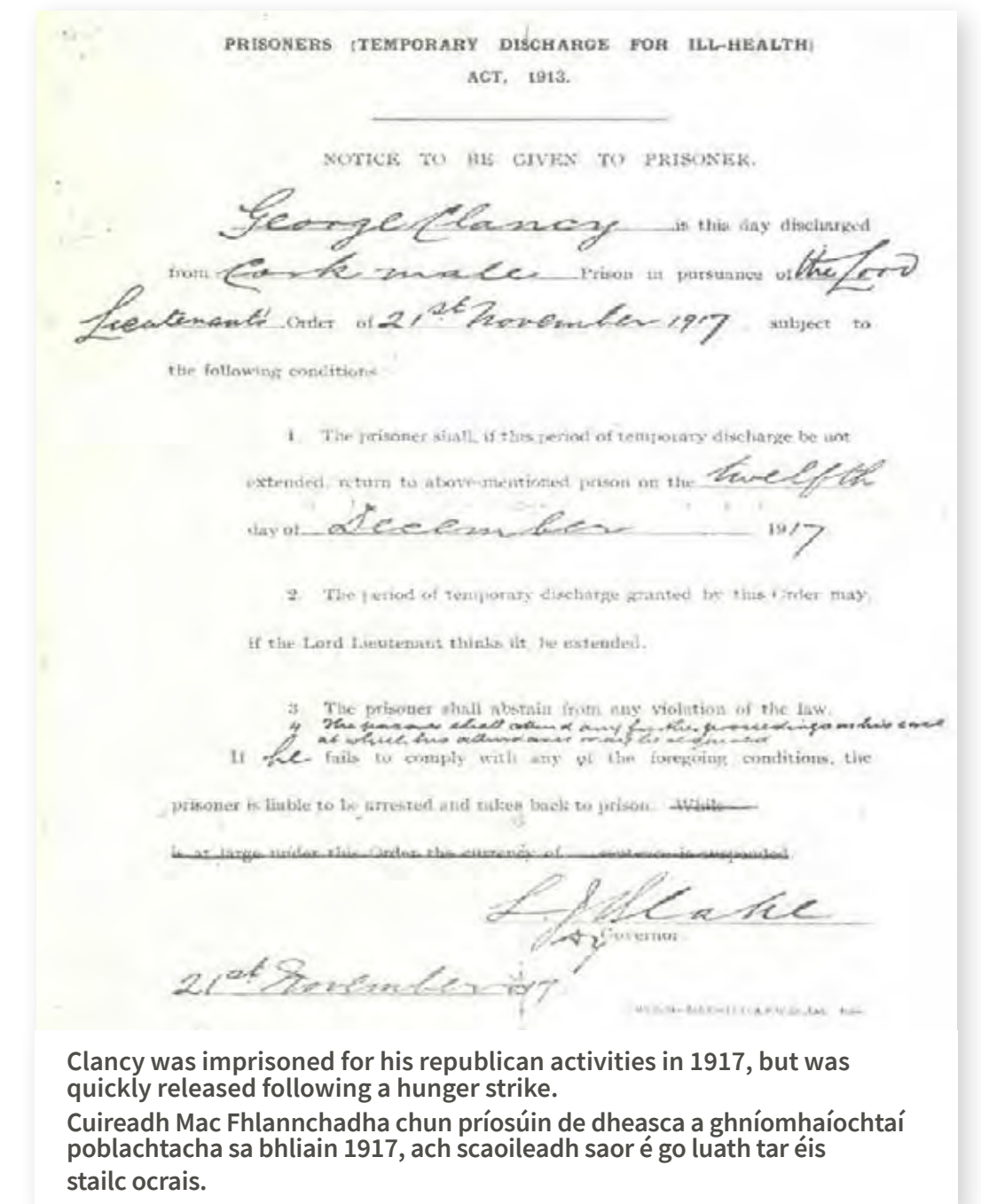
Lean sé de bheith gafa le hathbheochan na Gaeilge agus le gníomhaíochas poblachtach I rith a ghairme beatha iarchéime mar mhúinteoir teanga. Nuair a mhúin sé an Ghaeilge I gCathair Luimnigh ón mbliain 1908 go dtí 1918, bhí sé ina bhall gníomhach de Conradh na Gaeilge, agus ba bhall bunaidh bhrainse Óglaigh na hÉireann sa chathair é Mac Fhlannchadha in Eanáir 1914. Chomh maith leis sin, ba cheannaire áitiúil an IRB é, agus d’fhóin sé mar aidiúnach leis an Tú Cathlán, Briogáid Lár Luimnigh den IRA.

Clancy eschewed parliamentary politics for most of his life. According to his wife Mary, he had no faith in the Westminster system and he rejected two invitations to join the Irish Party, one directly extended by John Redmond. However, Sinn Féin’s entry into the electoral fray saw him take an increasingly activist stance. He campaigned for the party in the East Clare by-election in July 1917 and the General Election of 1918, and he was a Limerick agent for the First Dáil Loan. Clancy stood as a Sinn Féin candidate in the municipal elections of January 1920 and was elected senior alderman on Limerick Corporation. He became mayor of Limerick city one year later.

Irish Volunteers---City of Limerick Regiment.  
VOTING PAPER. 615  
ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE.  
Thursday, 25th June 1914.

COMMITTEE. SIX TO BE ELECTED		
BLAKE, Alphonsus	King's Island	A
BOURKE, Michael	Bedford Row	C
CASHEN, John	Thomondgate	B
CLANCY, George	Thomas Street	G
CLOSE, Charles P.	Clare Street	A
COLIVET, Michael P.	Thomondgate	B
DeCOURCY, Robt. W.	Alphonsus Place	D
DINNEEN, Stephen	Nicholas Street	B
DUGGAN, Edward B.	Summerville Ter	D
FITZGERALD, Maurice	St. Joseph's Street	D
GRANT, John	Wolfe Tone Street	D
GRIFFIN, P.	Ballinacurra	D
HARTIGAN, Michael	Thomondgate	B
HOGAN, Richard	Bowman Street	D
KEYES, Joseph	Upper Clare Street	A
KEYES, Thomas R.	Blackboy	G
KIRBY, James	O'Connell Street	H
LEHANE, John	Sarsfield Terrace	D
LYNCH, John	Henry Street	D
MAHER, Denis	Dixon's Lane	E
McNEICE, John S.	Hawthorne Villas	D
O'BRIEN, William	Osmington Terrace	B
O'DONNELL, Thomas	Arthur's Quay	C
O'FARRELL, P. J.	Corbally	A
O'FLYNN, P.	O'Connell Avenue	D
O'HALLORAN, Alph.	Sexton Street	G
O'NEILL, DAVID	Glentworth Street	E
RYAN, P. J.	O'Connell Street	C

D’fhan Mac Fhlannchadha glan amach ó pholaitíocht toghcháin don chuid ba mhó dá shaol. Dar le Máire, ní raibh ‘aon mhúinín aige I ngníomh Parlaiminteach [na Breataine] agus dhiúltaigh sé ar a laghad dhá chuireadh chun bheith mar bhall de Pháirtí na hÉireann, ba é John Redmond a thug ceann de na cuirí dó. Ach I ndiaidh gur iontráil Sinn Féin san iomaíocht toghcháin, thosaigh Mac Fhlannchadha ag glacadh le seasamh a bhí ag éirí níos gníomhaí I gcónaí. Rinne sé feachtas an-ghníomhach ar son an pháirtí I bhfothoghchán Oirthear an Chláir in Iúil 1917 agus in Olltoghchán 1918, agus d’oibrigh sé mar ghníomhaire ar an iasacht Chéad Dála. Sheas sé féin mar iarrthóir Shinn Féin sna toghcháin chathrach in Eanáir 1920, nuair a toghadh é ina sheanóir I mBardas Luimnigh. Toghadh Mac Fhlannchadha ina mhéara ar Chathair Luimnigh bliain ina dhiaidh sin.



Clancy was imprisoned for his republican activities in 1917, but was quickly released following a hunger strike. Cuireadh Mac Fhlannchadha chun príosúin de dheasca a ghníomhaíochtaí poblachtacha sa bhliain 1917, ach scaoileadh saor é go luath tar éis stailc ocras.

# Victims: George Clancy – ‘a Sinn Féiner before Sinn Féin’ Íospartaigh: Seoirse Mac Fhlannchadha – ‘tacadóir Shinn Féin sula raibh Sinn Féin ann’

A little after 1am on the morning of 7 March 1921, the Clancys were roused from their sleep by loud knocking and, as Crown Forces' raids on their home were becoming routine, they went down. Mary opened the door to find herself confronted by three armed men in overcoats, goggles, and hats. Quickly sensing real danger, she attempted to deny the men entry, but they forced their way past her and shot her husband dead in the hall. Mary was herself shot in the hand as she tried to defend him.

*Tamall gairid tar éis 1am ar maidin an 7 Márta 1921, thug triúr fear faoi airm agus faoi bhréagriocht cótaí móra, spéaclaí cosanta agus hataí, cuairt ar áit chónaithe Mhic Fhlannchadha. Mar gheall go raibh ruathar á thabhairt ar a dteach go rialta, d'oscail Máire an doras. Nuair a bhraith sí go raibh baol mór ann, rinne sí iarracht na fir a choimeád amach, ach bhrúigh siad thairsti agus scaoil siad a fear céile marbh sa halla. Lámhachadh Máire féin sa lámh fad a rinne sí iarracht é a chosaint.*



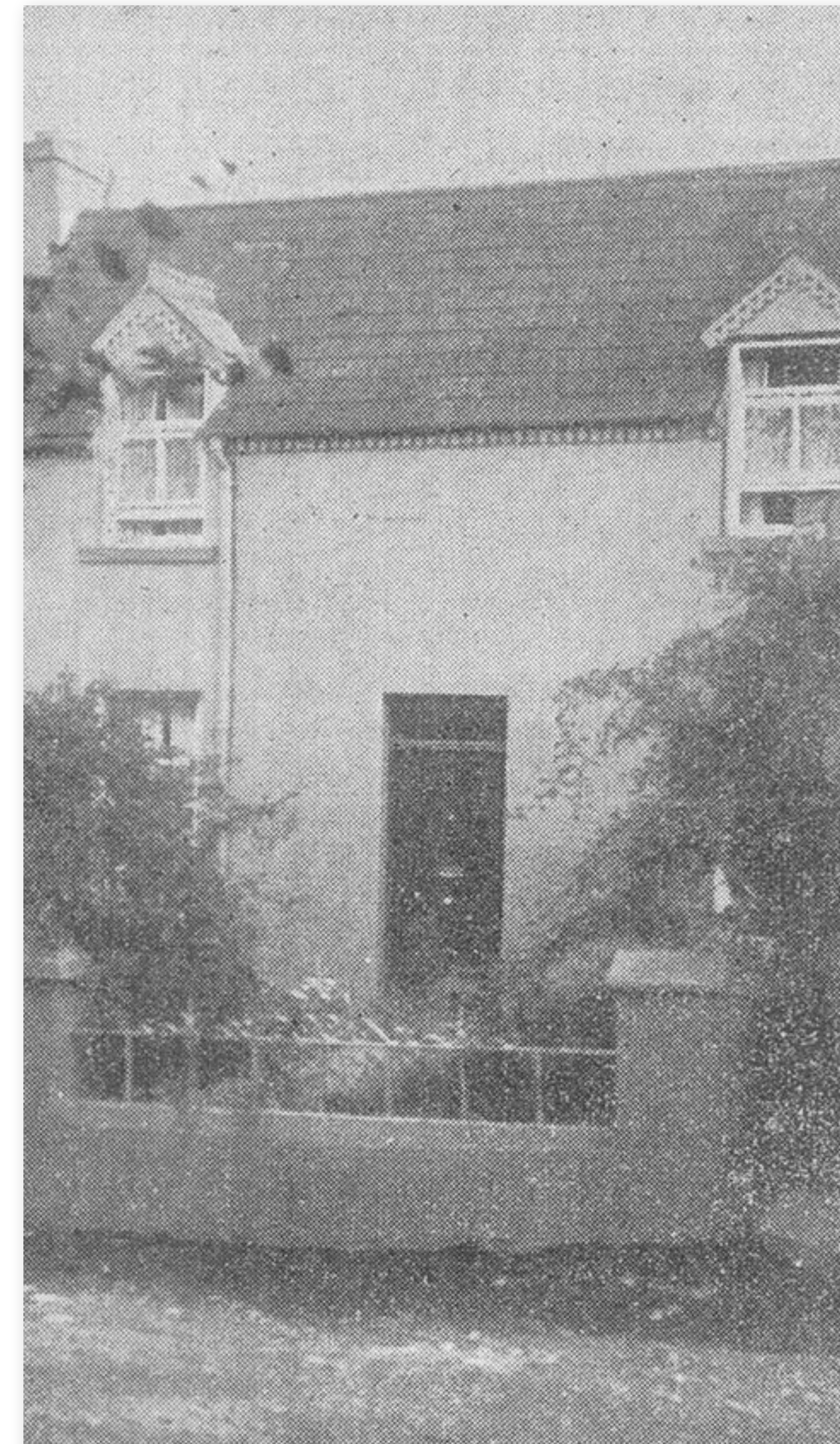
Listen to Mary Clancy's account of her husband's murder, read by Emma O'Kelly

Éist le cuntas Mháire Mhic Fhlannchadha ar dhúnmharú a fear chéile. Á léamh ag Emma O'Kelly



Clancy married Mary ('Moll') Killeen in July 1915. A National School teacher by profession, she was well known in Limerick nationalist circles, primarily through her involvement with the Gaelic League and Cumann na mBan. According to George's brother Egan, Mary was 'a more active Irish nationalist than George, if that were possible'.

*Phós Mac Fhlannchadha Máire ('Moll') Ní Chillín sa bhliain 1915. Bhí sí ina mhúinteoir bun scoile agus bhí ar eolas go maith i measc lucht náisiúnach na hÉireann i Luimneach. Bhí sí páirteach an-ghníomhach i gConradh na Gaeilge agus Chumann nna mBan. Dúirt deartháir Mhic Fhlannchadha, Aogán, gur 'náisiúnaí níos gníomhaí [i a dheirfiúr chéile] ná mar a bhí Seoirse, aisteach go leor.' (6)*



The Clancy residence, Dún Guir, at Castlevew Gardens in Thomondgate. Teach Mhic Fhlannchadha, Dún Goir ag Gairdíní Radharc an Chaisleáin i Sparr Thuamhan.



# Victims: Michael O'Callaghan – 'the Brains of Limerick Sinn Féin'

## Íospartaigh: Mícheál Ó Ceallacháin – 'Éirim Shinn Féin Luimnigh'



Michael O'Callaghan was born in Eden Terrace, Limerick city in 1879, the son of Edward and Ellen O'Callaghan who owned the successful City Tannery. Although ill-health prevented him receiving formal childhood education, he was a natural scholar and went on to qualify as an industrial chemist in London. This equipped him to take over the running of the family business, ultimately as managing director.

O'Callaghan came from what his wife, Kate, called 'sound national stock on both sides'. He maintained an active interest in Irish revivalist culture through membership of the Gaelic League and he strongly advocated for the strengthening of Ireland's native economy through his work with Irish industrial associations.

**Limerick Industrial Association.**  
(Men's Branch)

President : Sir Alexander Shaw, J.P.

Vice-Presidents :

Rt. Worshipful the Mayor of Limerick  
D. L. Roche, Esq., J.P. | E. Cole, Esq.  
Archibald Murray, Esq. | Rev. J. J. Dwane, P.P.  
R. P. O'Connor, Esq. | Patk. O'Brien, Esq.

Committee :

Robert Dorman	John Kerr, B.C.
Thomas Geary	Joseph Galbraith
James Kirby	David Meany
Patrick Hannon	J. H. Enright
Patrick Bourke, B.C.	P. M. Cusack
James Quin, J.P.	Thomas O'Neill
Chas. Johnson, B.C.	J. J. O'Donovan
G. Goodwin	T. A. Webberley
R. Gibson	J. Hennessy

Hon. Treasurer : M. O'Callaghan, Esq.  
Hon. Secretary : Charles Close, B.A.  
Secretary : Thomas S. Lawler,  
Offices : 39 Thomas Street, Limerick.

Rugadh Mícheál Ó Ceallacháin in Ardán Éidin, Cathair Luimnigh sa bhliain 1879. Ba mhac le hÉadbhard agus Eibhlín Ó Ceallacháin é, a bhí ina n-úinéirí ar Theanús rathúil na Cathrach. Cé gur chuir drochshláinte cosc air ó oideachas foirmiúil a fháil agus é ina leanbh, ba scoláire ó nádúr é agus cháiligh sé ina dhiaidh sin mar phoitigéir tionsclaíoch i Londain. Chabhraigh seo leis ceannas a ghlacadh ar ghnóthas an teaghlaigh a reáchtáil, mar stiúrthóir

Ba 'sliocht cheart náisiúnach ar an dá thaobh' é muintir Uí Cheallacháin, *dar lena bhean chéile*. Cáit. Bhí spéis ghníomhach i gcónaí aige i gcultúr athbheochana na hÉireann agus ba bhall de Chonradh na Gaeilge é agus thacaigh sé go láidir le todhcháí gheilleagrach dhúchasach na hÉireann tríd an obair a rinne sé le Cumann Forbartha Tionscail na hÉireann. bainistíochta, ar deireadh thiar.

**E. O'Callaghan & Son,**  
**Tanners & Curriers,**  
**HARDWEARING SOLE BUTTS AND BENDS,**  
Made from Irish and South American Hides.  
**Black & Brown Harness Leather**  
In Sides and Backs made from Irish Hides.  
**CITY TANNERY, LIMERICK,**  
AND  
**84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CORK.**  
Ask your shoemaker to sole your Boots with  
**O'CALLAGHANS' Sole Leather.**  
DUBLIN AGENT :  
**E. J. LONG, 16 Capel Street, and 3 Up. Stephen Street,**  
**DUBLIN.**

This image is reproduced with the kind permission of the National Museum of Ireland.  
Foilsítear an íomhá seo le caoinchead Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann.

# Victims: Michael O'Callaghan – 'the Brains of Limerick Sinn Féin' Íospartaigh: Mícheál Ó Ceallacháin – 'Éirim Shinn Féin Luimnigh'



O'Callaghan also participated in local nationalist politics. According to Kate, he joined Limerick's original Sinn Féin club in 1905 and was a member of its O'Rahilly Club when he died. However, he was also active in the Home Rule movement through his involvement with the All for Ireland League and as a founder member of the Limerick branch of the Irish Nation League in 1916.

O'Callaghan was a prime mover in the establishment of the Limerick Irish Volunteers and he sat on the executive committee until 1916. Following the Easter Rising, he served as treasurer of the Limerick branch of the National Aid Association and Volunteers' Dependants Fund and he agitated for republican prisoner release. Like Clancy, he campaigned for Sinn Féin in the 1917 East Clare by-election and the General Election of 1918.

*Chlac Ó Ceallacháin páirt freisin sa pholaitíocht náisiúnach. De réir Cáit, ghlac sé le ballraíocht de chéad chumann Shinn Féin Chathair Luimnigh sa bhliain 1905 agus ba bhall de Chumann Uí Rathaille Shinn Féin é nuair a fuair sé bás. Bhí baint ghníomhach aige freisin, áfach, sa ghluaiseacht ar son Rialtas Dúchais tríd an bpáirt a bhí aige sa Chonradh Uile-Éireann agus mar bhall bunaidh bhraínse Chonradh Náisiún na hÉireann i Luimneach i Meán Fómhair 1916.*

*Ba é Ó Ceallacháin an príomhthionscnóir freisin maidir le brainse Luimnigh d'Óglaigh na hÉireann a bhunú agus shuigh sé ina choiste feidhmiúcháin go dtí 1916. I ndiaidh Éirí Amach na Cásca, d'oibrigh sé mar chisteoir bhraínse Luimnigh den Chumann Cúnaimh Náisiúnta agus Chiste Chleithiúnaithe na nÓglach agus rinne sé agóid ar son príosúnaigh phoblachtacha a scaoileadh. Cosúil le Mac Fhlannchadha, rinne sé feachtas ar son Shinn Féin i bhfothoghchán Oirthear an Chláir 1917 agus in Olltoghchán 1918.*

Born in 1885, Kate O'Callaghan (née Murphy) was a native of Lissarda, county Cork. She earned a degree from the Royal University and succeeded her sister as senior lecturer in education at Limerick's Mary Immaculate College in 1912. She became very active in local nationalist politics as a founder member of Limerick Cumann na mBan. She met Michael through her involvement in the Gaelic League and they married in 1914. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

*Rugadh sa bhliain 1885 Cáit (Ní Mhurchú) Uí Cheallacháin agus ba é Lios Ardachaidh i gContae Chorcaí a háit dúchais. Bhain sí céim amach ón Ollscoil Ríoga, agus tháinig sí in ionad a deirfiar mar léachtóir sinsearach san oideachas ag Coláiste Mhuire gan Smál, Luimneach sa bhliain 1912. D'éirigh sí an-ghníomhach sa pholaitíocht náisiúnach áitiúil; ba bhall bunaidh bhraínse Luimnigh de Chumann na mBan í. Chas sí le Mícheál tríd an mbaint a bhí aici i gConradh na Gaeilge. Pósadh iad sa bhliain 1914. Courttest Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.*

Comhcuatact Luimnigh.  
Oifis Oilemís na Cásca.  
(Town Clerk's Office).  
Halla na Cásca.  
(Town Hall).  
Luimneach, 26th January, 1921.

a CARA.

You are summoned to attend a QUARTERLY MEETING of the Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Rutland St, on MONDAY, 31st day of JANUARY, 1921, at 12 o'clock, noon, to dispose of the following business, viz.—

STATUTORY BUSINESS—

- To elect a member of the Council to fill the office of Mayor of the City for one year in succession to the Right Worshipful Michael O'Callaghan, Mayor for 1920-21; to instal His Worship into office if the Council should so decide; and to fix the salary to be paid to the member to be appointed to said office.
- To select three persons qualified to fill the office of High Sheriff.

According to Kate, her husband rejected entreaties to serve a second mayoral term, saying that 'one year of the Mayoralty under present circumstances was the most that could be expected from even the best citizen of the Republic'.

Dar le Cáit, dhiúltaigh a fear céile impí a rinneadh chun an dara téarma a chaitheamh mar mhéara, agus dúirt sí 'nach bhféadfadh súil a bheith leis go gcaithfeadh fiú an saoránach is fearr sa Phoblacht níos mó ná bliain amháin ina Mhéara faoi na cúinsí i láthair na huaire'.

O'Callaghan's own career as a public representative commenced with his election to Limerick Corporation in 1911 and culminated in his inauguration as Sinn Féin mayor of Limerick city in January 1920. By then, politics was his particular focus (according to Kate, he had become 'the brains of [Limerick] Sinn Féin') and he did not hold IRA rank during the War of Independence.

*Cuireadh tús le gairm bheatha féin Uí Cheallacháin mar ionadaí poiblí nuair a toghadh é le Bardas Luimnigh sa bhliain 1911 agus rinneadh é a insealbhú, ar deireadh, mar mhéara Shinn Féin Chathair Luimnigh in Eanáir 1920. Faoin tráth sin, dhírigh sé ar an bpolaitíocht, ach go háirithe (ba 'éirim Shinn Féin [Luimnigh]' anois é faoin tráth sin, dar le Cáit) agus ní raibh céim san IRA bainte amach aige i rith Chogadh na Saoirse.*

IRISH NATION LEAGUE.  
BRANCH FORMED IN LIMERICK

The Irish Nation League was established at a great public meeting in Limerick, the hall being crowded to its utmost capacity, the greatest enthusiasm prevailing. Councillor M. O'Callaghan presided, Mr. Stephen M. O'Mara acting as secretary to the meeting. Mr. M. Lynch, J.P., Omagh, delivered an address explanatory of the objects of the League — Home Rule for all Ireland, &c., and denouncing the partition policy. Mr. O'Donovan proposing the formation of the "Treaty" Branch, said the people of the North never wanted their assistance more. It was absolutely necessary that the new organisation should be independent of any Parliamentary Party. Mr. P. Bourke said he had been a witness to the decay of the National cause. For years he had sat with Mr. Redmond on the National Directory—or rather the three mystery men—and found these were not the servants of the people, but the arrogant masters.

Derry Journal, 18 September 1916

**Victims: Michael O'Callaghan – 'the Brains of Limerick Sinn Féin' Íospartaigh: Mícheál Ó Ceallacháin – 'Éirim Shinn Féin Luimnigh'**

Shortly after 1am on the morning of 7 March 1921, two men disguised with goggles and hats called to the O'Callaghan residence, St Margaret's on the North Strand, and demanded that Michael come to the door. Assured that they were Crown officers, and as accustomed to raids as the Clancys, he and Kate went down. When Kate opened the door the men opened fire at close quarters and, despite her strenuous attempt to protect him, Michael was mortally wounded.

*Go gairid i ndiaidh 1am ar maidin an 7 Márta 1921, thug beirt fhear faoi bhréagriocht cuairt ar áit chónaithe Uí Cheallacháin, Bailtín Thobar Máiréad, ar an Trá Thuaidh agus d'iarr siad go dtiocfadh Mícheál chuig an doras. Bhí sé chomh taithíoch céanna ar ruathair na bpóilíní agus a bhí muintir Mhic Fhlannchadha, agus rinne sé féin agus Cáit a d'iarr siad. Nuair a d'oscail siad an doras, thosaigh na fir ag scaoileadh piléir leis i ngar dó agus, in ainneoin na n-iarrachtaí móra a rinne a bhean chéile chun é a chosaint, gortaíodh Ó Ceallacháin go marfach.*



Listen to Kate O'Callaghan's account of her husband's murder, read by Dawn Bradfield

Éist le cuntas Cháit Uí Cheallacháin ar dhúnmharú a fear chéile. Á léamh ag Dawn Bradfield



Kate O'Callaghan (centre), with her sister and a maid at St Margaret's.  
Reproduced with the kind permission of Patricia Haselbeck ©The Haselbeck Collection.  
Cáit Uí Cheallacháin, a deirfiúr, agus seirbhíseach ag Bailtín Thobar Máiréad.  
Foilsítear an íomhá le caoinhead Patricia Haselbeck ©The Haselbeck Collection.



**LIMERICK MURDERS.** — Coun-  
cillor Michael O'Callaghan, an ex-  
Mayor of Limerick, who was shot  
dead at his home, despite the  
heroic efforts of his wife,

Daily Mirror, 11 March 1921


'Ireland and the World stand appalled ...'

'Tá uafás ar Éirinn agus ar an Domhan ...'

Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh  
Limerick City & County Council



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

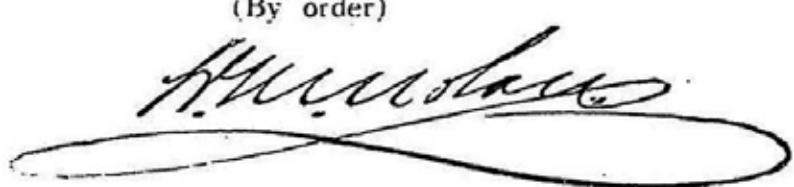
  
Comúatact Luimnige.  
oifis cleirig na castrac.  
(Town Clerk's Office).  
halla na castrac.  
(Town Hall).  
Lumneac. 12th March, 1921.

a CARA.

You are summoned to attend a SPECIAL MEETING of the Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Rutland St., on **THURSDAY**, 16th day of MARCH, 1921, at **6.30** o'clock, p.m., to dispose of the following business, viz.—

SPECIAL BUSINESS—

- To consider situation of the Corporation arising out of murders of Mayor and Ex-Mayor and take any necessary action thereon.
- To read correspondence on various matters and resolutions received from Public Bodies.
- To consider any matter which the Mayor (or Chairman) may bring specially before the Meeting.

Your attendance at said meeting is requested.  
(By order)  
  
Town Clerk

**NIGHT OF HORROR IN LIMERICK.**  
Mayor and Ex-Mayor  
Shot in Their Homes.  
WIVES' HEROIC STRUGGLE.  
LADY MAYORESS WOUNDED.  
A Third Tragedy.  
YOUNG MAN THE VICTIM.

Limerick Chronicle, 8 March 1921

**AWFUL HAPPENINGS IN LIMERICK**  
MOST PROMINENT OF CITIZEN'S SLAIN IN THEIR OWN HOME  
ALD. MACCARTAIN'S END RECALLED  
MASKED MARAUDERS KILL THEM BEFORE WIVES  
MAYORESS ALSO SHOT  
Limerick and Ireland stand appalled at the awful doings.

...aid, but Fr. Philip administered the last rites of the Church. The ex-Mayor died in a very short time afterwards.  
As a result of the violence inflicted on Mrs. O'Callaghan in her gallant attempt to save her husband she is in bed suffering from injuries to the hip, side and head.

...tance was at once demanded. "I opened the door," Mrs. Clancy said, "and one of the party asked, 'Is Clancy here?' My husband replied that his name was Clancy. The three men were wearing fawn-coloured overcoats and caps, and the man who spoke had no pronounced accent, but spoke in a cultured voice. He said to my husband, 'Come out here, Clancy.' My husband refused to move, and he again said, 'Come out here.' They then fired the shots that killed him. One of the men carried an electric flash lamp."  
Only on Sun. last the funeral of Mrs. Clancy's father, the late Mr. Timothy Killory, took place from the house.  
Five military officers visited the houses of the three deceased and viewed the bodies. It is expected that a military inquiry will be held in each case. Last night there were stronger military and police patrols at short intervals on the streets.  
Most Rev. Dr. Hallinan and Very Rev. Canon O'Driscoll, P.P., St. Munchin's, visited the home of the dead and prayed for their repose. At the house of the late Mayor his Lordship recited the Rosary in Irish.  
DUBLIN CORPORATION ADJOURNS.  
At Dublin Corporation meeting the Lord Mayor read a telegram from Ald. Casey.

Irish Independent, 8 March 1921

**THREE LIMERICK MURDERS**  
SENSATIONAL CRIMES.  
Mayor and Ex-Mayor Shot in Presence of Their Wives.  
MAYORESS HIT BY A BULLET.  
Three appalling murders were committed in Limerick late on Sunday night or early yesterday morning, the victims being the Mayor (Alderman Clancy), the ex-Mayor (Councillor O'Callaghan), and a young man named O'Donoghue.  
In the cases of the Mayor and ex-Mayor, the crimes were perpetrated in their own homes, in the presence of their wives, who made frantic efforts to save their husbands. The Mayoress herself was wounded.  
O'Callaghan was taken from his lodgings and shot dead on the road.

Belfast Newsletter, 8 March 1921

**MAYOR AND EX-MAYOR MURDERED.**  
SHOT DEAD IN THEIR OWN HOMES.  
TRAGIC NIGHT IN LIMERICK.  
WIVES WITNESS GHASTLY TRAGEDIES.  
WELL-KNOWN CITIZEN ALSO SLAIN.

Ulster Herald, 12 March 1921

**NIGHT OF MURDER.**  
MAYOR AND EX-MAYOR SHOT.  
WIVES' STRUGGLE WITH ARMED MEN.  
(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)  
DUBLIN, MARCH 7.

The Times (London), 8 March 1921

**MAYOR & EX-MAYOR SHOT IN THEIR HOMES.**  
RAIDERS' DOUBLE MURDER AT LIMERICK.  
MAYORESS BADLY WOUNDED IN THE STRUGGLE.  
(From our Special Correspondent.)

Manchester Guardian, 8 March 1921



'Ireland and the World stand appalled ...' 'Tá uafás ar Éirinn agus ar an Domhan ...'

**MAYOR AND EX-MAYOR OF LIMERICK KILLED.**  
**Third Victim in Midnight Murder Raid.**  
**WIFE WOUNDED.**  
**Women's Struggles to Save Husbands' Lives.**

Daily Mirror, 8 March 1921

**MAYOR OF LIMERICK IS SHOT DEAD IN BED**

Ex-Mayor Is Also Killed in Residence, and Another Citizen Is Killed in Field.

**MAYOR'S WIFE SHOT IN ARM**

She Makes Heroic Effort to Protect Her Husband, as Does Also Wife of the Ex-Mayor.

New York Times, 8 March 1921

**Limerick Horrified**

**A Night's Tragic Outrage**

**Mayor and Ex-Mayor of City Slain in their Home**

**Wife of Each Wounded**

Ireland and the world stand appalled at the awful doings which deprived Limerick city of her two most prominent citizens, Mayor Clancy and ex-Mayor O'Callaghan, in the early morning hours of Monday, March 7th.

In both cases the fate of Lord Mayor MacCurtain was recalled in every detail, but in the present cases the brutality of the deeds was much more pronounced, both Mayor and ex-Mayor being riddled with bullets after receiving their death-wounds and as they lay prone on the floors where they fell.

In these cases, too, the Mayor's wife was shot in the arm, while Mrs. O'Callaghan was badly maltreated in her efforts to save her husband, being eventually thrown heavily to the floor beside her dying husband, where she was found by a maid. Both ladies behaved with the utmost heroism.

To add to the night's horrors there has to be recorded also that a young man named O'Donoghue, a prominent Gaelic Leaguer, belonging to Rathduff, Westmeath, was taken from his residence and riddled with bullets a short distance away.

West Australia Record, 16 April 1921

**IRISH MAYORS SLAIN IN BED**

Clancy's Wife Dies Defending Him—O'Callaghan Other Victim of Black and Tans.

DUBLIN, March 7.—Sixteen persons were killed in Ireland over the week end, according to a casualty list issued this evening. The list follows: Soldiers, 5; policemen 4; and civilians, 7.

Washington Times, 9 March 1921

**LIMERICK MAYOR MURDERED IN BED BY SINN FEINERS**

FOURTH SINN FEIN MAYOR TO BE MURDERED WHILE HOLDING OFFICE.

**EX-MAYOR KILLED AT TIME OF SAME ATTACK**

Centralia Evening Sentinel (Illinois), 7 March 1921

**2 MURDERS, LIMERICK**

Mayor and Ex-Mayor of Limerick Are Shot and Killed in Their Own Homes This Morning.

**CURFEW KEPT FAMILIES IN**

St Johns Daily Star (Newfoundland), 7 March 1921



# 'A Day That Will Not Readily Fade from Public Memory'

## 'Lá Nach Ligfidh an Pobal i nDearmad go Deo'



### THE LIMERICK TRAGEDIES.

#### Obsequies and Funeral.

#### Impressive Scenes.

Thursday was observed as a day of general mourning in Limerick for the funerals of the Mayor (Alderman George Clancy), Councillor M'chael O'Callaghan (ex-Mayor), and Mr Joseph O'Donoghue, the victims of Monday morning's appalling murders. The proclamation of the Deputy Mayor was unanimously accepted by the citizens without distinction, and this was only to be expected having regard to the feelings of horror and consternation which the shootings aroused in the public mind. Business of all kinds was suspended on Thursday; shop, office, and factory being closed down. It was a day that will not readily fade from the public memory and will leave an indelible impression on all who witnessed the solemn procession as it passed through the city.

From an early hour in the morning, long before the Service at St John's Cathedral was timed to commence, people began to congregate in the streets converging on the sacred edifice, where the lying-in-state took place the previous day. The demeanour of the crowds was most edifying. It was respectful and subdued, as became the sad occasion, and betokened a spirit of calm resignation and of deep sympathy with the families and relatives of the deceased. The Requiem High Mass in the Cathedral commenced at 11 o'clock, and in order to avoid congestion admission to the sacred edifice was by ticket. For a considerable time before the ceremonies commenced the Cathedral contained its full complement. The utmost regularity and precision were observed in the admissions. The approaches to the Cathedral were held by cordons of Volunteers, and as the ticket-holders came along they were shown to the places allotted to them. Thus no hitch of any kind took place. The Cathedral was draped in black, and the impressiveness of the service was solemn and appealing to a degree. The figures of the bereaved Lady Mayoress and the ex-Lady Mayoress as they passed to the places allotted to them in Church aroused a deep feeling of pathos. Both, however, bore the terrible ordeal well, and at the conclusion of the Mass they were escorted to their carriages.

After Requiem Mass in St John's Cathedral, the three murdered men were buried in the municipal cemetery, Mount St Lawrence. Photographs of the funeral, a huge civic event attended by the mayors of almost all nationalist-controlled municipalities across Ireland, appeared in several newspapers, including the Irish Independent, Freeman's Journal, Sunday Independent, Daily Mail, & Illustrated London News.

*I ndiaidh Aifreann Éagnairce in Eaglais Naomh Eoin, cuireadh an triúr fear a dúnmharaíodh i reilig na cathrach, Chocán San Labhrás. Foilsíodh grianghraif den tsochraid, imeacht ollmhór cathartha ar fhreastail méaraí ó beagnach gach bardas faoi rialú náisiúnaithe ar fud na hÉireann air, i roinnt nuachtán, The Irish Independent, Freeman's Journal, The Sunday Independent, The Daily Mail, agus Illustrated London News san áireamh.*



Girl mourners carrying wreaths and reciting the rosary as they followed the coffin containing the remains of Alderman Clancy at Limerick. [Daily Mail.]

## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

### THE LIMERICK CRIMES



The funeral of the martyred three was of imposing dimensions. In addition to the citizens, public bodies from many parts of Ireland were represented.



Impressive scenes were witnessed in Limerick at the funerals of Alderman Clancy, Mayor, Mr. M. O'Callaghan, ex-Mayor, and Mr. J. O'Donoghue, another prominent local Republican, murdered in their homes. Our picture shows the Bishop of Limerick in his episcopal robes at the graveside.



AN IRISH TRAGEDY ON THE SINN FEIN SIDE: THE BURIAL OF THE MAYOR AND EX-MAYOR OF LIMERICK (SHOT AT THEIR HOMES)—THE SCENE BY THE GRAVES.

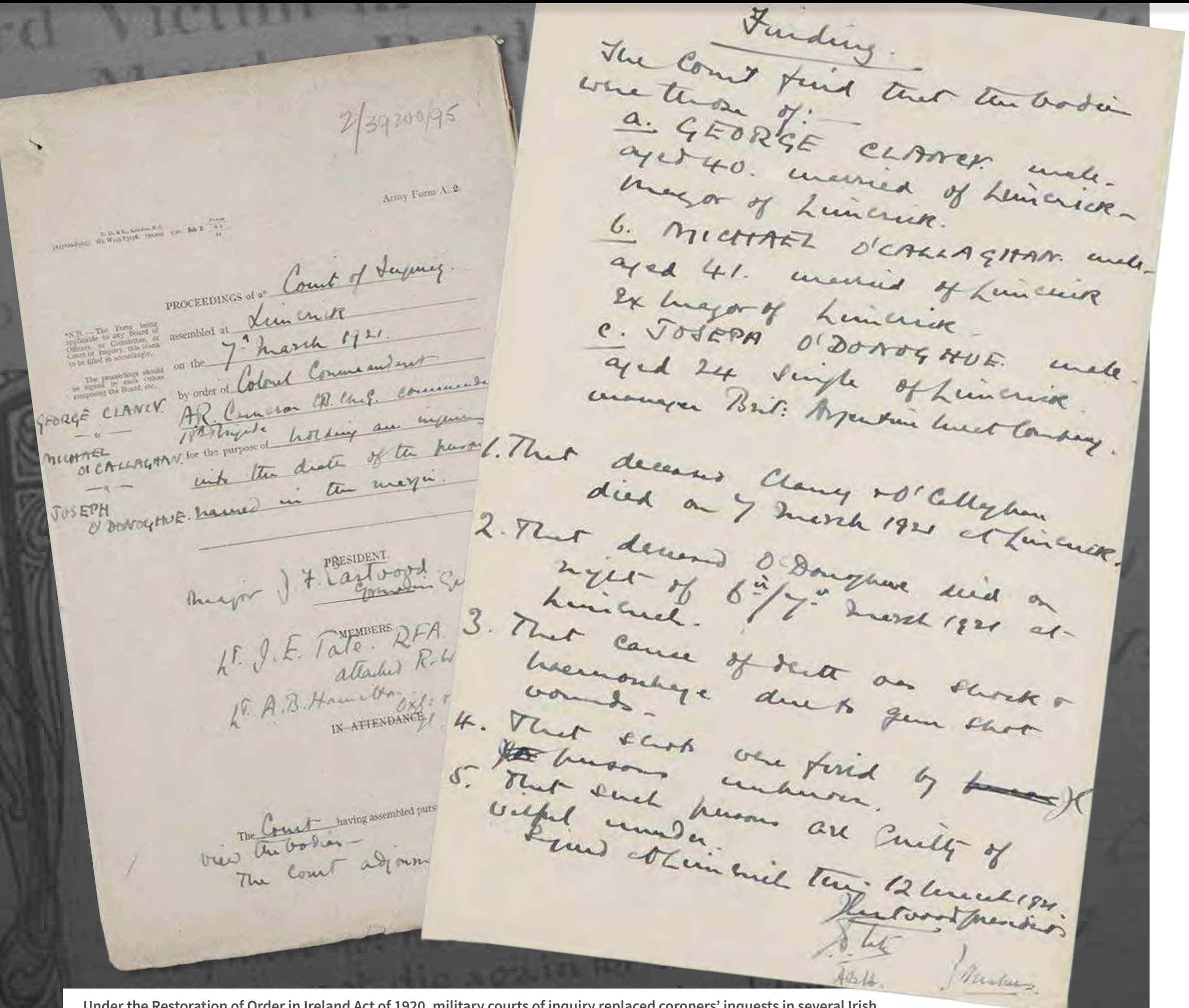
'A Day That Will Not Readily Fade from Public Memory' 'Lá Nach Ligfidh an Pobal i nDearmad go Deo'



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Foilseáir an íomhá seo le caoinchead Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann.

# Perpetrators: 'Extreme Republicans'?

## Déantóirí: 'Poblachtaigh Mhóra'?



A military court of inquiry into the murders opened on 7 March, but immediately adjourned until after the funerals. Hearings commenced on 11 March and 15 witnesses gave evidence. All but five were members of the Crown Forces.

Mary Clancy and Kate O'Callaghan refused to attend, arguing that military courts were 'but a farce and a travesty of justice'. And, to their minds, the Curfew Murders inquiry bore this out; they believed that the court's finding that O'Donoghue, O'Callaghan, and Clancy had been wilfully murdered 'by persons unknown' was a deliberate obfuscation of the fact that they had been killed by Crown Forces.

**HEART AND BRAIN OF IT.**  
**PRIEST ON LIMERICK VICTIMS' CONNECTION WITH SINN FEIN.**

There was no appearance for the next-of-kin nor were the widows of the Mayor and ex-Mayor present at the military inquiry into the Limerick murders. Mrs. O'Callaghan has written to the press refusing to recognise the tribunal, while expressing readiness to give evidence before a jury of her fellow-countrymen. There was no evidence save that of medical witnesses, and a clergyman with reference to the murder of Mr. O'Callaghan and the Mayor, Mr. Clancy. All the witnesses stated that the Mayor and ex-Mayor were of moderate views. The clergyman said O'Callaghan was the brain of Sinn Fein, while Clancy was the heart.—Daily Sketch.

RIC Weekly Summary, 18 March 1921

Cuireadh tús le cúirt mhíleata imeachta ar na dúnmharuithe an 7 Márta, ach cuireadh ar athló láithreach é go dtí go raibh na sochraidí thart. Cuireadh tús le héisteachtaí an 11 Márta agus thug 15 fhinné fianaise i rith dhá lá. Ba bhaill d'Fhórsaí na Corónach a bhí suite go háitiúil gach duine seachas cúigeair.

Dhiúltaigh Máire Mhic Fhlannchadha agus Cáit Uí Cheallacháin freastal, agus dúirt siad nach raibh sna himscrúduithe siúd 'ach cur i gcéill agus an ceartas a chur as riocht', agus gur dheimhnigh an fiosrúchán ar Dhúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú é seo dóibh, dar leo. Chreid siad go ndearna an cinneadh a rinne an chúirt, go ndearna 'daoine anaithnide' Ó Donnchadha, Ó Ceallacháin agus Mac Fhlannchadha a dhúnmharú go toiliúil, an fhírinne a dhoiléiríú - gurbh iad Fórsaí na Corónach a mharaigh iad.

**LETTER FROM MRS O'CALLAGHAN.**

The following letter was addressed to the Press on Thursday evening:—  
"St Margaret's, Limerick,  
"10/3'21.

"DEAR SIR,—I have received a request from the military to attend a military court of inquiry tomorrow with reference to the murder of my husband, Michael O'Callaghan. I am quite willing to appear before a jury of my countrymen, and to give evidence and every assistance. I shall not attend any military court of inquiry, as I believe that these courts are but a farce and a travesty of justice. I have several times conveyed my decision on this point to those concerned.  
"Faithfully yours,  
"K. O'CALLAGHAN."

Under the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act of 1920, military courts of inquiry replaced coroners' inquests in several Irish counties. The benches comprised three military personnel, who were not required to have legal or military training.  
Tháinig cúirteanna fiosrúcháin míleata in ionad ionchoisní cróinéirí i roinnt contaetha in Éirinn faoin Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, 1920. Bhí an chúirt comhdhéanta de thriúr oifigeach airm nár ghá dóibh oiliúint dlí nó leighis a bheith acu.





## Perpetrators: 'Extreme Republicans'? Déantóirí: 'Poblachtaigh Mhóra'?

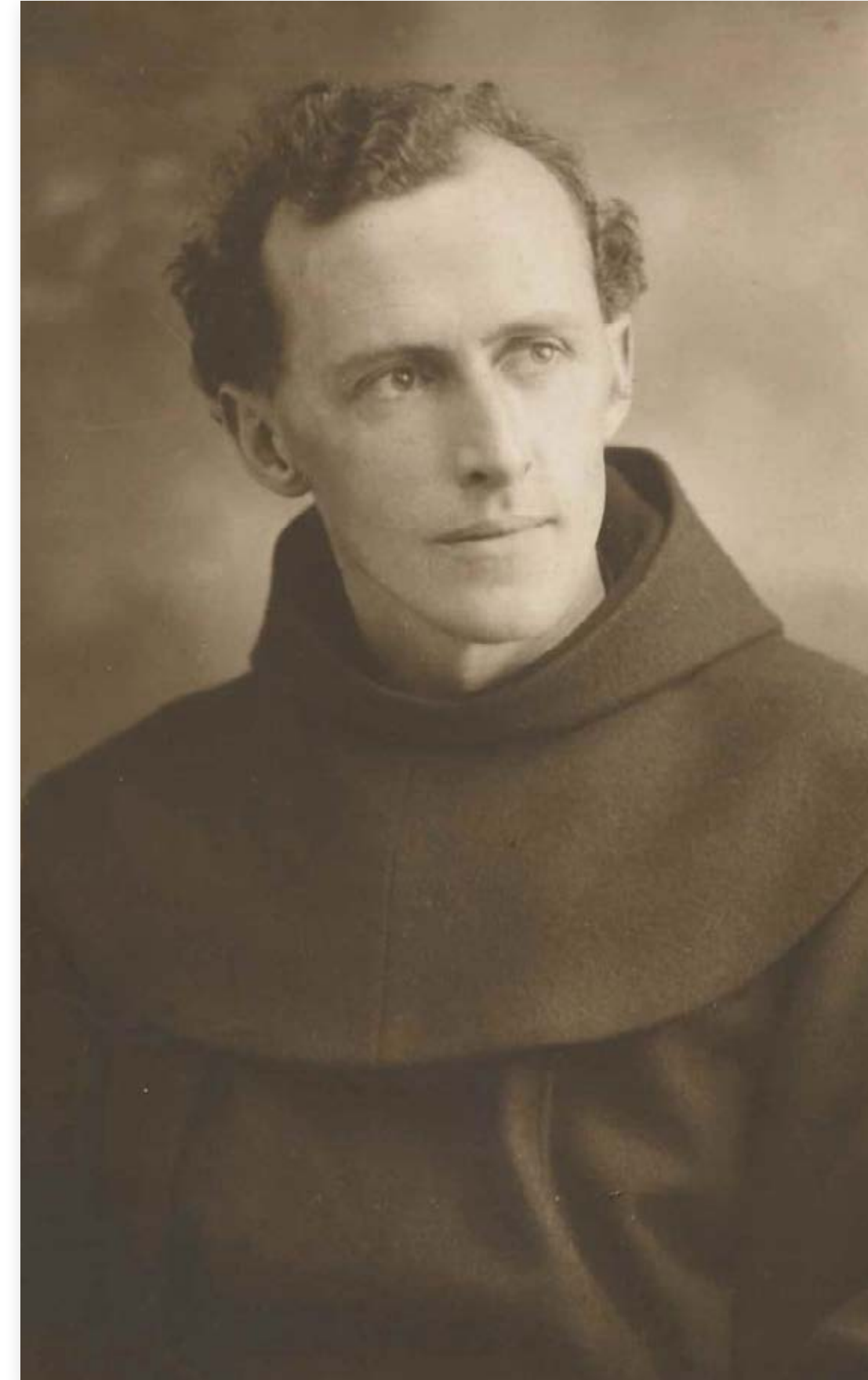


James Roberts, one of two local doctors to give evidence to the court. A graduate of Dublin's Catholic University Medical School, he lived and practiced at 13 Malloy Street. Roberts went to St Margaret's on the night of the murders to attend to Michael O'Callaghan.

*Ba é James Roberts ar cheann de dhá dochtúir áitiúla fianaise don chúirt a thabhairt. Bhain sé céim amach ó Ollscoil Scoil Leighis Chaitliceach agus mhair sé agus d'oibrigh sé ar Shráid Mala. Ar an oíche na dúnmharuithe, chuaigh sé go dtí Bailtín Thobar Máiréad oíche chun cúram leighis a thabhairt do Mhícheál. (7)*

The court's questioning of key witnesses was, at the very least, culpably incompetent. But firm evidence has yet to emerge that it consciously engaged in a cover-up. Limerick's military commander, A. R. Cameron, alone addressed the issue of the perpetrators' identities and he strongly argued for 'the extreme improbability of the Crown Forces being connected with the crimes'. For while O'Callaghan and Clancy were certainly 'advanced Sinn Féin politicians and connected with the Republican Army ... they were opposed to violence and did their best to prevent outrages'. It therefore seemed to Cameron 'incredible that people should believe that, for no apparent reason, Forces of the Crown should select two victims who were generally supposed to be amongst the influential party of citizens who had striven to keep the peace'.

*Ba mhí-éifeachtach agus lochtach, ar a laghad, an ceistiú a rinne an chúirt ar phríomhfhinnéithe. Ach ní raibh aon fhianaise dhaingean ann go ndearna an chúirt é seo a cheilt go coinsiasach. Níor phléigh ach ceannasaí míleata Chathair Luimnigh, R. P. Cameron ceist aitheantais na ndéantóirí agus rinne sé argóint láidir ar son 'neamhdhóchúlacht mhór a bheith ann go raibh Fórsaí na Corónach páirteach sna coireanna'. Cé gur chinnte gur 'ardpholaiteoirí Shinn Féin [Ó Ceallacháin agus Mac Fhlannchadha] agus go raibh siad bainteach leis an Arm Poblachtach ... chuir siad in aghaidh foréigin agus rinne siad a ndícheall ionsaithe a chosc'. Cheap sé, ar an ábhar sin, gur 'dochreidte dó gur cheart go gceapfadh daoine go roghnódh Fórsaí na Corónach beirt íospartach gan cúis shoiléir a bheith leis, daoine a cheap an móramh a bhí mar bhall de pháirtí mórthionchair na saoránach a bhí meáite ar an tsíocháin a chothú'*



Fr Philip Murphy was appointed mayoral chaplain by Michael O'Callaghan on his election in January 1920 and he remained in the role when George Clancy took office. He gave last rites to both on the night of their murders and was, in Mary Clancy's words, 'a source of help and consolation' to their widows 'during all that terrible time'. Fr Philip told the court of inquiry that Mr O'Callaghan was the brains of [Limerick] Sinn Féin and Mr Clancy was the heart'.

*Cheap Mícheál Ó Ceallacháin an tAthair Pilib Ó Murchú d'Ord na mBráithe Mionúra ina shéiplíneach leis an méara nuair a toghadh é in Eanáir 1920 agus bhí an ról seo fós aige nuair a ghlac Seoirse Mac Fhlannchadha leis an oifig. Chuir sé an ola dheireanach ar oíche a ndúnmharuithe ar an mbeirt agus, dar le Máire Mhic Fhlannchadha, sholáthair sé 'cabhair agus sólas' dá mbaintreacha 'i rith na tréimhse uasfásaí sin go léir'. Dúirt an tAthair Pilib leis an gcúirt imeachta 'Ba é an tUasal Ó Ceallacháin éirim Shinn Féin [Luimnigh] agus ba é tUasal Mac Fhlannchadha croí Shinn Féin [Luimnigh]' (8)*

The mayoral Catholic chaplain, Fr Philip, provided unwitting support for this theory by describing O'Callaghan and Clancy in similar terms: O'Callaghan was 'most moderate in his views and a peace-loving man' and 'a restraining influence' on militant republicans, and Clancy 'was of the same thinking'.

*Thug séiplíneach Caitliceach an mhéara, an tAthair Pilib, tacaíocht i ngan fhios lena theoiric trína mhacasamhail de chur síos a dhéanamh ar Ó Ceallacháin agus Mac Fhlannchadha: Bhí Ó Ceallacháin 'an-mheasartha ó thaobh a thuairimí agus bhí sé go mór ar son na síochána' agus 'd'imir sé tionchar srianta' ar phoblachtaigh mhíleatacha, agus 'bhí an meon céanna' ag Mac Fhlannchadha.*



Archibald Cameron, described by [Thomas Toomey](#) as 'an honourable man [who] seems to have deluded himself into thinking that elements of the Crown Forces could not have carried out the killings'.

*De réir an staraí Tomás Ó Tuama, 'fear uasal [é A. Cameron] agus caithfidh go raibh dul amú air gur cheap sé nach bhféadfadh Fórsaí na Corónach na maruithe a dhéanamh'. (9)*

File No. 355..... 2.....

Propositions he says are in progress at the southern end of his Bde area for enemy activity on a large scale (This sentence has written across it in green pencil "Q.M.G.") and to meet the situation he says they will need to be in a position to expend their ammunition without expecting a return by captures and will require a reserve of at least 5,000 rounds of .303 and machine guns and ammunition for same.

Page 104.

Typed copy of proceedings of meeting held in Cork No.2.area, 6.1.21 as follows:-

Brigades represented.	Representatives.
Cork No.1.....	Commandant and Adjutant.
Cork No.2.....	Commandant.
Cork No.3.....	Commandant and Quartermaster.
Tipperary No.2.....	Commandant.
Tipperary No.3.....	Commandant and Adjutant.
East Limerick.....	Commandant and Adjutant.

The following is item 15 of the minutes as given in the Spittome:-

"Arms: It was decided to ask G.H.Q.  
 (a) Can we or will they do anything about Limerick City where possibly 400 rifles are lying idle.  
 (b) Also 100 rifles in Tippy town Bn4 Tipp No.3. which are unusable useless, as they wont eject mark VII .303. Can mark IV be procured anywhere else or can mark VII be reduced to suit".

Item 15. Page 104. of Spittome No 55/3649. I.R.A. documents.

Arms: It was decided to ask G.H.Q.  
 (a) Can we, or will they (G.H.Q.) do anything about Limerick City where possibly 400 rifles are lying idle.....

5. Everything possible has been done to show sympathy with the townsman and relatives and to endeavour to soften as far as possible the feeling raised by the murders.

I attached (Marked "A") a letter I sent to the Town Clerk. The Brigade Major took this letter personally and informed the corporation that I was prepared to take action to show my sympathy if any suggestion was made.

6. The funeral which was very largely attended passed off quietly.

I attach a letter (Marked "B") which I caused to be addressed to the Deputy Mayor informing him that I would not interfere if it could be avoided. Troops were drawn up inside Ordnance Barracks and the funeral was inspected by a Senior Officer as it passed that place. There was nothing to object to in the proceedings.

7. The Court of Inquiry was boycotted by the relatives of the deceased and the Corporation.

The Inquiry was held in the Court House and was open to the public but no one attended.

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to Cameron was the theory that O'Callaghan been killed by the militants that they tried to ed to his superiors that he had 'little doubt ... were committed by the extreme republicans and O'Callaghan resisted suggestions for Crown Forces'.

as evidence documents seized during a n Dublin which laid bare frustration on the merick Brigade at perceived inactivity in the r brigade areas, particularly Mid Limerick 00 rifles were lying idle'. By eliminating Clancy, republican radicals hoped to remove fluence on IRA activity in Limerick city, and on the Crown Forces' who would, inevitably, ir deaths. Although this explanation took no oghue's murder, it became established as the

[Click here to read Cameron's evidence to the court](#)  
[Clíceáil anseo chun fianaise Cameron a léamh](#)



Page 62.  
 File entitled East Limerick contains:-  
 1. Typed report dated 15.1.21 from Vice Brig. East Limerick Brigade to G.H.Q. East Limerick Brigade, "On Active Service".  
 2. Writer states that he has had 12 engagements during 1920; the Flying Column has endeavoured to engage the enemy 15 times without result...  
 "These activities together with the small size of the brigade area have laid excessive burdens on the civil population. He points out that there has been little or no military activities in the two adjoining areas (Mid and West Limerick). Two such inactive areas on their borders are a danger to the East Limerick Bde and he suggests:  
 (1) That 3 or 4 Battalions of the West Limerick Bde nearest his area be included in his Bde and the city of Limerick.  
 (2) That all arms, ammunition, and men in these districts be placed at the disposal of his Bde.  
 As an alternative to these two suggestions he makes a further one that East Limerick be made Headquarters for the whole county and City; "and to organise the men of the county to use their arms to the best advantage".  
 He goes on to say that the supply of arms and ammunition is quite inadequate. Any arms they have are as a result of their own fighting the enemy and capturing arms.

CLICK TO ENLARGE

Bhí an teoiric i bhfad níos inchreidte do Cameron gur mharaigh na míleataigh ceannann céanna a rinne siad a shrianadh Ó Ceallacháin agus Mac Fhlannchadha. Thug sé le fios dá lucht ceannais [ba] bheag amhras a bhí air ... go ndearna na poblachtaigh mhóra na dúnmharuithe mar gheall gur chuir Ó Ceallacháin agus Mac Fhlannchadha in aghaidh ionsaithe a dhéanamh ar Fhórsaí na Corónach'.

Sholáthair Cameron cáipéisí a gabhadh i rith ruathair a tugadh ar Cheanncheathrú Ghinearálta an IRA i mBaile Átha Cliath mar fhianaise a léirigh go soiléir an frustrachas a bhí ar Bhriogáid Oirthear Luimnigh mar gheall ar an neamhghníomhaíocht a tugadh faoi deara sa dá limistéar briogáide eile sa chontae, go háirithe Luimneach Láir, áit 'nach raibh úsáid á baint as tuairim is 400 raidhfíil'. Trí Ó Ceallacháin agus Mac Fhlannchadha a mharú, bhí súil ag radacaithe poblachtacha ní hamháin leis an tionchar srianta a d'imir siad ar IRA Chathair Luimnigh a bhaint, ach 'ionsaithe a spreagadh ar Fhórsaí na Corónach' agus chuirfí an locht air seo as a mbásanna. In ainneoin nár cuireadh bás Uí Dhonnchadha i gcuntas in aon chor, glacadh leis, le himeacht ama, gurbh é an míniú seo ar Dhúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú tuairim oifigiúil na Corónach.

File No. 355..... 2.....  
 Propositions he says are in progress at the southern end of his Bde area for enemy activity on a large scale (This sentence has written across it in green pencil "Q.M.G.") and to meet the situation he says they will need to be in a position to expend their ammunition without expecting a return by captures and will require a reserve of at least 5,000 rounds of .303 and machine guns and ammunition for same.  
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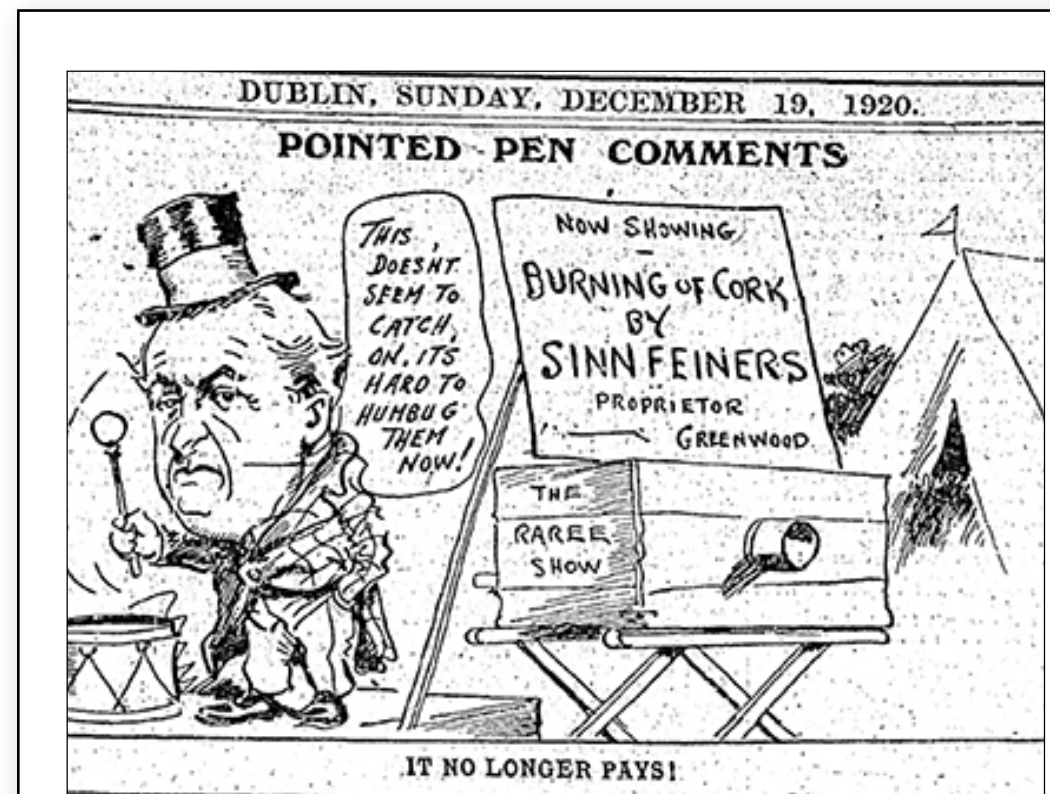
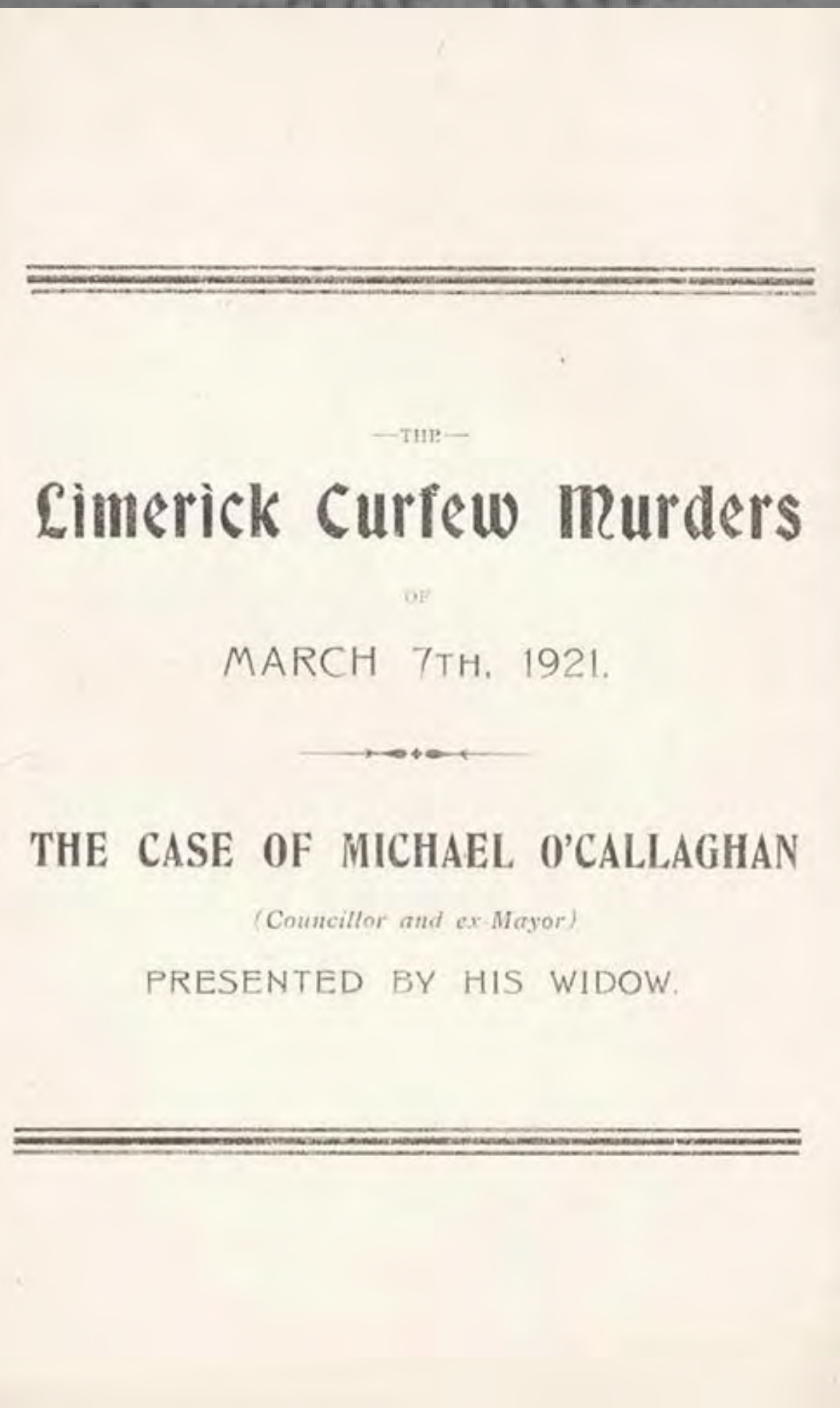
# Perpetrators: 'Hired English Assassins'?

## Déantóirí: 'Feallmharfóirí Sasanacha ar Fostú'?



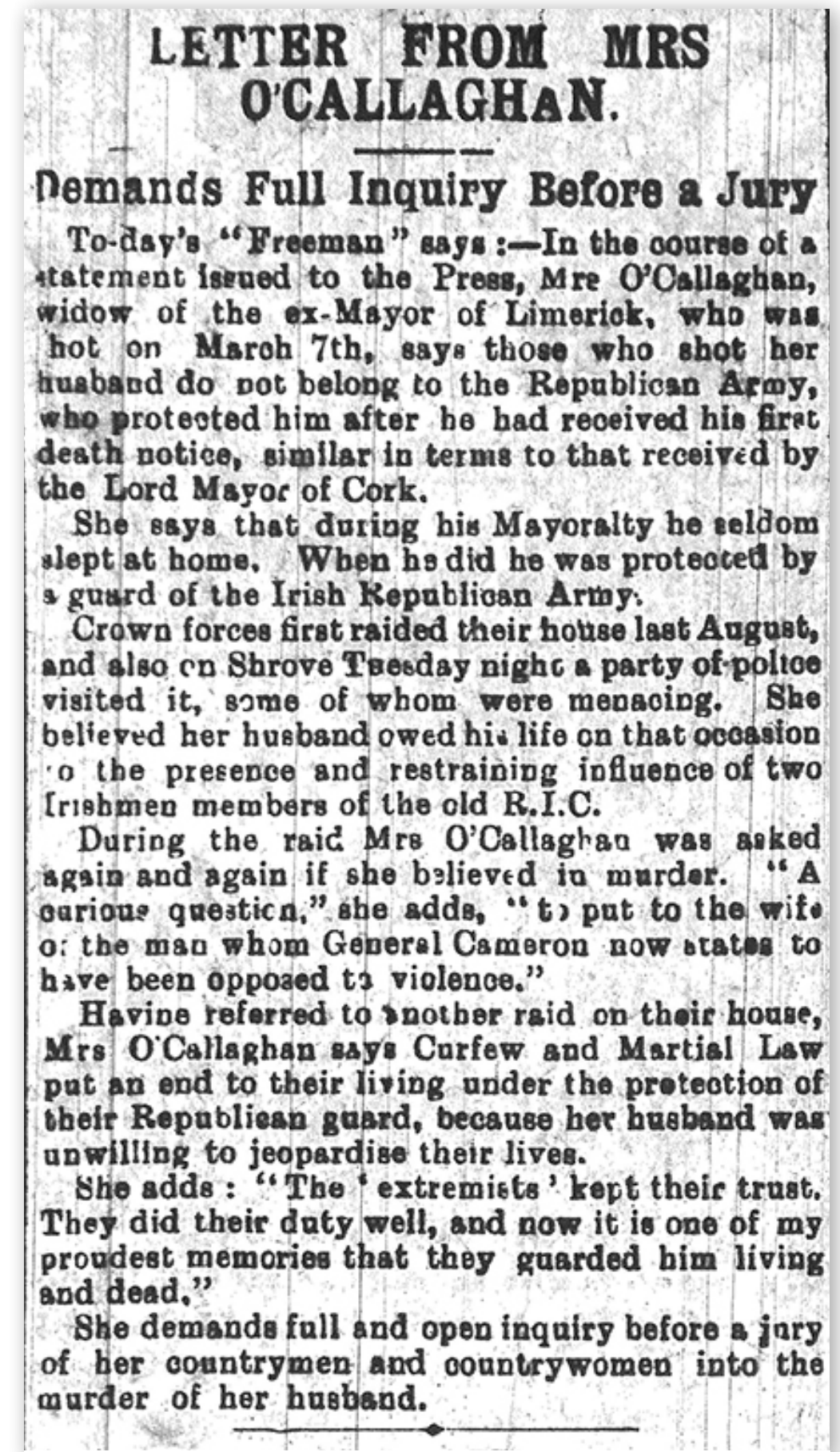
The suggestion that 'extreme republicans' were responsible for the Curfew Murders was roundly rejected by nationalists in Limerick, for whom the culpability of Crown Forces was never in doubt. Kate O'Callaghan was especially contemptuous. Certain that 'this story of a Sinn Féin murder gang was planned when the murders were being planned', she embarked on a campaign to bring the truth out through an independent public inquiry. When this was rejected by British prime minister David Lloyd George, she published and circulated the Limerick Curfew Murders.

Níor chreid na náisiúnaithe i Luimneach gurbh iad 'poblachtaigh mhóra' a bhí freagrach as Dúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú, agus ní raibh amhras ar bith orthu riamh ach gurbh iad Fórsaí na Corónach a bhí ciontach. Bhí Cáit Uí Cheallacháin go mór ina aghaidh seo. Chreid sí go láidir go raibh 'scéal seo dhrong dhúnmharaithe Shinn Féin beartaithe nuair a bhí na dúnmharuithe á bpleanáil', agus thug sí faoi fheachtas chun fírinne an scéil a chur amach trí fhiosrúchán poiblí. Nuair a dhiúltaigh Phríomh-Aire na Breataine, Lloyd George, é seo, d'fhoilsigh sí the Limerick Curfew Murders.



Claims that Crown Forces' atrocities had been committed by republicans themselves were commonplace at the time and, as these Sunday Independent cartoons illustrate, David Lloyd George and the Irish secretary, Sir Hamar Greenwood, were widely ridiculed for them in the Irish nationalist press.

Ba choitianta gur maíodh ag an tráth sin go ndearna na poblachtaigh féin ainghníomhartha Fhórsaí na Corónach, agus faoi mar a léirítear sna cartúin seo i nuachtán an Sunday Independent, rinneadh ceap magaidh go forleathan fairsing de Lloyd George agus de Rúnaí na hÉireann, Sir Hamar Greenwood, i nuachtáin náisiúnacha na hÉireann..



Limerick Chronicle, 15 March 1921

In the Limerick Curfew Murders, O'Callaghan charged that the murders had been the work of 'hired English assassins', specifically a five-strong ad hoc police death squad operating out of Cruise's Hotel which was providing a city base for RIC Auxiliary Division cadets at the time.

In the scenario that the pamphlet presented, all five were involved in the murder of Joseph O'Donoghue; three then proceeded to kill George Clancy, the two others her husband. And, although she did not refer to him by name, O'Callaghan clearly identified one of the latter's assassins: George Nathan, a section leader and intelligence officer with RIC Auxiliary Division 'G Company' based in Killaloe.

Her evidence for this was his accent. She had first encountered Nathan at a dance in January 1921, and he led a police raid on St Margaret's in late February, after which she and Michael discussed his 'charming and cultivated voice'. So, although Nathan was disguised on the night, she immediately recognised his voice and declared herself 'prepared to swear that [he] guided the murderers to our house and helped to murder my husband'.

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### MURDERED MAYOR

#### English Inquirers Into Limerick Tragedy

A letter signed Francis Dyke Acland, M.P.; Eleanor Acland, and Violet Bonham Carter, dealing with the murder of the ex-Mayor of Limerick, appears in the "Manchester Guardian." In the course of the letter the writers say:—"During a recent visit to Ireland we had a long interview with Mrs. O'Callaghan, widow of the murdered ex-Mayor of Limerick, a woman of great integrity, ability, and courage. No one could meet her without grieving that English statesmen should add to her bitter sorrow by insinuating that it was her husband's friends who treacherously murdered him. May we emphasise once more some of the circumstances of this mysterious outrage, which seems to us to demand further investigation?"

(Here attention is directed to circumstances already noted in these columns.)  
"No Evidence."

Referring to a statement made by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons, the writers say:—"We submit that it is more monstrous to insinuate that the trusted friends of a murdered man did him to death when there is no evidence produced with which to support such an accusation than it is to suggest that his opponents had some hand in the affair. At any rate, so long as one of the suspected parties is pressing for and the other evading impartial inquiry into such facts as are mentioned above, Mr. Lloyd George cannot complain of suspicions that may, and must, arise in any attentive mind.

"It does not meet the case to say, as Mr. Lloyd George said on April 7, that he is willing that the same court should be re-assembled. For it is a mockery of justice that where there are two parties, each suspicious of and suspected by the other, one of those parties should act as judge.

#### Anxiety and Danger.

"Mrs. O'Callaghan spoke in no spirit of revenge or personal bitterness. 'All I desire,' she said, 'is to save other women in Ireland from such cruel anxiety and danger.' Are there not women in England who have the heart to sympathise with that desire and the will to press it home by public resolutions and personal letters upon their elected representatives?"

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O'Callaghan's thesis drew on Dr Roberts' evidence to the court of inquiry. He stated that he had met five or six men on Sarsfield Street as he made his way to St Margaret's to attend to Michael O'Callaghan. They were walking back from that direction and towards Cruise's Hotel. Pictured with his wife, Mary. Bhunaigh Uí Cheallacháin a teoiric ar ar fhianaise An Dr James Roberts. D'inis sé don chúirt gur chas sé le cúigear nó seisear fear ar Shráid an tSáirséalaigh, ag siúl ar ais ón Trá Thuaidh agus i dtreo Óstán Cruise fad a bhí sé ar a bhealach go dtí Bailtín Thobar Máiread chun freastal ar Mhicheál Ó Ceallacháin. Anseo lena bhean chéile, Máire. (10)



RIC Auxiliary Division 'G Company' was barracked in the Lakeside Hotel, Killaloe. Members used Cruise's Hotel as a base when in Limerick city. Bhí 'Complacht G' de na Póilíní Cúnta ionnaithe in Óstán an Lakeside, Cill Dalua. D'fhan siad i óstán Cruise nuair a thaitil siad i gcathair Luimnigh. (11)

**MURDERED MAYOR**  
**English Inquirers Into Limerick Tragedy**  
Freeman's Journal, 12, 28 April 1921  
O'Callaghan's demand for an independent public inquiry had the support of several MPs. They rejected as 'a mockery of justice' Lloyd George's offer to reopen the military court instead.  
Dhiúltaigh Uí Cheallacháin agus a lucht tacaíochta sa pharlaimint an fhrith-thairiscint a rinne sé chun an armchúirt imeachta a athoscailt chun 'ceap magaidh a dhéanamh den cheartas'.

[Click here to read Dr Roberts' evidence to the court](#)  
[Clíceáil anseo chun fianaise An Dr Roberts a léamh](#)



CLICK ON HEADLINE TO READ THE REPORT

## Perpetrators: 'Hired English Assassins'? Déantóirí: 'Feallmharfóirí Sasanacha ar Fostú'?

In 1961 the military historian Richard Bennett confirmed O'Callaghan's claim in the press. He interviewed two surviving members of 'G Company', both of whom identified Nathan and a company colleague as the prime movers in the Curfew Murders. As Nathan was by then dead (he was killed in 1937 while serving with the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War), Bennett tracked down his accomplice, who eventually admitted that they had 'knocked off a couple of Shinners' that night creating, he recalled, 'quite a fuss'. Bennett declined to name Nathan's accomplice, but his article provides sufficient personal particulars to identify him as 'G Company' cadet William N. Harrison from Dublin.

Rinne an staraí míleata Richard Bennett an aithint a rinne Bean Uí Cheallacháin a dheimhniú sa bhliain 1961. Chuir sé agallamh ar bheirt bhall de 'Complacht G' a bhí fós ag maireachtáil, agus d'inis an bheirt acu dó gurbh iad Nathan agus comhghleacaí sa chomplacht príomhthionscnóirí Dhúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú. Mar gheall go raibh bás faighte ag Nathan faoin tráth sin (maraíodh é in Iúil 1937 fad a bhí sé ag fónamh leis na Briogáidí Idirnáisiúnta i gCogadh Cathartha na Spáinne), d'éirigh le Bennett a chomhpháirtí a aimsiú, a d'admhaigh ar deireadh thiar go ndearna siad 'roinnt 'Shinners' a mharú' an oíche sin. Dhiúltaigh Bennett comhpháirtí Nathan a ainmniú, ach déantar é aithint san eolas pearsanta a thugtar ina alt mar an Dalta N. Harrison ó 'Complacht G' ó Bhaile Átha Cliath.

[Click here to read Bennett's article](#)  
[Clíceáil anseo chun alt nuachtáin Bennett a léamh](#)



George Montagu Nathan, c. mid-1930s. His accent was certainly distinctive. Mary Clancy also recalled Nathan's 'charn house, while an army comrade in Spain described it as 'too gentlemanly to be real'.

George Montagu Nathan, i lár na 1930idí. Is cinnte go raibh canúint ar leith ag Nathan. Thug Máire Mhic Fhlannchadha nuair a bhí Nathan i gceannas ar ruathar a tugadh ar a háit chónaithe seachtain ina dhiaidh sin, agus dúirt comrádaí ai

Nathan's role in the Curfew Murders was further confirmed by a fellow British officer in the International Brigades: he told the Imperial War Museum in the mid-1980s that Nathan had been secretly 'tried' for the crimes by a cohort of ex-Irish republicans in his battalion and that he conceded his guilt.

*Dheimhnigh comhghleacaí Idirnáisiúnta Arm na Freisin: d'inis sé don lár na 1980idí go ndéantar é aithint san eolas pearsanta a thugtar ina alt mar an Dalta N. Harrison ó 'Complacht G' ó Bhaile Átha Cliath.*

## A MAYOR'S MURDER

AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY  
TOLD.

London, Tuesday.

The "Star" to-day contains the following:—

Mr. Michael O'Callaghan, Mayor of Limerick, was assassinated on March 7, 1921. Two men wearing goggles entered his house. Although Mrs. O'Callaghan tried to protect her husband, one of the men fired over her shoulder at Mr O'Callaghan, and he fell at the foot of the stairs. The other man then fired three shots at him as he lay on the floor.

An extraordinary sequel to the murder is reported to the "Star" by a resident in Camberwell, who was in a mess at Beggar's Bush Barracks, Dublin. The barracks was occupied by a detachment of the Auxiliary Division, R.I.C. One night a cadet displayed a handsome gold watch, which he offered for sale. The Camberwell man bought the watch for £10. He handed £3 to the cadet, and the remaining £7 to an officer, from whom the owner of the watch had borrowed the money. Examining his purchase, the Camberwell man discovered a inscription on the case, from which it appears that the watch was presented to the late Mayor of Limerick, Mr. O'Callaghan, from his fellow-citizens on the occasion of his release from Lewes Prison in 1917. When leaving the barracks last year the Camberwell man was questioned about the watch and his kit-bag was searched. Although he protested that he bought the watch, and produced a receipt for the amount, he was kept under arrest for two days. At the end of that time he was liberated. When in London he wrote to the Adjutant asking that his watch should be sent to him. In reply, he received a letter stating that it had been despatched by post. "I have not yet received the watch," he declared to a "Star" reporter. "All I have got is a cheque for £5, which I paid into my bank. When I get the watch, if ever, I shall hand it back to the widow of the gentleman to whom it was presented."

But this is not all. Recently the Camberwell man says he was visited by an ex-member of the Auxiliary Division, who threatened that if he opened his mouth about the affair he would shoot him. The reason for the threat, he explained, is because they think I know who murdered the ex-Mayor of Limerick. They know I do not know. I have sent all documents bearing on the affair to Commander Kenworthy, who has promised to raise the matter in the House of Commons. The "Star" has the address of the Camberwell man and the names of the persons he refers to, including the man from whom he made his purchase.

## A MAYOR'S MURDER

AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY  
TOLD.

London, Tuesday.

The "Star" to-day contains the following:—

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In January 1922, the London Star published a strange story which implicated the Auxiliary Division in the Curfew Murders. Its claim that Michael O'Callaghan's gold watch had been sold by an Auxiliary cadet to a mess worker in Dublin HQ was ridiculed in Limerick, where it was known that O'Callaghan did not own a gold watch and was never in Lewes Jail.

In Eanáir 1922, foilsíodh ráiteas sa Londen Star gur dhíol dalta Cúnta uaireadóir óir Mhíchíl Uí Cheallacháin le hoibrí bialainne i Rannóg na Saighdiúirí Cúnta i gCeanncheathrú Bhaile Átha Cliath. Rinneadh ceap magaidh den scéal i Luimneach, áit ar deimhniú nach raibh uaireadóir óir ag Ó Ceallacháin agus nach raibh sé riamh i bPríosún Lewes.



CLICK ON HEADLINE TO READ THE REPORT

 Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae Luimnigh  
Limerick City  
& County Council



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

## Parties: 'I Accuse ...'

## Páirtithe: 'Cuirim ina leith ...'



RIC District Inspector Leslie Ibbotson was in temporary charge in Limerick city on the night of the murders. He left [his own account of the events](#) in an unpublished memoir of his RIC service written in the early 1930s.

An cigire ceantair, Leslie Ibbotson, a bhí i gceannas go sealadach sa chathair ar oíche na ndúnmharuithe. [Scríobh sé a chuntas féin](#) sna 1930idí, mar chuid de chuimhní cinn nár foilsíodh den fhónamh a rinne sé leis an RIC.

Kate O'Callaghan was convinced that Nathan's death squad could have operated only with the connivance of the local Crown Forces, as the city was entirely under their control during curfew. She saw as particularly sinister the fact that soldiers at the Strand Barracks had declined to apprehend George Clancy's assassins despite hearing them passing by the building in both directions, as well as the fatal shots.

*Bhí Cáit Uí Cheallacháin lánchinnte nach bhféadfadh scuid maraithe Nathan an beart a dhéanamh ach i ndiaidh cead a fháil ó Fhórsaí na Corónach áitiúla mar gheall go raibh an chathair go hiomlán faoina smacht i ndiaidh an chuirfiú. Cheap sí go raibh an chaoi gur dhiúltaigh na saighdiúirí ag Beairic na Trá feallmharfóirí Sheoirse Mhic Fhlannchadha a ghabháil, in ainneoin gur chuala siad iad ag siúl thar an bhfoirgneamh sa dá threo, agus gur chuala siad na hurchair mharfacha, thar a bheith mailíseach.*

2. Mayor Clancy's house lies about two hundred yards from the Strand Barracks. The sentry on guard swore at the inquiry that he heard the steps of three men pass going in the direction of the Mayor's house. Ten minutes afterwards he heard six shots, the sound of which came from that direction. He reported the matter, and though he heard the footsteps of the murderers hurriedly returning in the direction of Sarsfield Bridge, the men were not challenged, no patrol was turned out, and the officer then in charge was not examined at the inquiry.

From the Limerick Curfew Murders.



(12)

Although the curfew was not rigorously enforced in Limerick city, troops were under direct orders to investigate shootings and this was clearly not done in the Clancy case. Whether this signified collusion, rather than a 'lack of energy and initiative' as Cameron assumed, is unproved.

*Ní raibh an Cuirfiú i bhfeidhm go dian i gcathair Luimnigh. Ach bhí orduithe ag saighdiúirí lámhach a fhiosrú agus ba shoiléir nach ndearnadh seo i gcás Mhic Fhlannchadha. Níl cruthúnas ann faoi cibé acu an raibh nó nach raibh claonpháirteachas i gceist leis seo, seachas 'easpa fuinnimh agus treallús', faoi mar ar ghlac Cameron leis.*

## Parties: 'I Accuse ...' Páirtithe: 'Cuirim ina leith ...'

Kate O'Callaghan further claimed that members of the city's regular RIC were complicit. District Inspector Leslie Henry Parker Ibbotson, who led the police investigation, formed her particular focus in this regard: 'I accuse him of being a party to the murder[s]', she declared in *The Limerick Curfew Murders*, and she cited an accumulation of circumstantial evidence she said proved that he had foreknowledge of the killings and had facilitated their perpetrators' escape.

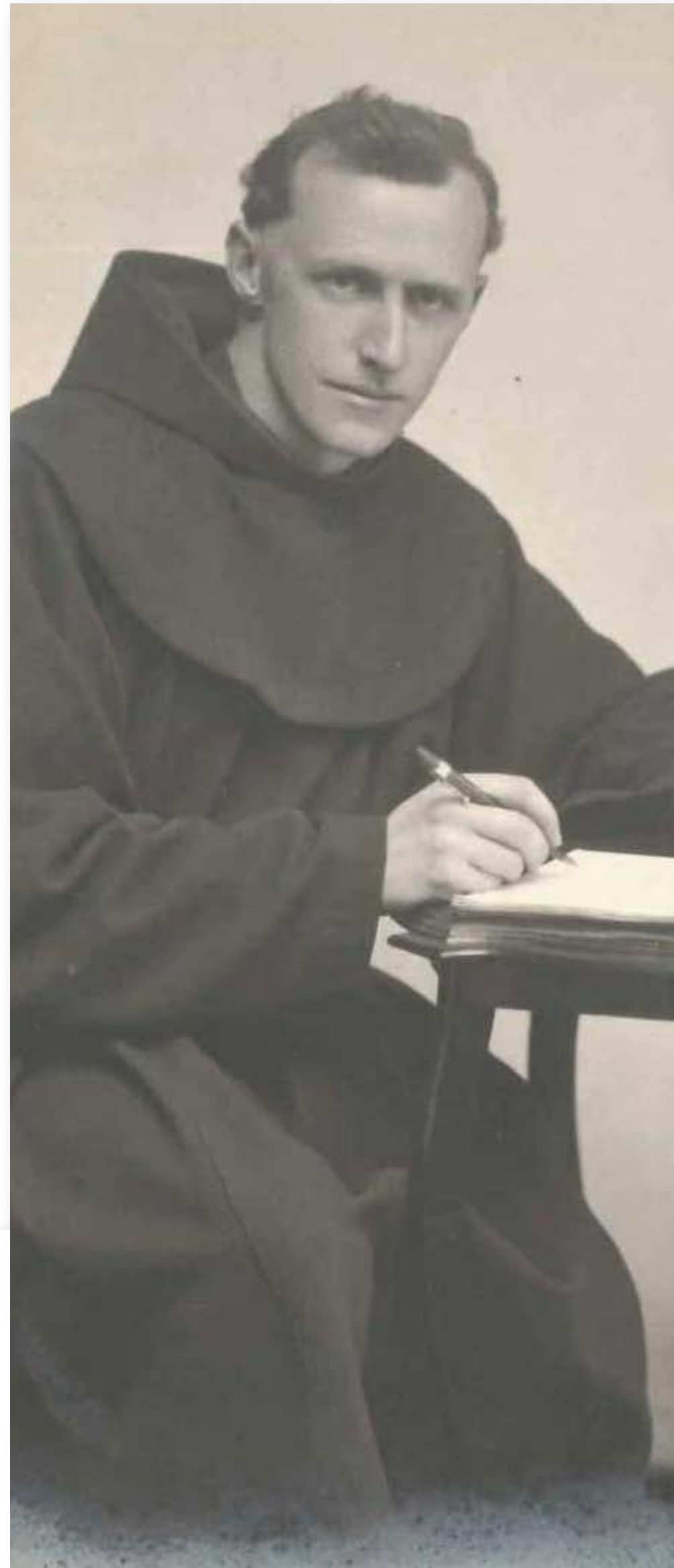
For example, Ibbotson had, at her request, called for Fr Philip at the Franciscan Friary on his way to St Margaret's and, in conversation on their way, had referred to plural 'murders' when only that of her husband was publicly known. Moreover, he had confidently attributed them to a 'Sinn Féin murder gang' before he arrived to investigate the scene. Most significantly, O'Callaghan accused Ibbotson of delaying his departure from William Street station for up to 35 minutes to allow the assassins to return unapprehended to Cruise's Hotel. In a close examination of the evidence, Thomas Toomey concurs with O'Callaghan's charge of accessorial guilt, noting that Ibbotson was himself a former Auxiliary and had spent the evening of 6 March socialising at the hotel.

[Fr Philip's evidence to the court of inquiry](#)  
[Clíceáil anseo chun fianaise tAthair Pilib a léamh](#)



Two attempts to force entry to Fr Philip's room at the friary were made subsequently by persons unknown. But that both occurred during curfew leaves no doubt that they were members of the Crown Forces. So fearful for Fr Philip's safety did his superiors become that they transferred him to Dublin in May 1921.

*Rinne daoine nach fios cé hiad dhá iarracht bealach a bhriseadh isteach go dtí seomra Athair Pilib ag an mainistir, ach mar gheall go ndearnadh an dá iarracht seo i rith an chuirfiú, ní hamhras ar bith ach gur bhaill d'Fhórsaí na Corónach na daoine a rinne na hiarrachtaí. Mar gheall go raibh an oiread sin eagla ar lucht a cheannais i dtaobh shábháilteacht an Athair Pilib, d'aistrigh siad é go Baile Átha Cliath i mBealtaine 1921. (13)*



But this Limerick tragedy Philip could never forget; on the night of Sunday 6 March 1921 when Mayor Clancy, just five weeks in office, and the ex-mayor O'Callaghan were both murdered in their homes and in the presence of their wives along with Volunteer Joseph O'Donoghue - all three shot during curfew hours. Mrs. O'Callaghan writing in the *Limerick Leader* on 20 November 1954, 33 years after the sad event, gives a graphic description of the murder of her husband and the moral support offered to her and the family by Fr. Philip. She recalled when the murderers fled down the garden path leaving her husband mortally wounded in the hall her first reaction was for the attendance of a priest and doctor but there was no reply from the many places she phoned. Finally a reply came from Dr. James Roberts who guessed from the number of shots fired that Michael was beyond all physical aid, yet he would "chance it". He left his home in Mallow Street at 1.20 a.m. and walked the length of O'Connell Street deserted from end to end and the only people he noticed was a group of murderers returning to barracks. Then she remembered the advice her husband had given her a few months before - 'throw the responsibility over on the police, remember their number 184' so she phoned William Street Police station requesting Fr. Philip Murphy, the Mayor's chaplain. It was 2 a.m. before the police brought the priest but his very presence 'gave me the reassurance that though murder and desolation had come to the household and cut me off from friends and help by curfew and tyranny yet God still had the world in his keeping.' The doctor James Roberts who gave the brave assistance was the brother of Aidan Roberts O.C.M. and Philip Murphy was remembered by Mrs O'Callaghan for his kindness, true compassion and patience on that dreadful night. In the early hours of the morning Philip requested from the Barracks a car and escort to enable him to gather Michael O'Callaghan's relatives to come and be of consolation to the widow and when they arrived he left to say the 6 o'clock Mass at the friary at which he requested prayers for the soul of Michael O'Callaghan. After Mass a woman rushed up to him and said: "You made a mistake, Father, it is not Michael O'Callaghan who has been murdered it is the mayor George Clancy". It was thus he heard with horror of the brutal circumstances of the killing of George Clancy, another dear friend and so he hastened to that afflicted household. This trifold tragedy on the night of Sunday 6 March and in the early hours of Monday 7th. created intense indignation and horror throughout the land.

How valuable a factor this quiet service Philip offered in those grim years few people to-day will ever appreciate. Apart from the physical dangers he did not spare himself, he sought neither favour nor gratitude but wished only to help others in their difficulties, to be a friend to whom all could come in confidence for consolation and advice. He made little of his own troubles and was fearless and unchanging in his national views. When the English authorities, on 11 March 1920 went through the charade and pretence of a 'Military Enquiry', the widows of the murdered men declined to attend on the grounds that such enquiries were travesties of justice but Philip was asked by Mrs. O'Callaghan to attend in order to speak and defend the great work done by both men in the public life of the city and in the National movement.

The 'open' or 'public' military enquiry was held in the City Courthouse surrounded by a cordon of soldiers; the adjacent streets and grounds of St. Mary's Cathedral were patrolled by armed troops; no member of the public was allowed in or near the building without a special military permit and the Press had to possess a permit and submit to a personal search before entry. Both Fr. Philip and Dr. Roberts attended the enquiry knowing it was a mockery of justice but determined to see that a modicum of truth was spoken at it. The enquiry came to nought as was expected, there was no effort made to bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice but Philip did speak out as to the valuable contribution both men made to the community. "George Clancy", he said "was the heart and Michael O'Callaghan the brains of Sinn Féin in Limerick".

*Dúirt Cáit Uí Cheallacháin freisin go raibh baill de ghnáth-RIC Chathair Luimnigh páirteach chomh maith céanna sna coireanna, go háirithe an cigire ceantair, Leslie Ibbotson. 'Cuirim ina leith gur pháirtí leis na dúnmharuithe é', a d'fhógair sí in *The Limerick Curfew Murders*, agus sholáthair sí fianaise a cheap sí a bhí imthoisceach lena chruthú go raibh eolas aige roimh ré ar na coireanna agus gur chabhraigh sé le déantóirí na ndúnmharuithe éalú.*

*Mar shampla, ar iarraidh Uí Cheallacháin chuir Ibbotson fios ar an Athair Pilib ag an Mainistir Phroinsiasach agus é ar a bhealach go dtí Bailtín Thobar Máiréad. Bhí siad ag caint fad a bhí siad ag siúl agus labhair Ibbotson ar 'dúnmharuithe', an uimhir iolra, nuair nach raibh aon eolas ar aon dúnmharuithe eile seachas dúnmharú a fir chéile. Chomh maith leis sin, dúirt sé le muintín gur 'drong dhúnmharaithe Shinn Féin' a rinne iad, sular cuireadh agallamh uirthi nó sular imscrúdaíodh an láthair. Thar aon ní eile, chuir sí ina leith gur fhan sé a fhaide le 35 nóiméad sular fhág sé beairic RIC Shráid Liam chun cuairt a thabhairt ar a teach lena ligean do na feallmharfóirí Óstán Cruise a bhaint amach gan iad a bheith tugtha faoi deara ag duine ar bith. D'aontaigh Tomás Ó Tuama, a luaigh gurbh iar-Shaighdiúir Cúnta é Ibbotson féin a chaith an tráthnóna i mbun sóisialú san óstán, agus rinne sé an argóint gur léirigh an t-iompar 'an-amhrasach' a bhí ar bun aige ina dhiaidh sin an chiontacht a bhraith sé mar gheall go raibh sé páirteach ann.*

From 'The Life and Times of Fr Philip Murphy o.f.m. (1890-1964)', an unpublished biographical sketch by Walter Crowley' o.f.m (1995).

*The Life and Times of Fr Philip Murphy o.f.m. (1890-1964); beathaisnéis neamhfhoilsithe le Walter Crowley o.f.m. (1995). (14)*

Recurrent claims of wider RIC complicity in the Curfew Murders remain unproved. Suspicion has

Níor tháinig aon fhianaise chun solais o raibh páirt ag aon bhall eile den RIC ann. Is mó an t-amhras faoin Sáirsint

# The Black and Tans leaving Limerick



PRIOR TO their departure from William Street Barracks, Limerick H.Q., en route to "dear old Blighty", the garrison had their photograph taken, to bring with them, as a souvenir, of their good time: murder, pillage, assault (criminal and physical), plus "£1 a day and their chances" – to quote the "News of the World". Seated second from left, beside plain-clothes 'Tan, is the notorious Sergeant Horan (R.I.C.), while second from right, third row, is his partner-in-crime, Sergeant Leech (R.I.C.), both of whom were involved in the triple murder of Mayor George Clancy, ex-Mayor Michael O'Callaghan and Volunteer Joseph O'Donoghue, in their homes on Sunday night/early Monday morning, March 6/7, 1921. Leech was shot dead on the steps of Harcourt Street station, Dublin, in the summer of 1922, after returning from Bray with a lady friend.

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## Question of Patrols on the Night of the Murder.

1. After the shooting of her husband, Mrs. O'Callaghan telephoned to the William street Police Barracks informing them of the fact, and asking them to get her a priest. The police did not turn out for about half an hour after her telephone call. When they did turn out, one D.I. and three constables represented the entire strength of their forces. Will General Prescott-Decie explain the delay, and say that the sending out of those four peace officers on foot showed a keen desire on the part of the police to apprehend the murderers?  
2. About twenty-five minutes after the shooting Doctor Roberts, who was bravely coming to attend Mr. O'Callaghan, met five men walking leisurely in Sarsfield street, about eighty-four yards from Cruise's Hotel, the headquarters of the Auxiliary police, and about 100 yards from the William street Police Barrack, to which Mrs. O'Callaghan had telephoned, and apparently going in that direction. The doctor stated in his evidence at the military enquiry that previous to that night he was always challenged when out on calls during Curfew hours, sometimes as often as twice in a block. WITHOUT BEING CHALLENGED. ...That night he walked from Mallow street to St. Margaret's and back to the Franciscan Friary without being challenged. Will General Prescott-Decie explain why patrols were not on the street that night, and what efforts were made to trace the five men whom Doctor Roberts saw in Sarsfield street, in such close proximity to these two barracks?  
3. Mayor Clancy's house is about 200 yards from the Strand Military Barracks. The sentry on guard swore at the enquiry that he heard the steps of three men pass, going in the direction of the Mayor's house. Ten minutes afterwards he heard six shots, the sound of which came from that direction. He reported the matter, and though he heard the footsteps of the murderers hurriedly returning in the direction of Sarsfield Bridge, the men were not challenged, no patrol was turned out, and the officer then in charge was not examined at the military enquiry to explain this failure. Can General Prescott-Decie explain the remissness of the officer? And why, if the police were anxious to trace the murderers, the officer was not examined at the enquiry?  
4. On other occasions when an attack of any kind was made, or threatened against the C n Forces in the city or within miles of it, troops poured out from all the barracks, the whole city was surrounded and bridges were closed and the people routed and searched in order to discover the criminals. Will General Prescott-Decie explain why this course was not adopted on the night of the 6th March, when three civilian citizens were murdered?  
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'Questions for General Decie' from Máire O'Donovan, deputy mayor of Limerick and sister of Kate O'Callaghan.

Ceisteanna do Prescott-Decie ón leas-mhéara agus deirfiúr Cáit Uí Cheallacháin.



# 'Worked for Ireland, Died for Ireland'

## 'D'oibrigh sé ar son na hÉireann, Fuair sé bás ar son na hÉireann'?



The above cartoon illustrates what Ireland is to expect from the Coercion Bill. Cartoon Reproduced From "Bull"

The Restoration of Order in Ireland Act of August 1920 provided the Crown Forces with significant protection from the civil law.

Thug an Restoration of Order in Ireland Act cosaint ón dlí do Fhórsaí na Corónach

Kate O'Callaghan maintained from the start that 'blacker criminals [than Nathan] planned these assassinations and [that] they sit in high places' and the overwhelming likelihood is that the murders were centrally conceived. Ten years afterwards, the Auxiliary Division's first commandant, Frank Crozier, asserted that the men were 'murdered by the police acting under orders as part of a plan to "do away with" Sinn Féin leaders and put the blame on Sinn Féin' and covert squads comprising Auxiliary Division and regular RIC personnel were certainly operating in Limerick at the time.

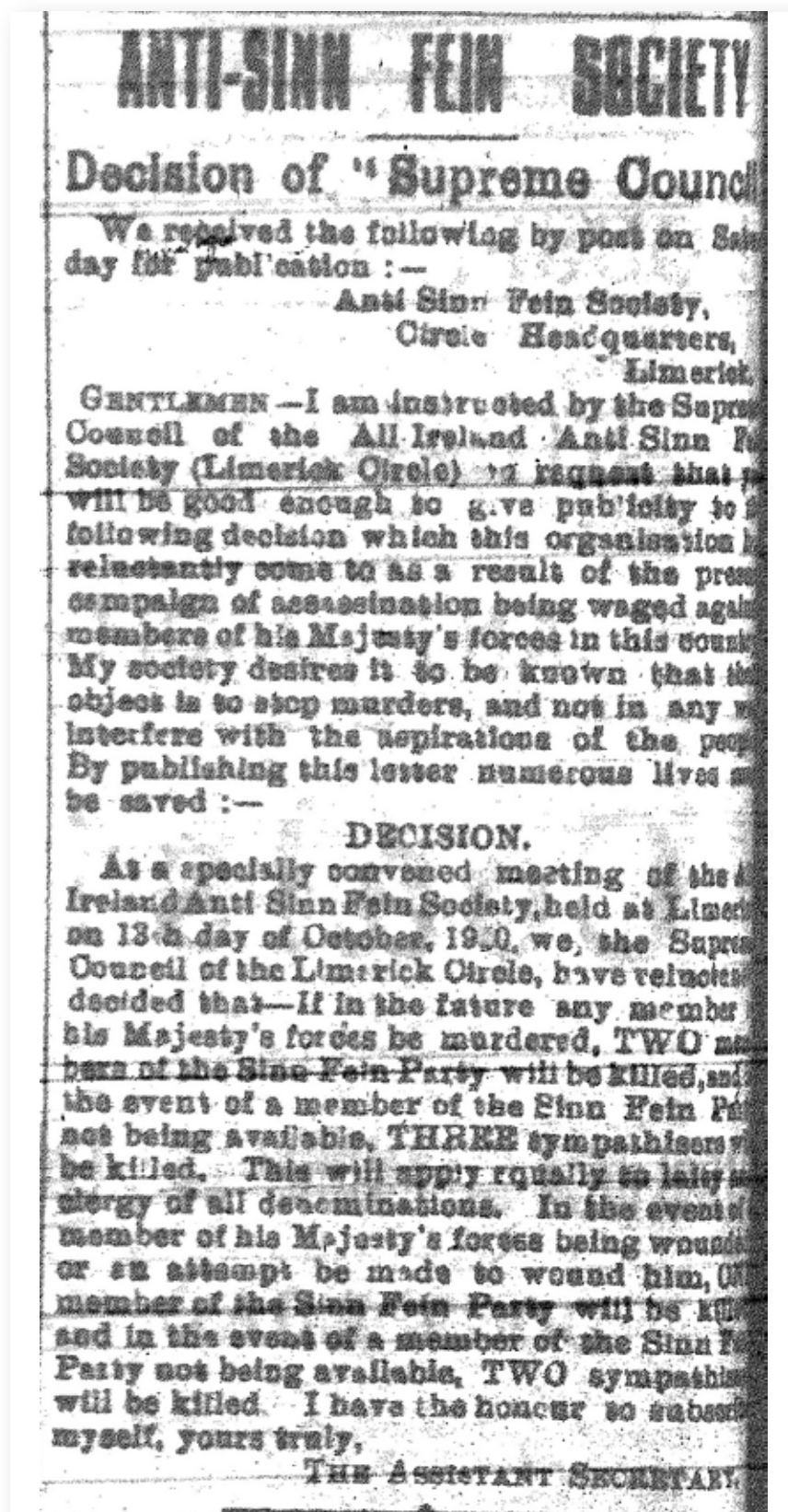
Research by historian [John O'Callaghan](#) indicates that the extrajudicial killings with which these squads 'terrorized republican communities' were probably 'unofficial political policy'. Divisional Commissioner Prescott-Decie, he notes, 'certainly took a cavalier attitude to the use of force [in his area] that had been approved further up the chain of command'.

George Nathan's defence at his informal 'court martial' in Spain was that he had been a mere foot soldier 'detailed to do the job'. That this defence was accepted by his Irish accusers suggests that he made a convincing case, and it is known that he travelled from Dublin to Killaloe on the day of the murders.

Thug Cáit Uí Cheallacháin le fios go ndearna 'coirpigh ní ba mheasa na feallmharuithe seo a phleanáil agus go bhfuil ardstádas acu'. Is cinnte gur dhóchúil go ndearnadh Dúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú a eagrú go lárnach. Deich mbliana ina dhiaidh sin, d'fhógair chéad cheannfort Rannóg na Póilíní Cúnta, Frank Crozier, gur 'mharaigh póilíní [an triúr fear] a bhí ag gníomhú de réir orduithe mar chuid de phlean chun "fáil réidh le" ceannairí Shinn Féin agus an locht a chur ar Shinn Féin', agus bhí scuadanna rúnda de phóilíní Cúnta den RIC ag feidhmiú i Luimneach ag an am.

Tugann taighde a rinne an staraí [Seán Ó Ceallacháin](#) le fios gur dhóchúil gur 'beartas polaitiúil neamhoifigiúil' a bhí sna maruithe seachbhreithiúnacha a rinne na scuaid chun 'sceimhle a chur ar phobail phoblachtacha'. Deir sé gur 'cinnte go raibh meon réchúiseach [ag an Coimisinéir Rannóige Prescott-Decie] maidir le fórsa a úsáid [ina cheantar] a chheadaigh lucht a cheannais'.

D'fhreagair páirtí cosanta George Nathan ag a 'armchúirt' neamhfhoirmiúil sa Spáinn nárbh ann ach saighdiúir coise 'ar leagadh an dualgas air an beart a dhéanamh'. Tugann an chaoi gur ghlac a chúisitheoirí Éireannacha leis an gcosaint seo le fios gur chruthaigh sé cás daingean, agus is eol gur thaistil sé ó Bhaile Átha Cliath ar lá na ndúnmharuithe.



These covert squads used cover names such as the 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society' and the 'Anti-Murder Gang' to obscure their Crown Forces' status.

D'úsáid na scuaid cheilte seo ainmneacha bréagacha cosúil leis 'an Cumann Frith-Shinn Féin' agus 'an Drong Frith-Dhúnmharaithe' lena cheilt gur bhaill d'Fhórsaí na Corónach iad.

Limerick Leader, 18 October 1920

# 'Worked for Ireland, Died for Ireland' 'D'oibrigh sé ar son na hÉireann, Fuair sé bás ar son na hÉireann'?

The reasons for which Michael O'Callaghan and George Clancy were targeted seem clear. They were the two most prominent 'Sinn Féiners' in Limerick, and both were subjected to sustained intimidatory campaigns, primarily death threats and raids on their houses, in the months prior to being killed.

As Limerick city's first Sinn Féin mayor, O'Callaghan had pledged the Corporation's allegiance to the First Dáil and he was a constant critic of the behaviour of the Crown Forces throughout his term. He was also a key figure in the republican propaganda war in Limerick, particularly through his briefing of visiting dignitaries and foreign correspondents. And although he was not himself an IRA Volunteer, he was, in his wife's words, 'a friend of the extremists' who 'well realised the need for a military ... side to the national movement'. Consequently, 'his logical end was murder by the hand of a hired English assassin'.

Clancy had dedicated himself entirely to the Irish Republic on his own election as mayor, declaring that he 'would be 100 per cent wool and unshrinkable' in its pursuit. He was also an IRA officer and, although the extent to which he participated in insurgent operations is unclear, he was believed by the Crown Forces to be actively involved. What is clear is that he had great status and influence within Limerick's republican ranks and was a role model to many therein. In the words of his wife Mary, 'dimly his murderers knew those things and that was why he died'.

O'Callaghan had received several death threats during his term in office. Fuair Mícheál roinnt bagairtí báis le linn a thréimhse mar mhéara. *Freeman's Journal*, 24 March 1920



Michael O'Callaghan (centre) and Fr Philip at the funeral of Terence MacSwiney, who died on hunger-strike in October 1920. George Clancy drafted Limerick's letter of condolence. (Below, right). Mayors from around Ireland would attend O'Callaghan's own funeral some four months later.

Mícheál Ó Ceallacháin ag siúl in aice le an tAthair Pilib taobh thiar de chónra Thoireallaigh Mhic Shuibhne i gCorcaigh, an 31 Deireadh Fómhair 1920. Mac Fhlannchadha a dhréachtaigh an litir chomhbhróin ó Luimneach. D'fhreastalódh méaraí ó beagnach gach bardas náisiúnach ar shochraid Uí Cheallacháin ceithre mhí ina dhiaidh sin. (17)

### RORY OF THE HILL

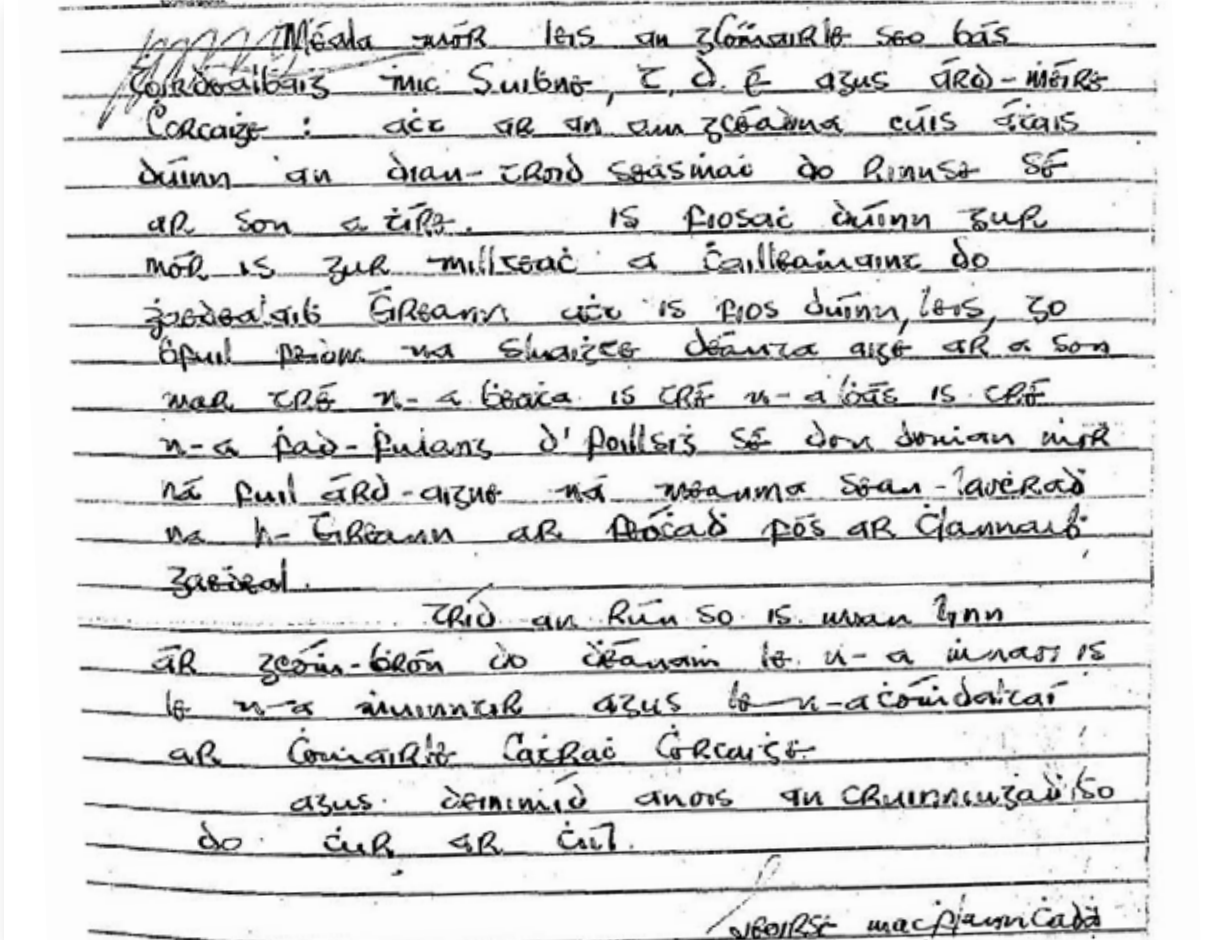
#### Mayor of Limerick Receives a Threatening Letter

The Mayor of Limerick (Councillor Michael O'Callaghan) received yesterday a type-written letter bearing the Clonmel post mark of the previous day.

There is a cross on top of the page containing the statement:—

"Prepare for death. You are a doomed man.—Rory of the Hill."

The Mayor, when questioned about the communication, said that at first he was disposed to treat the matter as a joke; but on consideration, and having regard to what had happened in Cork, he thought it better that the letter should be given to the Press for publication.

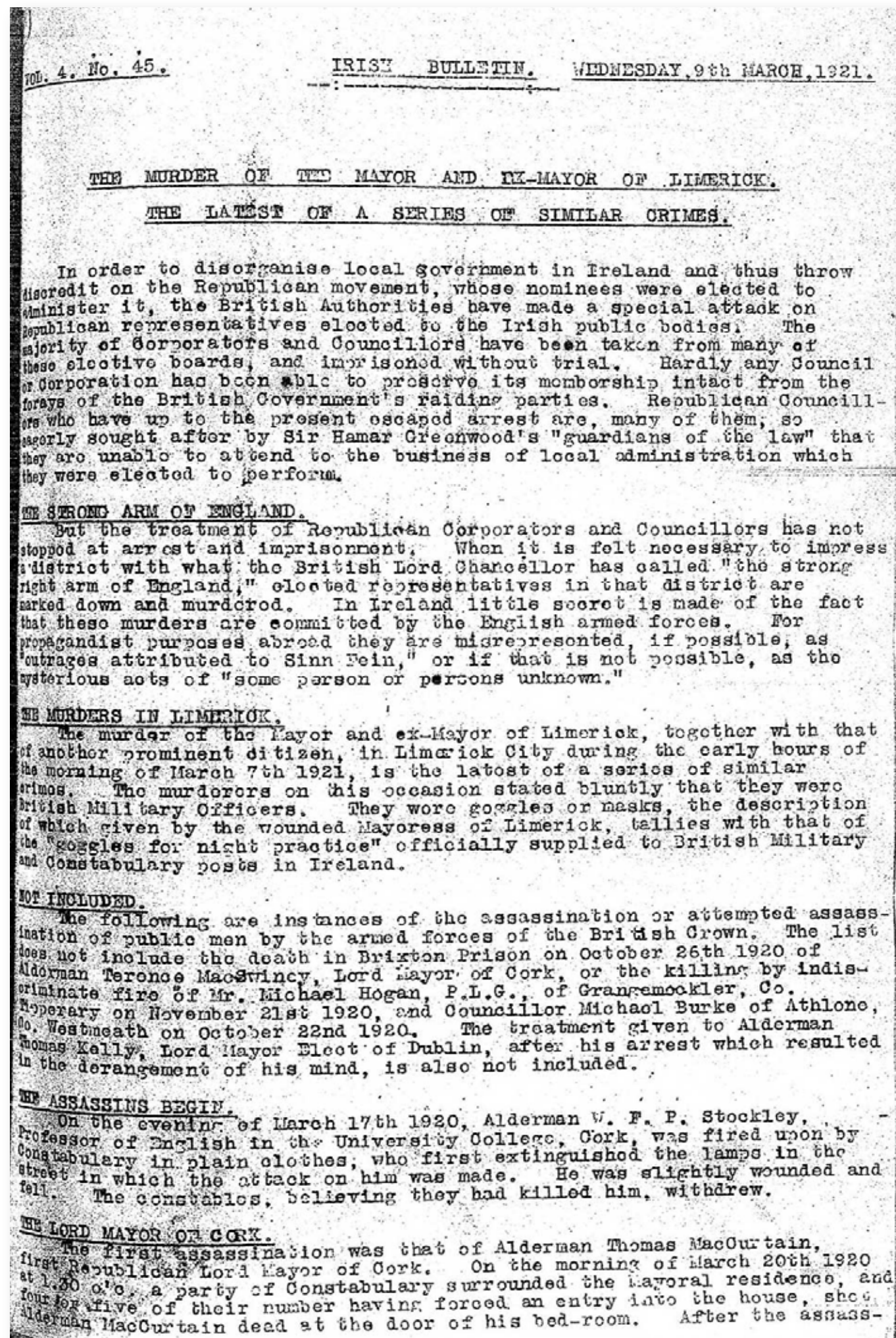


Is soiléir na fáthanna gur díródh ar Mhícheál Ó Ceallacháin agus ar Sheirse Mhic Fhlannchadha. Ba iad an bheirt bhall ba mhó le rá de chuid Shinn Féin i Luimneach, agus rinneadh iad a dhúnmharú mar thoradh deiridh ar fheachtais mharthanacha a bhí ceaptha eagla a chur ar dhaoine (bagairtí báis agus ruathair a thabhairt ar a dtithe, go príomha) sna míonna sular maraíodh iad.

Ba é Ó Ceallacháin chéad mhéara Shinn Féin Chathair Luimnigh agus gheall sé go mbeadh an Bardas dílis don Chéad Dáil agus cháin sé iompar Fhórsaí na Corónach i gcónaí i rith a théarma. Ba phríomhphearsa freisin é sa chogadh bolscaireachta poblachtach i Luimneach, go háirithe tríd an eolas a thug sé do dhaoine móra le rá a bhí ar cuairt agus do chomhfhreagrathaithe iasachta. Agus cé nárbh óglach den IRA é féin, bhí sé, dar lena bhean chéile, 'ar son na n-antoisceach' ... 'a thuig go soiléir go raibh gá le gné mhíleata sa ghluaiseacht náisiúnta'. Dá réir sin, 'ba loighciúil deireadh a chur leis trína dhúnmharú ag feallmharfóir Sasanach ar fostú'.

Bhí Mac Fhlannchadha go hiomlán tiomanta do Phoblacht na hÉireann i ndiaidh gur thogh sé é féin ina mhéara, agus d'fhógair sé 'go mbeadh sé go hiomlán tiomanta agus dochloíte' chun é sin a bhaint amach. B'oifigeach an IRA freisin é. Agus cé nach eol cé chomh bainteach a bhí sé in oibríochtaí an IRA, chreid Fórsaí na Corónach go raibh sé ag fónamh go gníomhach ag uair a bháis. Ach is cinnte go raibh meas air agus an go raibh stádas agus an tionchar aige laistigh de chéimeanna poblachtacha Luimnigh. Mar a dúirt a bhean chéile, Máire, 'ba ar éigean a bhí na rudaí seo ar eolas ag a dhúnmharfóir agus ba é sin an chúis go bhfuair sé bás'.

**'Worked for Ireland, Died for Ireland' 'D'oibrigh sé ar son na hÉireann, Fuair sé bás ar son na hÉireann'?**

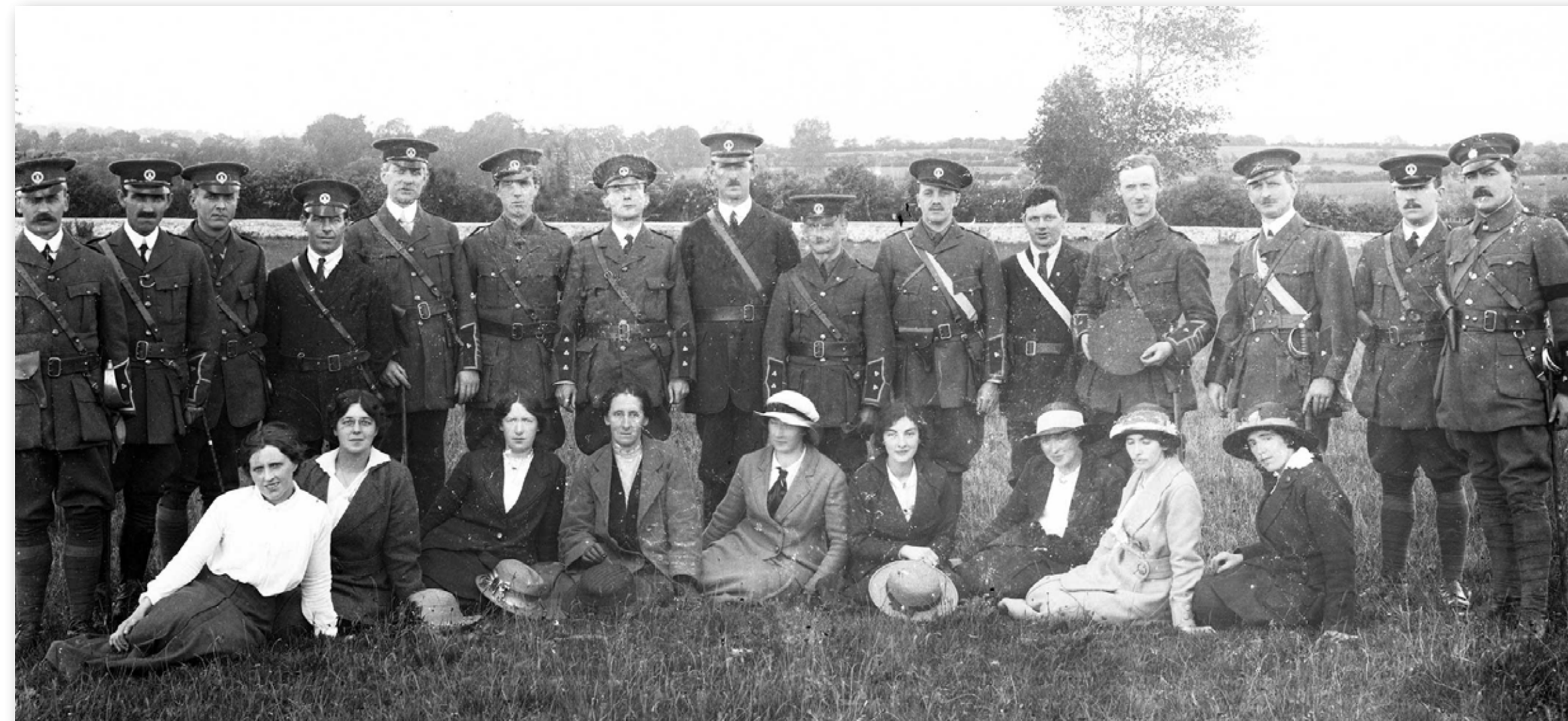


The reasons for which O'Donoghue was targeted are less certain, for he was not a prominent IRA Volunteer. It is believed that he was suspected by British intelligence of using his managerial role at the British & Argentine Meat Company to smuggle arms into Ireland, and Toomey notes anecdotal evidence that 'unidentified men had been checking mail for his [Limerick] address' in his native Westmeath in the weeks prior to his death.

Whatever the truth behind O'Donoghue's death, Kate O'Callaghan's assertion that her husband had 'worked for Ireland and died for Ireland' clearly applied to him equally. As, indeed, it did to George Clancy.

*Is lú is cinnte na cúiseanna gur díriodh ar Ó Donnchadha; níor bhall mór le rá de IRA Luimnigh. Creidtear gur chreid rannóg faisnéise na Breataine go raibh a ról bainistíochta ag Cuideachta Feola na Breataine agus na hAirgintíne á úsáid aige chun airm a thabhairt isteach go hÉirinn, agus go raibh 'post a bhí á thabhairt chuig a sheoladh [i Luimneach] á sheiceáil ag fir neamhaitheanta' ina áit dúchais san Iarmhír sna seachtainí sular dúnmharaíodh é.*

*Pé cúis a bhí le bás lósaef Uí Dhonnchadha, bhain ráiteas Cháit Uí Cheallacháin maidir lena fear céile - 'd'oibrigh sé ar son na hÉireann agus fuair sé bás ar son na hÉireann', an airead céanna le Ó Donnchadha agus a bhain sé, go deimhin féin, le Seoirse Mac Fhlannchadha.*



Group of Limerick members of the Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan, c. 1914, including George and Mary Clancy (7th and 2nd from the left, respectively). Reproduced with kind permission of Patricia Haselbeck ©The Haselbeck Collection.

Grúpa de bhail Luimnigh d'Óglagh na hÉireann agus de Chumann na mBan, thart ar an mbliain 1914, Seoirse agus Máire Mac Fhlannchadha san áireamh (an 7ú agus an 2ra duine ó chlé, faoi seach). Foilsítear an íomhá le cainchead Patricia Haselbeck ©The Haselbeck Collection.

Dáil Éireann's official newssheet, the Irish Bulletin, presented the Curfew Murders as part of a year-long assault on republican local government that included the assassination of the lord mayor of Cork, Tomás MacCurtain, and the imprisonment of his successor, Terence MacSwiney.

*Cuireadh Dúnmharuithe an Chuirfíú i láthair i mbileog nuachta oifigiúil Dháil Éireann, Irish Bulletin, mar chuid d'ionsaí a mhair bliain ar rialtas áitiúil poblachtach ina ndearnadh Ardmhéara Chorcaí, Tomás Mac Curtáin, a fheallmharú, agus inar cuireadh a iarthachtaí, Toirealach Mac Suibhne, chun príosúin.*

# Legacies? Oidhreachtanna?



April 2, 1921 THE SINN FEINER

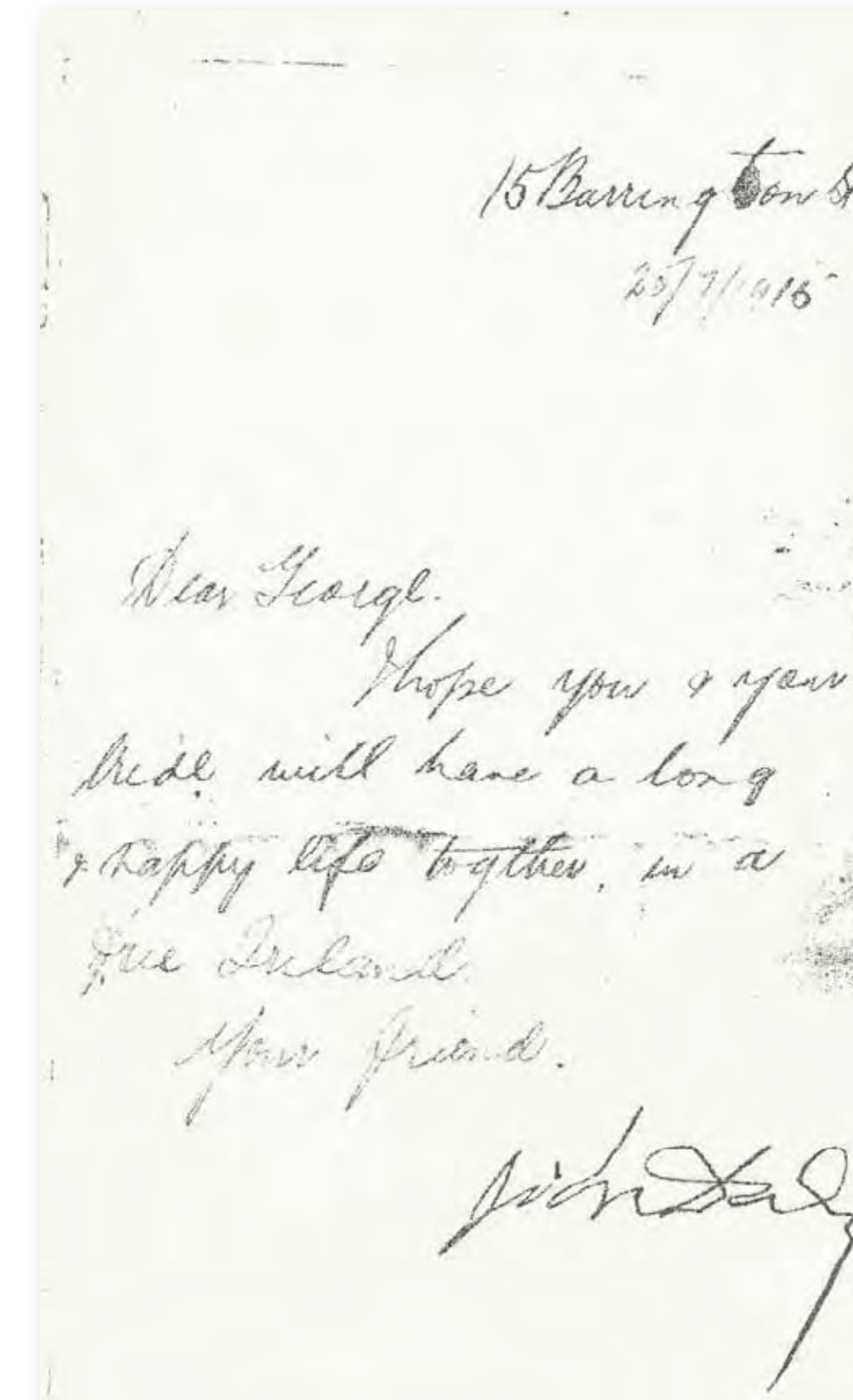
## WHEN BRITISH HUNS FALL OUT

**General Crozier (to the Real Hun):** If you want to shoot mayors of Irish cities through the bodies of their wives, if you want to burn Irish cities and murder ministers of religion, you'll have to do the bloody work yourself. I resign!

[Note: When the Black and Tans shot Mayor Clancy of Limerick, Mrs. Clancy flung herself between her husband and his assassins. Ignoring her presence they shot through her into the body of the Mayor. According to newspaper reports, the British general, Crozier, resigned because he was not in agreement with Lloyd George as to his method of reconquering Ireland.]

Writing in support of a compensation claim for the death of Joseph O'Donoghue lodged by his father under the terms of the Army Pensions Act, 1932, Kate O'Callaghan stated that the Curfew Murders 'did much to bring the Black-and-Tan terror to an end' and there was certainly some truth in this claim. Such atrocities, perpetrated by Crown Forces acting more like terrorists than police and frequently covered-up by corrupt military courts, helped lose Britain the propaganda war critical to its counterinsurgency's success. Central to the Irish victory were widows such as Kate O'Callaghan and Mary Clancy, the experiences of whom were oftentimes presented to maximise their propaganda value in service of the republican cause.

Agus í ag scríobh chun tacú le héileamh ar chúiteamh ar bhás lósaeif Uí Dhonnchadha, a rinne a athair faoi théarmaí an Achta Arm-Phinsean, 1932, luaigh Cáit Uí Ceallacháin gur 'chabhraigh [Dúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú] go mór le deireadh a chur le sceimhle na nDúchrónach' agus is cinnte go raibh seo fíor go pointe áirithe. Chabhraigh na hainghníomhartha siúd, a rinne Fórsaí na Corónach a ghníomhaigh cosúil le sceimhlitheoirí, seachas póilíní, agus á gceilt go minic ag armchúirteanna míleata, leis an mBreatain cogadh na bolscaireachta a chailleadh, cogadh ar bhain rithábacht leis chun rath a frithcheannairce a bhaint amach. Bhí páirt lárnach sa bhua poblachtach ag baintreacha cosúil le Cáit Uí Cheallacháin agus Máire Mhic Fhlannchadha, a raibh eispéiris na mban siúd curtha i láthair i dtaobh a bhfulaingthe ar mhaithe le bolscaireacht chun bá a mhéadú ar son an cúis.



Leading Limerick republican John Daly had wished George and Mary Clancy 'a long and happy life together' on their marriage in 1915.

Bhí súil ag Seán Ó Dálaigh, poblachtánach mór le rá i Luimneach, go mbeadh 'saol fada sona le chéile' ag George agus Mary ar a bpósadh i 1915. (19)

### WIDOW OF EX-MAYOR OF LIMERICK.

Mrs. Clancy, widow of Mr. George Clancy, a murdered Mayor of Limerick, was present at yesterday's meeting of the Doll. Mrs. Clancy leaving the Mansion House. —(FREEMAN Photo.)

Mary Clancy rejected the Treaty in 1922. While she did not enter electoral politics, she became a Fianna Fáil stalwart in Limerick and a strong personal supporter of Éamon de Valera. She died in 1962.

Dhíúltaigh Máire Mhic Fhlannchadha an Conradh sa bhliain 1922. Cé nach ndeachaigh sí leis an bpolaíocht toghcháin, thacaigh sí le Fianna Fáil i Luimneach agus thug sí tacaíocht láidir phearsanta do De Valera. Fuair sí bás sa bhliain 1962.



Kate O'Callaghan (3rd from left) was one of the so-called 'Black Widows' who were elected to Dáil Éireann in 1921 and rejected the Anglo-Irish Treaty in January 1922. Asked whether she would be taking an Anti-Treaty stance had she been granted an independent judicial inquiry into her husband's death, she replied that 'if that demand were granted now, it would not change the conviction which was bred in me and strengthened by [his murder] that England and the British Empire have always stood in Ireland for evil and suffering' and, that 'as long as it is in my power to vote against the inclusion of Ireland in the British Empire I will do so'. She lost her Dáil seat in 1923 and retired from electoral politics. She died in 1961.

*Bhí Cáit Uí Cheallacháin (an 3ú duine ó chlé) ar dhuine de na 'Baintreacha Dubha'; faoi mar ar tugadh orthu, a toghadh leis an Dáil sa bhliain 1921 agus a chur in aghaidh an Chonartha i Eanáir 1922. Nuair a fíafaíodh di an gcuirfeadh nó nach gcuirfeadh sí in aghaidh an Chonartha mar gheall gur ceadaíodh fiosrúchán neamhspleách breithiúnach a dhéanamh ar bhás a fir chéile, d'fhreagair sí; 'dá gceadófaí an t-éileamh sin anois, ní athródh sé an tuairim láidir atá agam agus a neartaigh [an dúnmharú] gur chothaigh Sasana agus Impireacht na Breataine an t-olc agus an fhulaingt in Éirinn i gcónaí' agus 'a fhad agus is féidir liom vóta a chaitheamh in aghaidh Éire a bheith in Impireacht na Breataine, déanfaidh mé é sin'. Chaill sí a suíochán sa Dáil sa bhliain 1923 agus d'éirigh sí as an bpolaíocht toghcháin. Fuair sí bás sa bhliain 1961. (20)*

The long-term legacies of crimes like the Curfew Murders remain unclear. The stories of their victims and their immediate families bear witness to lives damaged or even destroyed. However, the testimonies of their descendants sometimes suggest a transgenerational trauma still little understood and the cumulative impact on which on Irish society has yet to be properly assessed.

*Go bunúsach, ní heol leagáidí iomlána coireanna cosúil le Dúnmharuithe an Chuirfiú go fóill. Léiríonn scéalta a n-íospartach agus a dteaghlach saol gortaithe nó fiú millte. Léirítear i scéalta shliocht na ndaoine seo an crá croí a iompraíodh ó ghlúin go glúin nach dtuigtear mórán faoi, fiú go fóill, áfach, agus ní dhearnadh measúnú ceart ar an tionchar trí chéile a imríodh ar shochaí na hÉireann go fóill.*



A memorial plaque marking the site of O'Donoghue's death was emplaced in 1992. The avenue on which he died was renamed for him in the mid-1930s, as was the North Strand for O'Callaghan and Clancy.

*Tógadh cuimhneachán do Ó Donnchadha i 1992. Tugadh a ainm ar an ascaill ina bhfuair sé bás i lár na 1930idí. Athainníodh an Trá Thuaidh in onóir O'Ceallacháin agus Mac Fhlannchadha ag an am céanna.*



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