

AN OPEN LETTER TO YOUNG IRISHMEN.

In this leaflet we address you the youth of the Nation. You are faced with the most critical situation that any Irish generation was faced with. You are the custodians of the traditions of a brave and noble people. In your hands rest the destinies of the Irish Nation.

Young Irishmen! Your enemy, the British Empire is at war. The cruel tyrannous Empire that scourged your Nation; that robbed it of its freedom; that suppressed its language, its schools; murdered its soldiers and its scholars; confiscated the lands of your fathers; starved thousands to death by artificial famine. Sent us the Black and Tans to burn and loot and murder. Imposed a Civil War on us, where brother shot down brother; partitioned our country and condemned over half a million of our race to slavery under an Orange Junta. That Empire is at War. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

In this Twenty-Six Counties at the moment there are almost one hundred young men held prisoners because they would dare to assert the right of this Nation to Independence. In the gaols of England there are 82 young men suffering for the same Cause. They had the courage and the audacity to carry the War into enemy territory. In Belfast the Craigavon Junta hold over 140 young men. They, too, would dare to assert Ireland's claim to liberty. All these men are members of the Irish Republican Army - Ireland's National Defence Force. They are proud to suffer for the Cause for which generations of Irishmen have died. They make no complaint. They ask for no mercy. They are proud to be soldiers of the I.R.A., but now that they are imprisoned, now that their activities have ceased for the time being, they hand on the task to you. Will you not be faithful to that task?

In this open letter we make no secret of the fact that we are asking you to join the I.R.A. Why should we make that fact secret? The I.R.A., is the Army of this country. It has a great tradition. A tradition it will live up to. It was founded to break the connection with England and to erect in this country a Free, Independent, Gaelic Republic, where poverty would cease to exist, and where a social order based on Christian Justice would take the place of the foul British System known as Capitalism.

In appealing to you the youth of this generation, we would recall to your minds the days of 1914 when slavish Irishmen, who were then the leaders of the Irish people, refused to seize the opportunity of England's difficulty to secure Irish Freedom, and decided to hold Ireland for the Empire. But we would also recall to your minds the days of 1916, when the "Hot-heads and the fools" raised the flag of the Irish Republic in Dublin, and by so doing, redeemed this Nation and killed forever the slavishness of the so-called Constitutional Party.

To-day when other leaders posing as Republicans are following in the wake of Redmond and Dillon, and endeavouring to hold Ireland for the Empire, be proud to take your stand with the "Hot-heads", of Easter Week. We stand for Ireland against the Empire. Will you not stand with us.

We have no hesitation in issuing this appeal to you. We know the spirit of Irish youth. You are the sons of rebel fathers. Let it not be said that you are the most cowardly youth in Europe. Great things are happening to-day. Armies are on the march. Empires are crashing and new ones arising. National territories are being defended in all parts of the world. Is it to be said that the young men of Ireland are the only young men in Europe who are afraid to draw the sword for their own Nation? We do not believe this of you.

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We believe that you only await the opportunity, and we believe that that opportunity has been given to this generation,

Come into the ranks of the I.R.A., at once. We want you, we want to train you. We want to arm you so that when the day of battle arrives you will not be found wanting. Make no mistake about it, this war will not pass without an attempt being made to cut this country off from the British Empire. They may gaoil us, they may hang us but they will never exterminate our spirit.

The torch which we received from Cathal Brugha as he fell, riddled with bullets, with the cry of "No Surrender" on his lips, we hand to you. Will you hold it aloft with us? Will you defend it with your lives? Will you help us to enthroned and to make function the living Irish Republic? If you will, then your place is with the I.R.A., with your shoulders behind your rifles. Join to-day. Long Live the Republic and down with the British War Lords, and their servants in Merrion St., and Stormont.

ISSUED BY THE IRISH REPUBLICAN PUBLICITY BUREAU, DUBLIN.

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