

IRISH-GERMAN TREATY OF 1914

Co-signed by Representatives of the German Imperial Government
and Roger Casement, representative of the Irish Republic.

Published by An Chartlann

PREFACE

*The following text is an extract from John Devoy's autobiography
Recollections of an Irish Rebel.*

Casement's mission to Germany had three main objects:

First, to secure German military help for Ireland when the opportunity offered.

Second, to educate German public opinion on the Irish situation, so that the people would stand behind the Government when it took action in favour of Ireland.

Third, to organise, if possible, Irish prisoners of war into a military unit to take part in the fight for Irish freedom.

Casement did his best in all these things, but did the first ineffectively, succeeded admirably in the second, and failed badly in the third.

After Casement's arrival in Germany he spent considerable time in negotiating a formal Treaty between Germany and himself (Representative of Ireland) which contained some provisions that we in America did not approve of and which we were certain the men in Ireland would not ratify. The Treaty never was ratified by any Irish body, but Casement regarded it as a crowning triumph of his efforts.

The Treaty was printed in German and English in parallel columns, and was so reproduced in the *Gaelic American*. It was intended for wide circulation in the United States, which Casement thought we could easily secure, but it was impossible to get any daily paper to publish it. He could not understand this, and when I advised him that the daily papers had all been captured and treated us as badly as the English did, it seemed to him that it was due to lack of proper effort on our part.

I quote hereunder the version of the Treaty in English, as a historical curiosity which had no influence whatever on the

course of events. I preface it with a copy of Casement's letter on the subject addressed to Zimmermann, the German Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and of the communication from Zimmermann accepting Casement's proposal and transmitting to him copy of the Treaty on behalf of the German Imperial Government.

ROGER CASEMENT PLAQUE IN RIEDERAU, BAVARIA



"Here resided in Summer 1915, Sir Roger Casement, a martyr for Ireland's freedom, a magnanimous friend of Germany in difficult times. He sealed the love of country with his blood."

CASEMENT'S PROPOSAL

Berlin, 23 December, 1914.

To the Under-Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs,
Berlin.

Dear Mr. Under-Secretary:

Following upon the interview I had the honour to have with you soon after my arrival in Berlin, the Imperial German Government issued a Declaration defining its attitude towards the Irish People which offered me convincing proof of the goodwill of Germany towards Ireland.

In that declaration the Imperial Government announced that it desired for the Irish people only their national prosperity and national freedom. I now learn that the Irish soldiers, prisoners of war in Germany, are being quartered in a separate camp and are being treated with as much kindness as is possible to show men circumstanced as they are.

Fully aware of the importance to my country of the Declaration issued by the German Government and very sensible, as I am, of the kind treatment accorded to my countrymen now in Germany, I have had under consideration the possibility of taking active advantage of these manifestations of goodwill to Ireland. With the end in view of aiding the cause of Irish nationality, I have now the honour to submit to the Imperial German Government a proposal for the embodiment of an Irish Brigade, pledged to fight in that cause alone, to be formed of such Irishmen, now prisoners of war in Germany, as may be willing to enrol themselves in such a corps.

I venture to transmit herewith a statement covering the conditions under which, in my opinion, such a Brigade might

possibly be formed, and I would beg that this suggestion may have the earnest consideration of the Imperial German Government.

I have the honour to be, Dear Mr. Under-Secretary, with the highest respect.

Your very obedient servant,

ROGER CASEMENT.

ZIMMERMANN'S RESPONSE

Auswartiges Amt.

Berlin, December 28th, 1914.

The Honourable Sir Roger Casement,
Eden Hotel,
Kurfurstendamm,
Berlin.

Dear Sir Roger:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd inst., in which you submitted to the Imperial German Government a proposal for the formation of an Irish Brigade, pledged to fight in the cause of Irish nationality alone and to be formed of such Irishmen, now prisoners of war in Germany, as may be willing to enrol themselves in such a corps.

In reply I have the honour to inform you that the Imperial German Government agrees to your Proposal and accepts the conditions under which the Brigade might possibly be formed, as laid down in the statement annexed to your letter of the 23rd inst. and enclosed herewith,

I have the honour to be, Dear Sir Roger,
Your obedient servant,

ZIMMERMANN

Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

THE TREATY

ARTICLE I.

With a view to securing the national freedom of Ireland, with the moral and material assistance of the German Imperial Government, an Irish Brigade shall be formed from among the Irish soldiers, or other natives of Ireland, now prisoners of war in Germany.

ARTICLE II.

The object of the Irish Brigade shall be to fight solely in the cause of Ireland, and under no circumstance shall it be employed or directed to any German aid.

ARTICLE III.

The Irish Brigade shall be formed and shall fight under the Irish flag alone. The men shall wear a special, distinctively Irish uniform.

As soon as Irishmen can be got for the purpose, either from Ireland or the United States, the Brigade shall have only Irish Officers. Until such time as Irish Officers can be secured German Officers will be appointed with the approval of Sir Roger Casement, to have disciplinary control of the men.

But no military operation shall be ordered or conducted by the German officers of the Brigade during such time as the men are under their control.

ARTICLE IV.

The Irish Brigade shall be clothed, fed and efficiently equipped with arms and munitions by the Imperial German

Government on the clear understanding that these are furnished as a free gift of aid the cause of Irish Independence.

ARTICLE V.

It is distinctly understood and is hereby formally declared by the Parties to this agreement that the Irish Brigade shall consist only of Volunteers in the cause of Irish national freedom, and as such no member of the Irish Brigade shall receive pay or monetary rewards of any kind from the Imperial German Government during the period he shall bear arms in the Brigade.

ARTICLE VI.

The Imperial German Government undertakes, in certain circumstances, to send the Irish Brigade to Ireland with efficient military support and with an ample supply of arms and ammunition to equip the Irish National Volunteers in Ireland who may be willing to join them in the attempt to recover Irish national freedom by force of arms.

The "certain circumstances" hereby understood are the following:

In the event of a German naval victory affording the means of reaching the coast of Ireland, the Imperial German Government pledges itself to despatch the Irish Brigade and a supporting body of German officers and men, in German transports, to attempt a landing on the Irish coast.

ARTICLE VII.

The opportunity to land in Ireland can only arise if the fortune of war should grant the German Navy a victory that would open, with reasonable prospect of success, the sea-route to Ireland. Should the German Navy not succeed in this effort the Irish Brigade shall be employed in Germany, or elsewhere,

solely in such a way as Sir Roger Casement may approve as being in strict conformity with Article II.

In this event it might be possible to employ the Irish Brigade to assist the Egyptian People to recover their freedom by driving the British out of Egypt. Short of directly fighting to free Ireland from British rule a blow struck at the British invaders of Egypt, to aid Egyptian national freedom, is a blow struck for a kindred cause to that of Ireland.

ARTICLE VIII.

In the event of the Irish Brigade volunteering for this service the Imperial German Government undertakes to make arrangements with the Austro-Hungarian Government for its transport through that Empire to Constantinople, and to provide with the Turkish Government for the recognition and acceptance of the Irish Brigade as a Volunteer Corps attached to the Turkish Army in the effort to expel the British from Egypt.

ARTICLE IX.

In the event of the war coming to an end without the object of the Irish Brigade having been effected, namely, its landing in Ireland, the Imperial German Government undertakes to send each member of the Brigade who may so desire it, to the United States of America, with the necessary means to land in that country in conformity with the United States Immigration Laws.

ARTICLE X.

In the event of the Irish Brigade landing in Ireland, and military operations in that country resulting in the overthrow of British authority and the erection of a native Irish Government, the Imperial German Government will give the Irish Government so established its fullest moral support, and both

by public recognition and by general goodwill will contribute, with all sincerity, to the establishment of an independent Government in Ireland.