

# LETTER TO GENERAL JOHN MAXWELL, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1916.

By Edward Thomas O'Dwyer.

**Taken from *History of the Sinn Féin Movement and the Irish Rebellion of 1916* by Francis P. Jones. This letter was written in reply to one from General Maxwell demanding that Bishop O'Dwyer take action against two priests alleged to have had Republican sympathies.**

ASHFORD, CHARLEVILLE,  
May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1916.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 12<sup>th</sup> inst., which has been forwarded to me here. I have read carefully your allegations against Rev. — and Rev. —, but do not see in them any justification for disciplinary action on my part. They are both excellent priests who hold strong national views, but I do not know that they have violated any law, civil or ecclesiastical.

In your letter of 6<sup>th</sup> inst. you appeal to me to help you in the furtherance of your work as military dictator of Ireland. Even if action of that kind was not outside my province, the events of the past few weeks would make it impossible for me to have any part in proceedings which I regard as wantonly cruel and oppressive.

You remember the Jameson Raid, when a number of buccaneers invaded a friendly State and fought the forces of the lawful government. If ever men deserved the supreme punishment, it was they. But officially and unofficially the influence of the British Government was used to save them, and it succeeded. You took care that no plea for mercy should interpose on behalf of the poor young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin. The first information which we got of their fate was the announcement that they had been shot in cold blood.

Personally, I regard your action with horror, and I believe that it has outraged the conscience of the country. Then the deporting by hundreds, and even thousands, of poor fellows without a trial of any kind seems to me an abuse of power as fatuous as it is arbitrary, and altogether your regime has been one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of the misgovernment of this country.

I have the honour to be, sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
EDWARD THOMAS O'DWYER,  
*Bishop of Limerick.*

To General Sir. J. G. Maxwell,  
*Commander-in-Chief,*  
The Forces in Ireland.