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I came to University College about 1913. I was living at Dominican Hall and attending lectures at University College, Dublin. One day in 1914 coming out of lectures I remember seeing a man older than ourselves with a wide round hat It was 'Ginger' O'Connell. I made his acquaintance and on a subsequent occasion he informed me that on the outbreak of war he had deserted, from the American Army as he felt that the time was opportune to return and help organise resistance against the British in his own land. At this time he was an organiser for the Volunteers and was constantly at No. 2 Dawson Street. I remember he was frequently followed by detectives with whose faces I became very familiar. We became very friendly and I saw a lot of him during 1914-15. He talked to me about the Volunteers and he frequently spoke to me about the two tendencies that prevailed among the Executive of the Volunteers. He wished that Eoin McNeill would attend more frequently so as to counteract the influence of a small section that had the definite purpose of rushing a Rising which he felt militarily could have no success. He was afraid that their mystical view of the need for a blood sacrifice would bring about a premature clash with the English which would be futile and disastrous as it would waste this opportunity for advancing the cause of Irish freedom while England was at war and would cause the Volunteers to be disbanded, the leaders to be executed and would put a premature end to the military movement for resistance in that generation. His [2].was essentially a military mind. He was a convinced revolutionary, but he thought always on technical lines and militarily speaking he could only sympathies with a policy that offered a reasonable prospect of success.

'Ginger' with McNeill, the O'Rahilly, Hobson and others were opposed to the idea of a blood sacrifice as such. They were of the opinion that the Volunteer movement was growing stronger every day and that they should continue to build it up and let circumstances develop before adopting an aggressive policy. 'Ginger' used to talk of that section half banteringly and half ruefully as the 'Army of Destiny'. He had a great admiration for the character and ideals of the individuals who held. these views and never criticised them adversely as men, but he thought that from the practical military point of view their ideas offered no prospect of success. There was, therefore, apparently a fundamental cleavage in temperament and point of view. Pearse, McDonagh and Plunkett were the names he mentioned in connection with the other point of view which he looked upon as a sort of mystical patriotism. He never mentioned the name of James Connolly or the Citizen Army nor did he at any time previous to Easter Week refer to the I.R.B. I was always struck by his remark that "When Eoin McNeill came he was always head and shoulders above the others in debate and the arguments he put forward had a steadying effect and seemed to unite the Executive on the lines of building up the Movement on national lines and to restrain the impetuosity that was leading the more advanced section in the direction of a premature Rising. All through 1915 these ideas were exercising and worrying him and in [3] conversation with me he adverted frequently to the divided outlook as he feared that the good work achieved would be undone. His was not a poetic temperament and to him the mystical idea of patriotism was antipathetic.

Although we discussed all these things in a general way, he was really very reticent about details. About ten or twelve days before the Rising I went to stay with my friend, Mrs. Joseph Connolly, in Belfast and I was quite out of touch with 'Ginger'

during that time. It was in Belfast I became aware of the sharply mounting tension – I had felt nothing of this before I left Dublin. There was great excitement, confusion and bewilderment in Belfast. People seemed to be lacking in precise knowledge of what was to happen. They discussed what was the significance of the Sunday Parade; the consensus of opinion was that it meant a Rising. There was constant coming and going to the house of Dinny McCullough. I also remember excited discussions on the whole situation and wondering what was taking place in Dublin and the South; it was expected that something would take place. At no time was there any suggestion of military action in Belfast. The places mentioned as centres of action were Dublin and Dungannon. On Saturday morning, to the best of my recollection, Joe Connolly set off for Dublin to get more exact information and to stay for the Rising if it should take place. From the discussions in Belfast I concluded, as an observer, that the policy of these in the Volunteer Executive in favour of an immediate Rising had carried the day and that it would be supported by all. We felt surprised and felt it was something of an anti-climax when Joe Connolly came back on the Sunday night and told us of [4] the meeting in Seamus Ó Ceallaigh's house which showed that there was a sharp split among the leaders on the subject of the Rising and that Eoin McNeill had countermanded the parade. I cannot remember any further details of that meeting although he gave us a full account of it at the time. Colm O'Loughlin arrived, I think, on the Sunday and stayed during the week. He gave us a detailed account of the Ballykissane incident. I know he was a bearer of the McNeill message but I don't know whether it was to Belfast. There was a feeling of uncertainty as we realised that the split was definite among the leaders and that some would obey McNeill and some would follow the other leaders into a rebellion. There was a feeling of general sadness at the split in the ranks of what was already a very small, minority in the country.. We feared that small isolated actions would take place and prove abortive. We were of opinion that in general the McNeill view would prevail.