



P. H. Pearse

Why We Want Recruits

May 1915

We want recruits because we have undertaken a service which we believe to be of vital importance to our country, and because that service needs whatever there is of manly stuff in Ireland in order to its effective rendering.

We want recruits because we have a standard to rally them to. It is not a new standard raised for the first time by the men of a new generation. It is an old standard which has been borne by many generations of Irish men, which has gone into many battles, which has looked down upon much glory and upon much sorrow, which has been a sign to be contradicted, but which shall yet shine as a star. There, is no other standard in the world so august as the standard we bear and it is the only stand which the men of Ireland may bear without abandoning their ancient allegiance. Individually Irishmen have sometimes fought under other standards: Ireland as a whole has never fought under any other.

We want recruits because we have a faith to give them and a hope with which to inspire them. They are a faith and a hope which have been handed down from generation to generation of Irish men and women unto this last. The faith is that Ireland is one, that Ireland is inviolate, that Ireland is worthy of all love and all homage and all service that may lawfully be paid to any earthly thing, and the hope is that Ireland may be free. In a human sense, we have no desire, no ambition but the integrity,

the honour, and the freedom of our native land.

We want recruits because we are sure of the rightness of our cause. We have no misgivings, no self-questions. While others have been doubting, timorous, ill at ease, we have been serenely at peace with our consciences. The recent time of soul-searching had no terrors for us. We saw our path with absolute clearness; we took it with absolute deliberateness. We could no other.' We called upon the names of the great confessors of our national faith, and all was well with us. Whatever soul-searchings there may be among Irish political parties now or hereafter, we go on in the calm certitude at having done the clear, clean, sheer thing. We have the strength, and the peace of mind of those who never compromise.

We want recruits because we believe that events are about to place the destinies of Ireland definitely in our hands, and because we want as much help as possible to enable us to bear the burden. The political leadership of Ireland is passing to us - not, perhaps, to us as individuals, for none of us are ambitious for leadership, and few of us fit for leadership; but to our party, to men of our way of thinking; that is, to the party and to the men that stand by Ireland only, to the party and to the men that stand by the nation, to the party and to the men of one allegiance.

We want recruits because we have work for



them to do. We do not propose to keep our men idle. We propose to give them work - hard work, plenty of work. We would band together all men capable at working for Ireland and give them men's work.

We want recruits because we are able to train them. The great majority of our officers are now fully competent to undertake the training of Irish Volunteers for active service under the conditions imposed by the natural and military facts of the map of Ireland. Those officers who are not so competent will be made competent in our training camps during the next few months.

We want recruits because we are able to arm them. In a rough way of speaking, we have succeeded already in placing a gun and ammunition therefore, in the hands of every Volunteer that has undertaken to endeavour to pay for them. We are in a position to do as much for every man that joins us. We may not always have the popular pattern of gun, but we undertake to produce a gun of some sort for every genuine Irish Volunteer, with some ammunition to boot.

Finally:

We want recruits because we are absolutely determined to take action the moment action becomes a duty. If a moment comes - as a moment seemed on the point of coming at least twice during the past eighteen months - when the Irish Volunteers will be justified to their consciences in taking definite military action, such action will be taken. We do not anticipate such a moment in the very near future; but we live at a time when it may come swiftly and terribly. What if conscription be forced upon Ireland? What if a Unionist or a Coalition British Ministry repudiate the Home Rule Act? What if it be determined to dismember Ireland? The future is big with these and other possibilities.

And these are among the reasons why we want recruits.