

# ÉIRE AGUS AN GHÉARCHÉIM RIALTAIS DÚCHAIS, 1912–1914

Bhí Éire ina cíor thuathail, ó thaobh na polaitíochta de, sa bhliain 1912. Bhí an Bille Rialtais Dúchais, ar diúltaíodh di sna blianta 1886 agus 1893, os comhair parlaiminte an athuair agus ghlac Teach na dTeachtaí leis an iarraidh seo. Mar gheall ar leasú parlaiminteach an bhliain roimhe sin, bheadh ceangal ar Theach na dTiarnaí glacadh leis an mBille ón mbliain 1914 ar aghaidh. Ach bhí na hAontachtaithe, a bhí glan in aghaidh Rialtais Dúchais, meáite ar stop a chur leis an reacht, le lámh láidir, dá mba ghá. Bhí tacaíocht acu ó pháirtí na gCoimeádach sa Bhreatain. An 28ú Meán Fómhair 1912 seoladh an Conradh agus Cúnant Sollúnta i mBéal Feirste ‘chun an chomhcheilg láithreach chun parlaimint Rialtais Dúchais a bhunú in Éirinn, a chur faoi chois’. Bunaíodh Óglaigh Uladh go luath ina dhiaidh sin. Rinneadh socruithe chun airm a iompórtáil ón nGearmáin agus oíche an 24/25ú Aibreán 1914 tugadh breis is 24,000 raidhfíil agus na milliúin urchar i dtír ag cuanta Latharna, Co. Aontroma, agus ag cuanta Bheannchair agus Dhomhnach Daoi, Co. an Dúin.

‘Ceannairc an Churraigh’ a lean iarrachtaí chun srian a chur le hÓglaigh Uladh. Dhearbhaigh oifigigh shinsearacha in arm na Breataine, a bhí lonnaithe i gCampa an Churraigh, Co. Chill Dara, go n-éireoidís as dá n-ordófaí dóibh cur i gcoinne na nÓglach. Idir an dá linn, tharraing armáil Óglaigh Uladh aird ar a laghad arm a bhí ag Óglaigh na hÉireann; raidhfíilí adhmaid agus maidí is mó a bhí acu siúd. I bhfocail an Phiarsaigh: ‘Personally, I regard the Orangeman with a rifle a much less ridiculous figure than the Nationalist without a rifle.’

# IRELAND AND THE HOME RULE CRISIS, 1912–1914

Ireland in 1912 was in a state of political turmoil. The Home Rule Bill, defeated in 1886 and 1893, was once again before parliament and was passed by the House of Commons. As a result of parliamentary reform initiated the previous year, the House of Lords could not prevent the bill from coming into force beyond 1914. Unionists, totally opposed to Home Rule, became increasingly determined to block the legislation, by armed force if necessary. They were supported by the Conservative party in Britain. On 28th September 1912 the Solemn League and Covenant was launched in Belfast ‘to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule parliament in Ireland’. This was followed by the founding of the Ulster Volunteer Force (U.V.F.). Plans were made to import arms from Germany, and on the night of 24/25th April 1914 over 24,000 rifles and several million rounds of ammunition were landed at the ports of Larne, Co. Antrim and Bangor and Donaghadee, Co. Down.

Moves to curb the U.V.F. led to what became known as the ‘Curragh Mutiny’, when senior British officers based in the Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, stated that they would resign if ordered to move against it. In the meantime, the arming of the U.V.F. served to highlight the lack of weapons among the Irish Volunteers, whose members drilled mainly with wooden rifles and clubs. As Pádraig Pearse put it: ‘Personally, I regard the Orangeman with a rifle a much less ridiculous figure than the Nationalist without a rifle’.



Thuas: Sáiltéar i bhfoirm uibhe, agus slúan frith-Rialtais Dúchais air, 1912.

Thíos: Óglaigh Náisiúnta á léirbhreithniú, 1916.

Above: Saltcellar in the form of an egg, with anti-Home Rule slogan, 1912.

Below: National Volunteers Review, 1916.