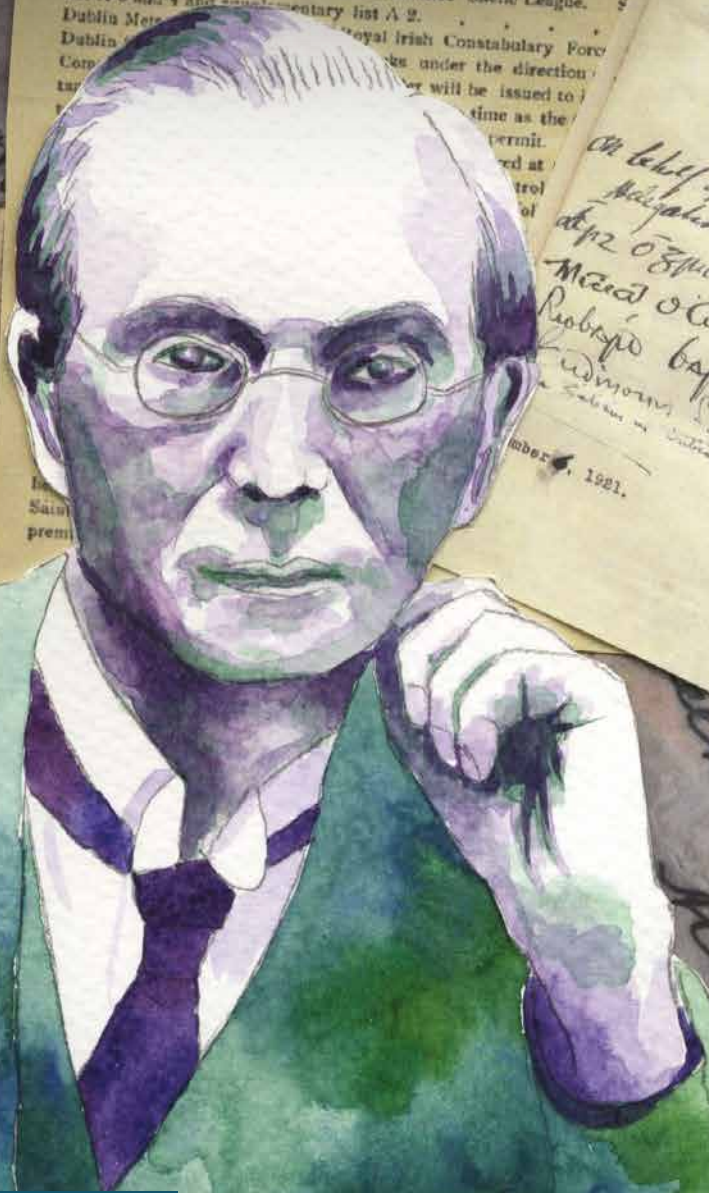
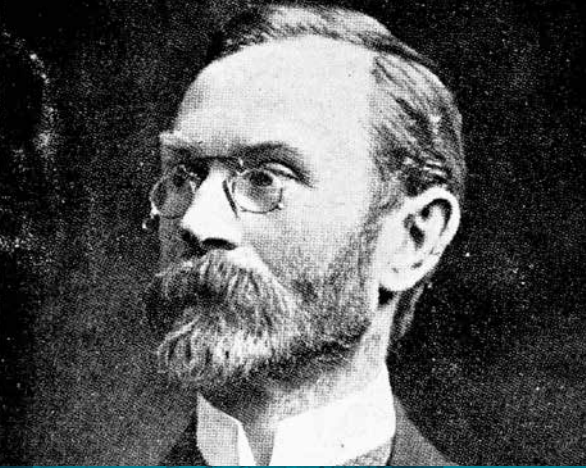


EIOIN MACNEILL



Creative
Centenaries

The story of Eoin MacNeill
Key Stage 3 Learning Resource



The story of Eoin MacNeill has been developed by the Nerve Centre's Understanding the Decade of Commemorations project, in partnership with the Tower Museum.

It is the latest in a series of graphic novels connected to the Decade of Centenaries, which highlight important historical events and people from Ireland's history during the years 1912-1923.

This is a Key Stage 3 curriculum linked resource that looks at the life of Eoin MacNeill, who is remembered in Irish history as the man who countermanded the orders for the 1916 Easter Rising.

Eoin MacNeill was an Irish scholar, Irish language enthusiast, nationalist activist and Sinn Féin politician who served as Minister for Education from 1922 to 1925. MacNeill has been described as "the father of the modern study of early Irish medieval history".

This graphic novel has been produced in 2020 to mark the anniversary of the Government of Ireland Act in 1920 and the subsequent partition of Ireland into two political jurisdictions – Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland.

Further graphic novels, as well as a suite of animations and interactive resources, are available to access from www.creativecentenaries.org/resources.

Artwork by Clare Foley and script by Seth Linder. With thanks to Dr Adrian Grant and Professor Fearghal McGarry.

creativecentenaries.org
towermuseumcollections.com



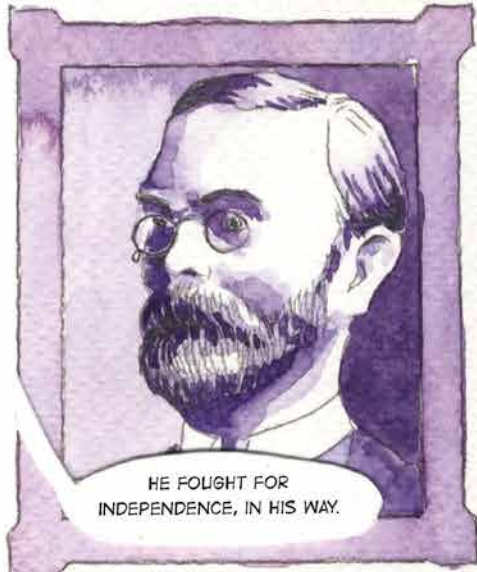
This graphic novel is part of the Understanding the Decade of Commemorations project, supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).



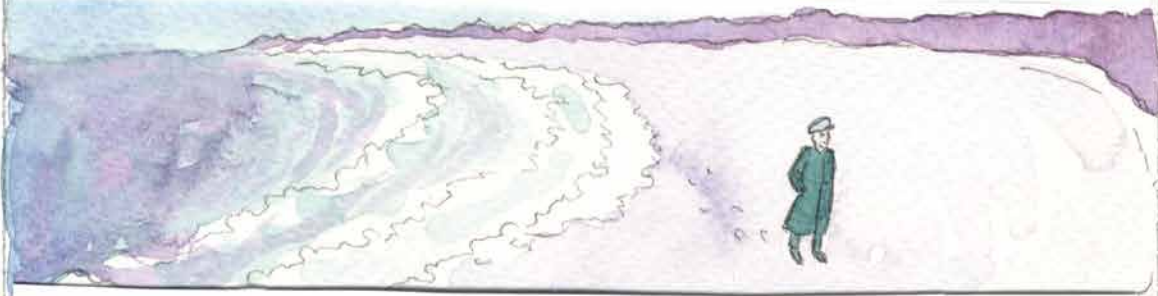
TO-NIGHT.
SINN FEIN.
GREAT
PUBLIC MEETING
IN
ST. COLUMB'S HALL.
Chair will be taken at 8 o'clock.
SPEAKERS:
Arthur Griffith, Founder of Sinn Fein.
Eoin MacNeill, President Irish Volunteers.
Laurence Ginnell, M.I.P., Late of Westminster.
Herbert Pim, Etc., Etc.
Balcony Reserved for Ladies.
BEID EIRE SAOR ARIS.
Derry Journal Ltd.



Procession at Michael Collins funeral, 1922. Eoin MacNeill second from left. © National Library of Ireland.



AFTER GRADUATING FROM UNIVERSITY AND BECOMING A CLERK IN THE DUBLIN LAW COURTS IN THE LATE 1880S, EOIN STUDIED THE IRISH LANGUAGE AND IRISH HISTORY.



FOR MANY YEARS HE VISITED INISHMAAN IN THE ARAN ISLANDS, TO LEARN IRISH AND ABSORB TRADITIONAL IRISH CULTURE WHICH HE CAME TO SEE AS CENTRAL TO IRISH IDENTITY.

IN 1893, HE CO-FOUNDED THE GAELIC LEAGUE WITH PROTESTANT SCHOLAR DOUGLAS HYDE.

IF WE ARE TO BE A TRULY FREE PEOPLE WE MUST RECLAIM OUR IDENTITY, OUR LANGUAGE, OUR TRADITIONAL CULTURE.



IN 1898, EOIN MARRIED AGNES MOORE. THEY HAD FOUR SONS AND FOUR DAUGHTERS.

1904.



EOIN HELPED ORGANISE THE FIRST FEIS NA NGLEANN, TO RESTORE TRADITIONAL IRISH CULTURE IN HIS NATIVE GLENS. MANY OF HIS CO-FOUNDERS WERE PROTESTANT SUPPORTERS OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE. THIS HELPED SHAPE EOIN'S BELIEF THAT UNIONISTS COULD BE PERSUADED TO SUPPORT AN INDEPENDENT IRELAND.

IN 1908, EOIN HELPED PATRICK PEARSE SET UP ST ENDA'S IRISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL FOR BOYS IN DUBLIN.

THIS SCHOOL WILL HELP US UNDO CENTURIES OF ANGLICISATION AND HELP US ON THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE.

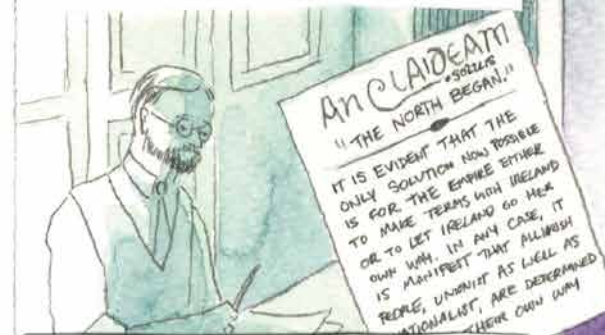


THE FOLLOWING YEAR EOIN WAS MADE PROFESSOR OF EARLY IRISH HISTORY AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN. HIS WORK HELPED TRANSFORM OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EARLY IRISH HISTORY.



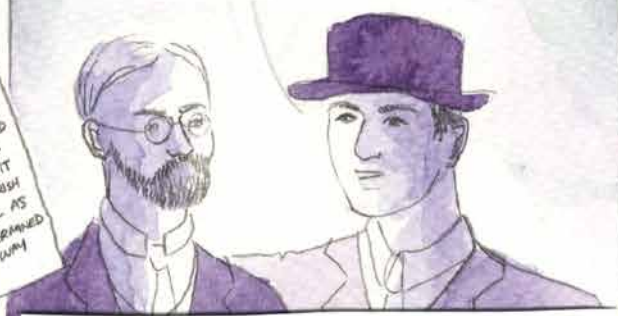
1913 WAS A CRUCIAL YEAR FOR IRELAND. UNIONISTS WERE BITTERLY OPPOSED TO HOME RULE, WHICH WOULD GIVE IRELAND LIMITED SELF-GOVERNMENT. 500 DELEGATES OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL DECIDED TO SET UP THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT IF HOME RULE BECAME LAW. THEY WERE SUPPORTED BY THE ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE (UVF), A PARAMILITARY FORCE SET UP THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

EOIN WROTE AN ARTICLE 'THE NORTH BEGAN' IN A NEWSPAPER CALLED AN CLAIHEAMH SOLUIS. IF THE UVF COULD DEFEY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO FIGHT AGAINST HOME RULE, HE ARGUED...



...WHY SHOULD IRISH NATIONALISTS NOT CREATE THEIR OWN ARMED FORCE TO FIGHT FOR HOME RULE? UNIONIST AND NATIONALIST SHOULD CREATE THEIR OWN IRELAND TOGETHER.

WE AGREE THERE IS A NEED FOR THE ARMED FORCE YOU WROTE ABOUT AND WE BELIEVE YOU ARE THE BEST PERSON TO LEAD IT.



AS A RESULT OF THIS ARTICLE, BULMER HOBSON, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE IRISH REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD (IRB), WHO WANTED COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN, APPROACHED EOIN.

ON NOVEMBER 25, 1913, EOIN HOLDS THE FIRST PUBLIC MEETING OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

OUR AIM IS TO ENSURE AND MAINTAIN THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES COMMON TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF CREED, CLASS OR POLITICS.

SOON TENSIONS ARISE BETWEEN JOHN REDMOND, LEADER OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT AND THE IRB, WHO WANT COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN.

SLAUGHTERHAM Irish Volunteers PUBLIC MEETING ROTUND TUESDAY, NOV 25

JULY 1914. THE FIRST WORLD WAR BREAKS OUT. REDMOND BELIEVES IF THE IRISH ENLIST FOR THE BRITISH ARMY IT WILL ENSURE THAT HOME RULE WILL BE GRANTED. JOHN REDMOND SPLITS FROM THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS AND TAKES OVER 100,000 MEN WITH HIM. TENSIONS BETWEEN HIM AND EOIN REACH BREAKING POINT.

IS THE TIME

YOUR FIRST DUTY IS TO TAKE YOUR PART IN ENDING THE WAR

JOIN AN IRISH REGIMENT TODAY

SIGN UP TO-DAY

AS PROUD IRISHMEN WE CANNOT ANSWER THE CALL TO FIGHT FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE. IT IS A MORAL CORRUPTION OF THE HIGHEST ORDER.

THE FEW THOUSAND WHO REMAIN, UNDER EOIN'S LEADERSHIP, ARGUE THAT THE FIGHT IS IN IRELAND AND THAT IRISHMEN SHOULD NOT JOIN THE BRITISH ARMY

ALTHOUGH EOIN REJECTS THE CALL TO JOIN THE BRITISH ARMY, HE DOES NOT WANT AN ARMED REBELLION AGAINST THE BRITISH. THIS PUT HIM AT ODDS WITH OTHERS IN THE VOLUNTEERS, MAINLY THOSE WHO WERE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE IRB.

WE ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE BRITISH ARMY. TO TAKE UP ARMS WITHOUT A CHANCE OF SUCCESS WOULD BE TO LEAD OUR PEOPLE TO THEIR DEATH. AND TO KILL IN THOSE CONDITIONS WOULD BE 'MURDER'. ONLY IF THE VOLUNTEERS ARE UNDER DIRECT THREAT SHOULD WE USE VIOLENCE.

APRIL 1916. A DOCUMENT SURFACES WHICH SEEMS TO SHOW THAT THE BRITISH ARE URGENTLY PLANNING TO ARREST EOIN AND OTHER LEADERS OF THE VOLUNTEERS. THE DOCUMENT IS DOCTORED BY IRB LEADER JOSEPH PLUNKETT TO PERSUADE EOIN TO SUPPORT AN ARMED REBELLION.

IF THE RISING IS TO GO AHEAD, WE MUST GET EOIN'S SUPPORT. EVEN IF IT IS BY DECEPTION.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19. PEARSE PRESENTS THE FORGED 'CASTLE DOCUMENT' TO EOIN. HE CLAIMS IT WAS STOLEN FROM HIGH-RANKING BRITISH OFFICIALS AT THEIR HQ IN DUBLIN CASTLE.

THE PLAN IS WELL-ADVANCED. WE HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY KEPT IN THE DARK.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20. BULMER HOBSON DISCOVERS THAT THE IRB ARE PLANNING A RISING THROUGHOUT IRELAND. AN ARMS SHIPMENT FROM GERMANY, ARRANGED BY EOIN'S FRIEND ROGER CASEMENT, REACHES THE IRISH COAST.

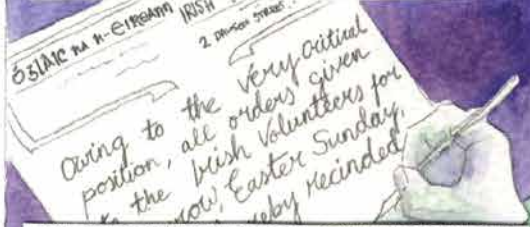
MIDNIGHT. HOBSON AND EOIN CONFRONT PEARSE AT HIS SCHOOL.

YOU MUST CALL OFF THE RISING. IT CAN'T SUCCEED, AND ISN'T JUSTIFIED BY PRESENT CONDITIONS.

OUR PLANS HAVE BEEN LAID. YOU CAN'T STOP US NOW.

IN THE EARLY HOURS OF FRIDAY, APRIL 21, ROGER CASEMENT IS ARRESTED ON THE KERRY COAST AFTER BEING SET ASHORE BY A GERMAN U-BOAT. THAT EVENING THE SHIP CARRYING ARMS FROM GERMANY WAS INTERCEPTED OFF THE COAST OF CORK, AND SUNK BY ITS CAPTAIN THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

EASTER SATURDAY, APRIL 22. 6PM. WHEN EOIN HEARS OF CASEMENT'S CAPTURE AND THE LOSS OF ARMS, HE IMMEDIATELY WRITES SEVERAL LETTERS COUNTERMANDING THE RISING.



THE ORDER IS TAKEN TO LOCAL COMMANDERS OF THE VOLUNTEERS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

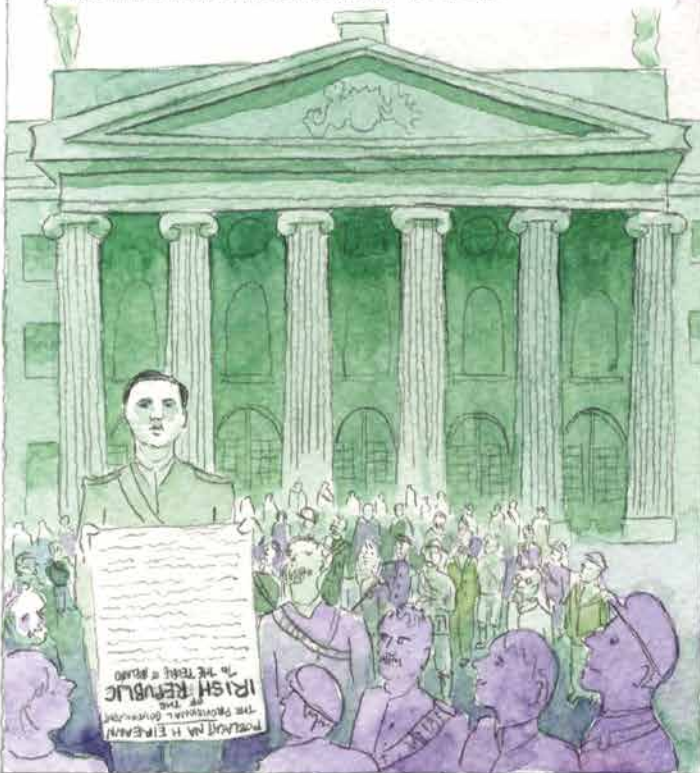


SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 22. EOIN ARRIVES AT THE OFFICES OF THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT IN DUBLIN WITH AN ORDER CANCELLING THE 'EASTER MANOEUVRES' OF THE VOLUNTEERS WHICH IS PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

SUNDAY, APRIL 23. 9AM. THE MILITARY COUNCIL OF THE VOLUNTEERS DECIDES TO PROCEED WITH THE RISING AND FINALISES THE TEXT OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC.



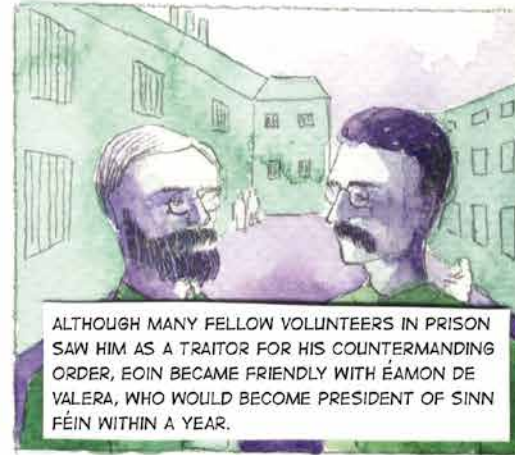
DESPITE THE COUNTERMANDING ORDER, THE LEADERS OF THE RISING GO AHEAD, DELAYING IT BY A DAY TO EASTER MONDAY. BUT THE HUGE CONFUSION LEADS TO A SMALLER TURNOUT AND LARGELY RESTRICTS THE RISING TO DUBLIN.



THE VOLUNTEERS HOLD OUT FOR SIX DAYS BEFORE PEARSE IS FORCED TO SURRENDER TO AVOID MORE LOSS OF LIFE.



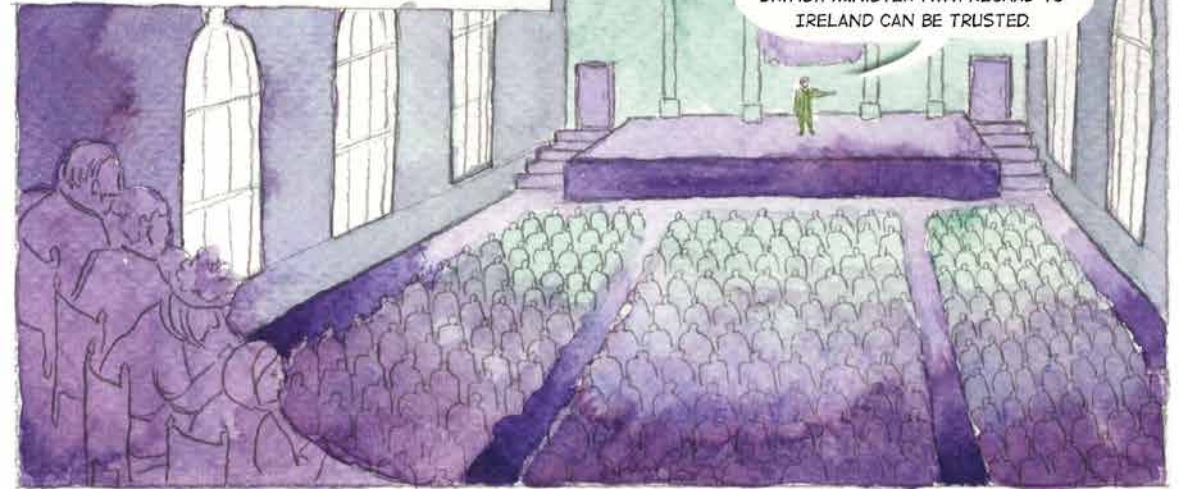
EOIN PLAYED NO PART IN THE RISING BUT WAS ARRESTED AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE VOLUNTEERS. HE IS SENTENCED TO PENAL SERVITUDE FOR LIFE FOLLOWING A COURT-MARTIAL AND TRANSFERRED TO DARTMOOR PRISON IN ENGLAND.



ALTHOUGH MANY FELLOW VOLUNTEERS IN PRISON SAW HIM AS A TRAITOR FOR HIS COUNTERMANDING ORDER, EOIN BECAME FRIENDLY WITH ÉAMON DE VALERA, WHO WOULD BECOME PRESIDENT OF SINN FÉIN WITHIN A YEAR.

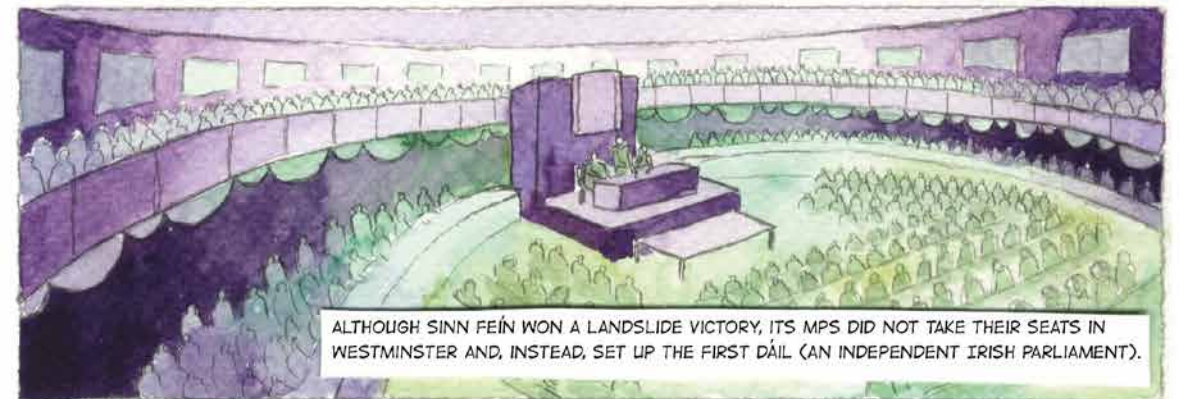
AFTER REPUBLICAN PRISONERS WERE RELEASED IN AN AMNESTY IN 1917, EOIN STOOD FOR SINN FÉIN IN THE GENERAL ELECTION IN THE LONDONDERRY CITY CONSTITUENCY THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

DECEMBER 11, 1918. EOIN ADDRESSES A CROWD AT ST COLUMB'S HALL, DERRY.

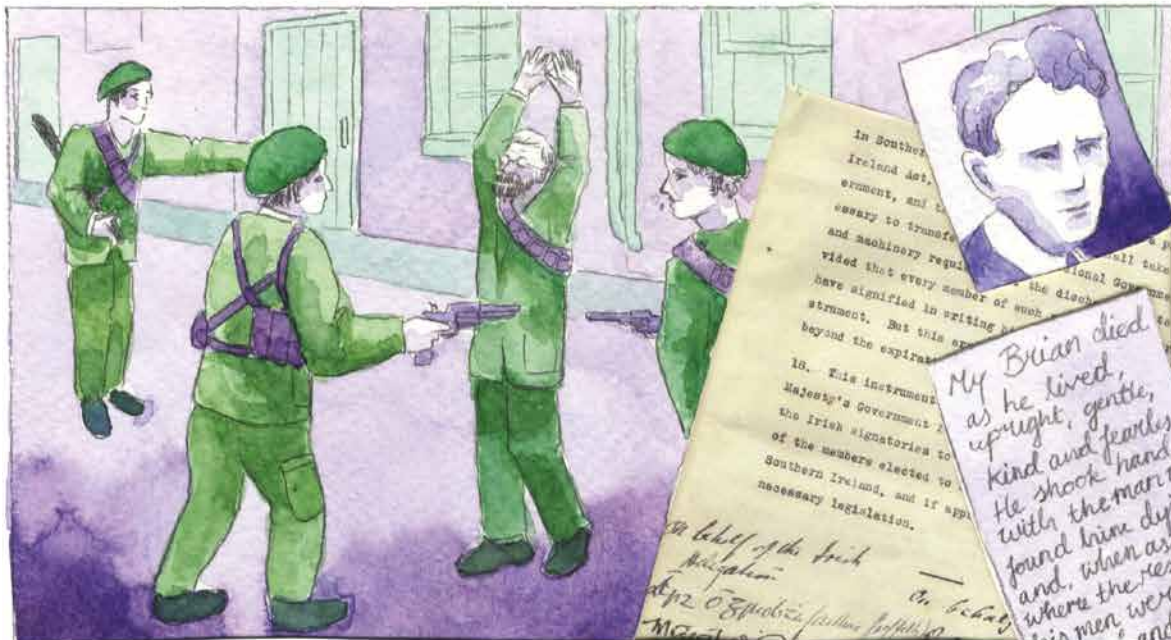


BY BITTER AND LONG EXPERIENCE WE HAVE LEARNED THAT NO WORD OF A BRITISH MINISTER WITH REGARD TO IRELAND CAN BE TRUSTED.

A NATIONALIST PACT MEANT EOIN HAD A FREE RUN AGAINST UNIONIST MAYOR ROBERT ANDERSON. EOIN NARROWLY WON, WITH 7,335 VOTES TO ANDERSON'S 7,020.



ALTHOUGH SINN FÉIN WON A LANDSLIDE VICTORY, ITS MPS DID NOT TAKE THEIR SEATS IN WESTMINSTER AND, INSTEAD, SET UP THE FIRST DÁIL (AN INDEPENDENT IRISH PARLIAMENT).

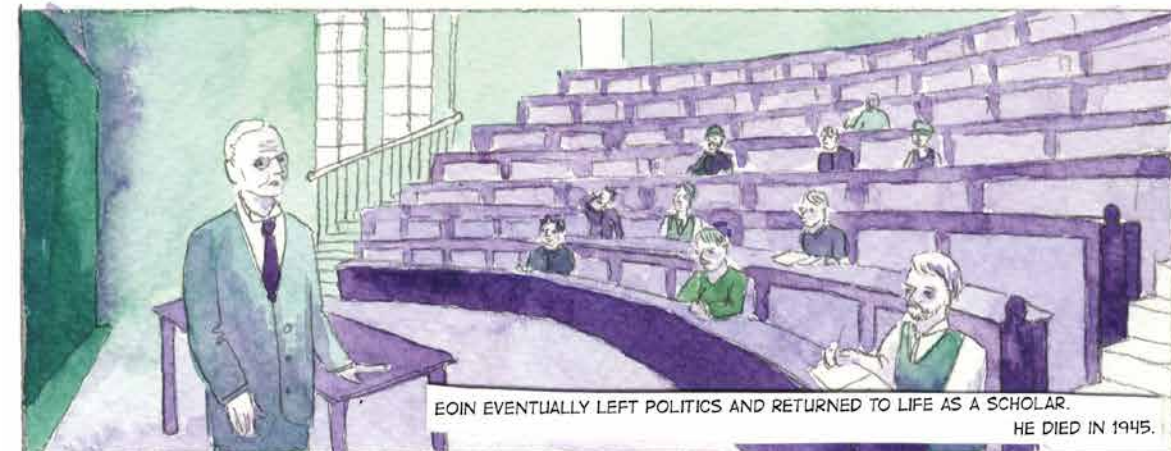


IN NOVEMBER 1920, DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AGAINST BRITISH FORCES, EOIN WAS ARRESTED AGAIN AND JAILED. ON RELEASE HE WAS ELECTED SPEAKER OF THE SECOND DÁIL. WHEN REPUBLICANS SPLIT FOLLOWING THE ANGLO-IRISH PEACE TREATY, HE TRIED TO STEER THE TREATY THROUGH WITH A COMPROMISE BUT FAILED. IN THE RESULTING CIVIL WAR HE BACKED THE TREATY SIDE AGAINST THE IRA. HE LOST A SON, BRIAN, WHO FOUGHT FOR THE OTHER SIDE.



FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IRISH FREE STATE, EOIN BECAME MINISTER FOR EDUCATION IN ITS FIRST GOVERNMENT.

IN 1924, EOIN REPRESENTED THE IRISH FREE STATE ON THE IRISH BOUNDARY COMMISSION, SET UP TO RENEGOTIATE THE BORDER BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE FREE STATE. IN NOVEMBER, 1925, A MAP WAS LEAKED SHOWING THAT PART OF COUNTY DONEGAL WAS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE SOUTH, WHERE IT WAS EXPECTED LAND WOULD ONLY BE GRANTED THE OTHER WAY, THERE WAS AN ANGRY REACTION. EOIN RESIGNED TWO WEEKS LATER.



EOIN EVENTUALLY LEFT POLITICS AND RETURNED TO LIFE AS A SCHOLAR. HE DIED IN 1945.

Eoin MacNeill is remembered in Irish history as the man who countermanded the orders for the 1916 Easter Rising.

He was born into a Catholic family in the Glens of Antrim in 1867. Growing up in one of the last Gaelic speaking areas in Ireland, he was greatly influenced by Irish culture. After graduating from university, he became a clerk in the Dublin Law Courts. In 1893, he co-founded the Gaelic League with scholar Douglas Hyde. In 1898, he married Agnes Moore, with whom he had eight children. The following year he became Professor of Early History at the recently formed University College, Dublin.

His life changed dramatically in 1913 when he wrote an article for the Gaelic League newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis*, in which he argued that Irish Nationalists should establish a paramilitary force to mirror the unionist Ulster Volunteer Force, established the previous year. With encouragement from the revolutionary Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), the Irish Volunteers were formed later that year under MacNeill's leadership.

At one point, membership of the Irish Volunteers boasted over 100,000 members. But the force split after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, when MacNeill refused the demand of John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Home Rule movement, that members be asked to enlist in the British Army. Redmond left, taking most of the membership with him. Those who remained were committed to fighting the British in Ireland.

However, MacNeill refused to support armed rebellion unless there was a strong chance of success or members' lives or liberty were not at risk. To force him into accepting the Rising planned for Easter 1916, others in the Irish Volunteers' leadership, including Patrick Pearse, forged a document which appeared to show the British were planning to arrest them.

Initially MacNeill permitted the Rising to go ahead but when his friend Roger Casement was arrested bringing arms into Ireland days before the planned rebellion on Easter Sunday, he wrote his famous countermanding order. It still went ahead, a day later, but with greatly reduced numbers, and was brutally suppressed.

Although he played no part in the Rising, MacNeill surrendered himself as Chief of Staff of the Volunteers. Given a life sentence, he was transferred to Dartmoor Prison in England. After republican prisoners were released in an amnesty, he won a seat in the General election of 1918, standing for Sinn Féin.

Arrested during the War of Independence he was elected speaker of the Second Dáil on his release. As republicans split following the peace treaty with the British, he backed the Treaty Side against the IRA. His son, Brian, fighting for the IRA, was killed.

MacNeill represented the Irish Free State on the Irish Boundary Commission, set up to renegotiate the border with Northern Ireland in 1924. He resigned after criticism he had conceded too much to the British. He eventually left politics and returned to academic life. He died in 1945.

EOIN MACNEILL

FURTHER INFORMATION

ONLINE

Eoin MacNeill's entry in the Dictionary of Irish Biography
<http://historyhub.ie/eoin-macneill-dib>

ONLINE

MacNeill's countermanding order to the Easter Rising is considered one of the most important documents in Irish history. It sold in 2014 for €30,000.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-27046338>

VISIT

The National Library of Ireland has many papers, documents, and photographs relating to Eoin MacNeill.
<https://www.nli.ie/>



Record a podcast with Eoin MacNeill

Students will imagine a scene where Eoin MacNeill is being interviewed for a radio broadcast in 1925 after his resignation from the Boundary Commission. In groups, students will research some of the main achievements and incidents from his life and script an interview between MacNeill and a fictional interviewer, imagining the types of questions and answers that would have been given. Students will assume the role of both characters and use audio recording software to create their podcast.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum Links

Key Elements	Cross Curricular Skills	Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities	Areas of Learning
Personal Understanding; Mutual Understanding; Moral Character; Citizenship; Cultural Understanding; Media Awareness; Ethical Awareness	Communication; Using ICT	Managing Information; Thinking; Problem Solving; Decision Making; Being Creative; Working with Others	The Arts; English (with Media Education); Environment & Society



Write a letter to Eoin MacNeill's son during the Irish Civil War

Write a letter from Eoin MacNeill to his son Brian, during the Irish Civil War. Students should consider how Eoin MacNeill would have felt with his son fighting for the opposing side. Did Brian consider his father a traitor to Ireland? Did Eoin try to change his son's mind, asking him to return home? Students will work independently to write a one-page letter.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum Links

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Personal Understanding; Mutual Understanding; Moral Character; Citizenship; Cultural Understanding; Media Awareness; Ethical Awareness	Communication; Using ICT	Managing Information; Thinking; Problem Solving; Decision Making; Being Creative; Working with Others	The Arts; English (with Media Education); Environment & Society



Class discussion

Eoin MacNeill was a scholar, revolutionary and politician. A champion of the Irish language, he founded the Gaelic League, an organisation which aimed to encourage the use of Irish in everyday life. He was a founding member of the Irish Volunteers, a group that played a major role in the Easter Rising, and became its chief of staff. But he has gone down in history as the man who tried to stop the Easter Rising. Today, opinion remains divided about Eoin MacNeill. Is he a hero or hate figure? Or does MacNeill's dramatic life reflect the complex history of this period?