

HEAVEN OUT OF THE TRENCHES

THE WAR ENDS, A NEW IRELAND BEGINS?

Cork 1918: the year the war ended

January

CATHAL BRUGHA, DIARMUID LYNCH AND CON COLLINS

CAME TO CORK IN JANUARY 1918 TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THE "INACTION" OF THE CORK VOLUNTEERS AT EASTER 1916.

CAPTAIN DANIEL DESMOND SHEEHAN B.L., MP MID-CORK (1901-1918),

Royal Munster Fusiliers, 9th (Service) Battalion and was decommissioned owing to ill-health and ear injuries. During the war two of his three sons and his brother-in-law were killed on active service while his daughter (a VAD nurse) and his brother were severely disabled.

M.P. & HIS SON IN KHAKI.



Capt. D. D. Sheehan, M.P., Royal Munster Fusiliers, and his son who has been twice wounded.

FEBRUARY

TOMÁS MACCURTAIN mentioned "merchant princes" when speaking of the need to establish committees to obtain money from traders to provide food.

Members of the Cork Trades Council and Sinn Féin established the Cork People's Food Committee to prevent the exportation of food. Republican trade unionist John Good claimed that by giving food to the army the British Government was engineering another famine in Ireland. MacCurrtain warned that business people were only concerned about their "selfish interests".

MARCH

Terence MacSwiney was imprisoned and served time in Belfast, Dundalk and Lincoln prisons.

Robert Gibbins was invalided out of the Royal Munster Fusiliers in March 1918 with the rank of captain, having been wounded in the throat in Gallipoli in 1915.



SS Kenmare is torpedoed with 29 lives lost. Most of the crew was from Cork

In Skibbereen, County Cork, Ernest Blythe was arrested for non-compliance with a military rule directing him to reside in Ulster. Two 'Cork Sinn Féin Pamphlets published: No.1: Most Rev. Dr. Cohalan's tribute to the Young Men; No.2: The Bishop of Limerick and the British Constitution'.

April

Ford & Sons devised the name Fordson for their tractors.

April 23 - The Irish Trade Union Congress called a one day general strike against the imposition of conscription to bring the country to a standstill, the largest strike to date in Irish history fully endorsed by both the employers and the Catholic Church.

From this point onwards, the trade unions became close allies of the republican movement.

May

PARAMILITARY FUNERAL WAS HELD FOR AN IRISH VOLUNTEER WHO DIED IN CORK CITY WITH A GRAVESIDE SALUTE FIRED BY FOUR MEN IN UNIFORM WITH SERVICE RIFLES.



TADHG BARRY

WAS THE ONLY REPUBLICAN ARRESTED BY BRITISH FORCES IN THE 'GERMAN PLOT' IN CORK.

ALOYS FLEISCHMANN'S INTERNMENT IN A CAMP IN OLDCASTLE, CO. MEATH ENDED AND HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE ISLE OF MAN, WHERE 22,000 PRISONERS ARE HELD.

The City of Cork Steam Packet Company's passenger steamer 'Innisarra' was sunk (May 12) by a German submarine (U-86) 10 nautical miles from Ballycotton Island. All on board, were lost except the captain, the chief engineer and three seamen who were landed at Queenstown.



JUNE

US Naval archives document an outbreak of flu on the USS Dixie, docking outside Queenstown (Cobh), in May 1918.

June 8 - Bombardier Tom Barry arrives in Egypt with the 4th Artillery Brigade

July

Raid on Captain Morgan's, Bunalun, Skibbereen:

Captain Morgan of Bunalun had become very aggressive to his workmen, telling them "many Irishmen would get a chance of going to heaven out of the trenches". We decided on getting his wind up by raiding his home for sporting guns, at about 10.50 a.m. one morning we disguised ourselves, and held up workmen in Morgan's yard at about 1.30 p.m. at point of revolver. We got four sporting guns and a box of cartridge caps in this raid.

- Thomas Hourihane

Jamie Moynihan was officer commanding the group of Volunteers who carried out the armed attack on crown forces near Ballingeary (July 7).

Freeman's Journal

GAELIC SUNDAY

FIXTURES BROUGHT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH

August 4 - 'Gaelic Sunday', approximately 100,000 took part in an act of defiance against the British administration, refusing to apply for licenses to play Gaelic Games. There was a full muster of the members of the companies of the Third West Cork Brigade for the funeral of Lieutenant William Hurley (Kilbrittain Company) in Clogagh.

Denis O'Doherty, Irish Guards was killed in action aged 28 (August 27). His brother Felix O'Doherty had started the Fianna and Volunteers in Blarney and became Captain 'B' (Blarney) Company, 6th Battalion, Cork Brigade, I.R.A.

October

The British Army renewed their recruiting campaign in Cork, however.

When a British Army regimental band begin to play on a street corner to attract the public two republican pipe bands set up across from them playing rebel tunes (Cork Constitution, October 21).



Bishop Cohalan told a public meeting in the Council Chamber, City Hall (October 31) that they were assembled to continue the scheme to secure a supply of milk at a cheap rate for the children of the city inaugurated the previous winter.

County Borough of Cork School Attendance Committee Minutes report notes 'complaints made... by parents... that they cannot get their children to attend school owing to the manner in which they are punished by teachers' (October 10).

November

IRISH VOLUNTEER OFFICER

DENIS (DONNCHA) MCNEILUS FROM DONEGAL IS ARRESTED

AT LEITRIM ST IN CORK (NOVEMBER 4).

THE FOLLOWING DAY IRISH

VOLUNTEERS HELP

MCNEILUS TO ESCAPE FROM CORK GAOL.

In Cork, 469 people died of influenza in 1918

(281 men and 188 women).

September

September 26 - The 20th sitting of the Irish Convention - and the first to be held outside Dublin - met in Cork.

Convention Chairman Sir Horace Plunkett

confirmed that the main reason Cork was chosen to host a sitting was to give northern delegates an opportunity to see the south of the country, that it was as important for them to understand the peoples of the agricultural parts of the island as it was for those in the south to appreciate the achievements of industry and commerce in the north-east.

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Four Long Years: The War's impact on the people

When the Royal Munster Fusiliers left for the front in August 1914 enthusiastic crowds sang 'Rule Britannia'. War recruitment had a disproportionate impact on urban areas compared to the rural hinterland; unemployment and low wages were powerful recruiting agents. The Royal Munster Fusiliers opened recruiting offices in the city and in Kinsale in the first few months of the War and recruited in large numbers both city and county.



Royal Munster Fusiliers in 1914



Already by 1915 enthusiasm for the War had begun to wane. In July 1915, Pope Benedict XV issued an encyclical calling on all powers to end the war and come to an agreement. The Irish Catholic Bishops publicly called on Redmond to withdraw Irish support for the war.

'Cheers for the Cork revolutionary slackers and cowards,' said Lieutenant Tom Kettle to the 200 Sinn Féin protestors that encroached on a recruitment meeting at which he spoke in December 1915.



Recruitment meeting at the bottom of Shandon Street

According to recent estimates, as many as 210,000 Irish men, in addition to a few hundred Irish women, served in British armed forces, including 25,000 had been National Volunteers. 19% of them died in battle with countless others returning maimed or wounded. Many returned home disillusioned at what they saw as the failure of the British government to make good its promise of Home Rule.

Meanwhile 10,000 Volunteers under Eoin MacNeill had kept their organisation together in Ireland until Home Rule was passed.



Soldiers suffering from gas attack

The **10th Division** was one of Kitchener's New Army divisions formed in August 1914. Under the command of General Bryan Mahon it was the first Irish Division to take the field in war, and was the most travelled of the Irish formations fighting at Gallipoli, Salonika and Palestine. After the Gallipoli disaster the division transferred to Egypt where it joined the XX Corps. The division fought in the Third Battle of Gaza which succeeded in breaking the resistance of the Turkish defenders in southern Palestine.

The 16th Division, "Johnnie Redmond's pets", formed in Ireland in September 1914 with a core of the National Volunteers. In December they moved to France, under the command of Major General William Hickie who saw them as "a political Div[isio]n of riff raff Redmondites".



General Bryan Mahon

At Loos in January and February 1916 they got their introduction to trench warfare, they suffered greatly in the Battle of Holluch at the time of the Easter Rising, and then they moved to the Somme where they suffered massive casualties.

Out of a total of 10,845 men, they lost 3,491 on the Loos sector between January and the end of May 1916.

Their major actions ended in the summer of 1917 at the Battle of Passchendaele.



The mud of Passchendaele

Several factors contributed to the decline in recruitment after 1916. One was the heavy casualties suffered by Irish units in the war. The 10th Irish Division, which included the Munsters, suffered very heavy losses at Gallipoli in 1915, while the 16th and 36th Divisions were shattered at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Also, Irish troops in the British Army appear to have been treated with particular harshness, including hundreds executed after courts martial.

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Four Long Years: The War's impact on the people 2



The Irish Volunteers continued to train and resisted any attempt to disarm them. They had organised the Easter Rising where around 1,200 Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army members took over the city centre.

By the end of the week, 16,000 British troops had been deployed to Dublin. 62 rebels were killed, 132 British Army and Police died and 368 were wounded. 270 civilians were killed and over 2,000 wounded.

The resulting executions helped to swing Nationalist support away from the Parliamentary Party and toward Sinn Féin.

In Cork, Bishop Colohan asked that no street demonstrations accompany the memorial masses in the city's churches. Despite this, a crowd of about 600 marched and sang in Irish, a number of them wearing republican badges and rosettes. A police baton charge discharged the crowd, amid a hail of stones.



Cork city centre – including Grand Parade, left – enjoyed prosperity in the early years of the War

Riots in St Patrick's Street in June 1917 left Abraham Allen dead (after a bayonet wound in the thigh) and a number seriously injured.



In 1917 Lady Mary Carbery of Castle Freke wrote a comic fantasy for the Irish Times called If the Germans Came. In 1917 Talbot Press published it as The Germans in Cork in which Sinn Féin facilitate the German invasion, and amongst other things, the Germans gas the inmates of the Cork Lunatic Asylum.

Naval traffic in the harbour increased as the Royal Navy gathered many of its fleet to guard the western approaches from attack by German submarines. There was a close connection between the Navy and Cork; many families had members serving in either the Royal Navy or working in industries that served the Navy. This connection developed when the American Navy arrived.

In March 1918 a crowd of roughly 300 men and women gathered at Cork Railway Station and attacked women travelling on the train to Queenstown where the American sailors and their money are blamed for so many women being charged with 'committing acts contrary to public decency on any street' and 'vagrancy'.



US Navy ships in Cork Harbour

When Irish conscription was proposed following the German Spring Offensive it led to the Conscription Crisis of 1918 and a mass assembly of civil disobedience. The proposal was dropped in May after the American entry into the War.

Large elements of Irish society were effectively excluded from Irish politics; Sinn Féin represented only part of the Irish nation. The virtual ban on the commemoration of the Irish dead of the First World War dramatically illustrates this.

- Michael Hopkinson



World War I was something of a boom time; agriculture and industry profited from reductions in international competition and increased demands resulting from the War effort. The boom conditions meant that net exports peaked, in real terms, in 1918, despite food shortages and numerous strikes in Cork city in 1917 highlighting the decreasing power of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

As the war dragged on, and in particular as the German U-Boat campaign impacted on the importation of foodstuffs from America and Australia, Cork people grew increasingly concerned. There was a tension between classes in the city; as a rule the middle class professions and the vast majority of the upper class in Cork society were unionist in outlook. These men assumed the leadership of various committees formed at the outbreak of War. While some nationalists joined the committees, these tended to be middle class men or prominent working class politicians. The ordinary working man and woman had little say in the conduct of the wartime measures in the city.

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The 'War To End All Wars'?



At 5am on November 11 1918, an armistice was signed between the Allied forces and Germany in a railway carriage at the forest of Compiègne outside Paris. Hostilities were scheduled to cease at 11 am on that day, signifying the end to a catastrophic world war that killed approximately 16 million soldiers and civilians and injured a further 36 million.

Scenes of jubilation greeted news of the Armistice (left and right)



When news of the Armistice reached the battlefields across Europe, many soldiers found it hard to believe that Germany had finally surrendered. **Capt Noel Drury** of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers remembered

'It's like when one heard of the death of a friend – a sort of forlorn feeling. I went along and read the order to the men, but they just stared at me and showed no enthusiasm at all. They all had the look of hounds whipped off just as they were about to kill.'



Colonel Thomas Gowenlock served as an intelligence officer in the American 1st Division. He was on the front line that November morning and wrote of his experience a few years later:

'My watch said nine o'clock. With only two hours to go, I drove over to the bank of the Meuse River to see the finish. The shelling was heavy and, as I walked down the road, it grew steadily worse. It seemed to me that every battery in the world was trying to burn up its guns. At last eleven o'clock came - but the firing continued. The men on both sides had decided to give each other all they had – their farewell to arms. It was a very natural impulse after their years of war, but unfortunately many fell after eleven o'clock that day.'



In the years following the War the controversial Treaty of Versailles was drawn up between the winners and losers. There were other treaties bringing an end to the conflict, such as the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey / Ottoman Empire. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles were harsh and included severe punitive measures. Germany was forced to accept guilt for the war, had to pay billions of dollars in compensation to allied countries, relinquish 10% of its territories as well as its colonies, and had to agree to drastic restrictions on its military force.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire ceased to exist, and the Ottoman Empire was reduced to its Turkish heartland, making the new country a much harsher place for Armenians, Kurds, Greeks and Jews.

The First World War had become known as 'the war to end all wars' because many believed its high death toll and vast destruction would deter future fighting amongst countries. However, a deep bitterness set in amongst the German population in the years following the Treaty of Versailles and the severity of the treaty terms only served to pave the way for the rise to power of the National Socialist German Worker's Party and its leader, Adolf Hitler, in the 1930s.

When the Irish Divisions raised for the war were demobilised, roughly 100,000 war veterans returned to Ireland. This suggests that around 70–80,000 decided to live elsewhere perhaps due to high unemployment and the rise of militant nationalism in the country. Those returning from the War entered a changed labour market as employment prospects for ex-servicemen were bleak.



The train carriage at Compiègne where the Armistice was signed.

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'Heroes or Traitors?'

The Armistice in Ireland

Armistice Day would remain a day of raw emotion in Ireland for many decades to come. Approximately 200,000 Irishmen had volunteered to serve in the war and for many years there was a misconception that they were all Protestant, Unionist, Irishmen, anti-Nationalist and anti-Home Rule whose loyalty was to the British Crown. However, this is not the case. Some fought out of a sense of duty; some believed that the union between Britain and Ireland would be strengthened by their actions against a common enemy. Others believed that Ireland would be rewarded with Home Rule if they fought on the side of Britain.



Sinn Féin grows in popularity



Anti-conscription meeting

The poppy, common to many battlefields, was adopted as a symbol of remembrance of those who died in the war. The poppy was inspired by a poem called 'In Flanders Fields' written by a Canadian physician, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, who fought in the War.

In Ireland, some communities erected memorials to honour those who had been killed. A memorial was erected in Cork in 1925 and is one of the few Irish examples of its type. Carved in relief on a modest limestone obelisk, sitting on a plinth, is the profile of a Munster Fusiliers soldier in full military uniform, head down, gun at rest. Each November, wreaths are laid here at the Cenotaph to mark the anniversary of the Armistice.

In the century since 1918 the poppy and Remembrance Day became associated in the Irish consciousness less with respect for those who died, and more a statement of political allegiance. The role of Irish soldiers in the First World War was gradually played down, by both the government who wanted to distance Ireland from Great Britain, and by others who preferred not to dwell on the contribution the Irish had made to the war. It was not until 1991 that an Irish President – Mary Robinson – attended the Armistice Day commemoration service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in an official capacity. Since then, there have been sincere attempts by successive governments to address what historian FX Martin identified as the 'national amnesia' regarding Ireland's participation in the First World War.



The personal aftermath for many returning Irish servicemen depended on their geographical position and their religion. The sacrifices at the Somme and Messines Ridge became part of the social heritage of the new Unionist Northern Ireland. In southern counties, servicemen who had answered 'Ireland's call' from 1914 on were mainly Catholic supporters of Home Rule within the British Empire. They went to war with the full support of nationalist leaders, the Catholic Church, and their communities. Indeed, when the Royal Munster Fusiliers left in August 1914 enthusiastic crowds sang 'Rule Britannia!'

By the end of the war, however, Ireland had undergone dramatic political change. The 1916 Easter Rising, the Conscription crisis and Sinn Féin's ascendancy in the General Election in 1918 had prompted most nationalists to repudiate Irish participation in the war and vilify those who had betrayed their country by fighting on the side of the British. Many ex-servicemen were victimised and records show that at least 200 were murdered by the IRA between 1919 and 1922. Furthermore, in 1919 the unemployment ratio of ex-servicemen was 46%, compared to just 10% in Britain. Poor housing, high unemployment and some discrimination in State jobs led to the formation of various Old Comrades Associations to try to relieve the plight of many veterans. However, thousands found that they were 'surplus to requirements' and, either unable to find work, or no longer accepted by their community, they emigrated in the hope of a better life abroad.



War memorial on South Mall

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The 1918 General Election - Enter Sinn Féin



The 1918 general election marked a profound sea change in the Irish political landscape. At the time of the previous general election in 1910, Sinn Féin barely existed and did not participate in elections. The party was founded by Arthur Griffith (left) in 1905, who himself was a 'dual monarchist' rather than a republican – he proposed that Ireland should be a separate Kingdom but with the British monarch as head of state.

The election held on December 14 1918 saw 73 Sinn Féin MPs elected out of a total of 105 Irish MPs. The election also saw the demise of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), who went from 74 seats in 1910 to a mere six in 1918. The Irish Unionists increased from 17 to 22 seats, whereas there were also three Labour Unionists and one Independent Unionist. In Cork William O'Brien's All For Ireland League, which in 1910 won 8 of the 9 Cork seats, was wiped out.

The rise of Sinn Féin was primarily due to the new found good will towards the independence movement following the 1916 Rising and the execution of its leaders, which followed soon after. Disaffection with the IPP because of their association with the War, also contributed to Sinn Féin success. The Labour Party, led at the time by Thomas Johnson, decided not to contest the election. [see panel on left / right] This gave nationalist Ireland a straight choice between the once dominant IPP and the fledgling Sinn Féin. In many cases, Sinn Féin candidates were elected unopposed. Prominent Sinn Féin MPs of the period include Michael Collins, Éamonn de Valera, Arthur Griffith, Countess Markievicz, Austin Stack, and Cathal Brugha.



Owing to the Sinn Féin policy of abstentionism, the 73 Sinn Féin MPs refused to take up their seats in Westminster. The 1918 General Election was of huge significance in an Irish context marking, as it did, the beginning of the end for British rule in the twenty-six counties. Just four years previously, John

Redmond had succeeded in mobilising large numbers of young Irishmen to fight in the First World War, ostensibly for Home Rule. The election results of December 14, 1918 illustrate that this was no longer enough for the majority of the Irish electorate.

But this was not the only story of the 1918 Election. For the first time women over 30 who were property holders, and all adult men could vote. The total votes cast thus went from just over 200,000 in 1910 to well over a million in 1918, a fivefold increase [see panels]

Why no Labour Party on the ballot?

In 1918 the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party [ITUCLP] was strong, and growing stronger. The congress-party strongly opposed conscription in Ireland in the spring of the year, and a twenty-four-hour anti-conscription strike took place on 23 April 1918. Following this Labour announced that it would take part in the General Election to be held immediately after the war ended, its executive feeling that "Labour's hour of destiny has struck". It was not long, however, before the movement had to deal with issues of national self-determination, and the labour movement's role in it.

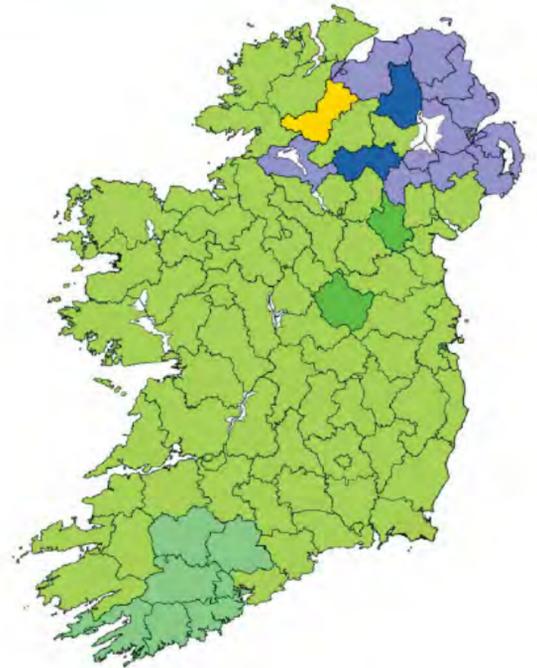
Sinn Féin pressed the ITUCLP to secure its abstention from the forthcoming election. Labour had a radical programme - to win for Irish workers the collective ownership and control of the whole produce of their work and to secure the democratic management of all industries in the interest of the nation; and abolish all privileges which were based on property or ancestry.

In the end, a special party conference voted by 96 votes to 23 that the ITUCLP would not contest the 1918 general election, to allow the election to take the form of a plebiscite on Ireland's constitutional status. Its radical programme would have to wait.



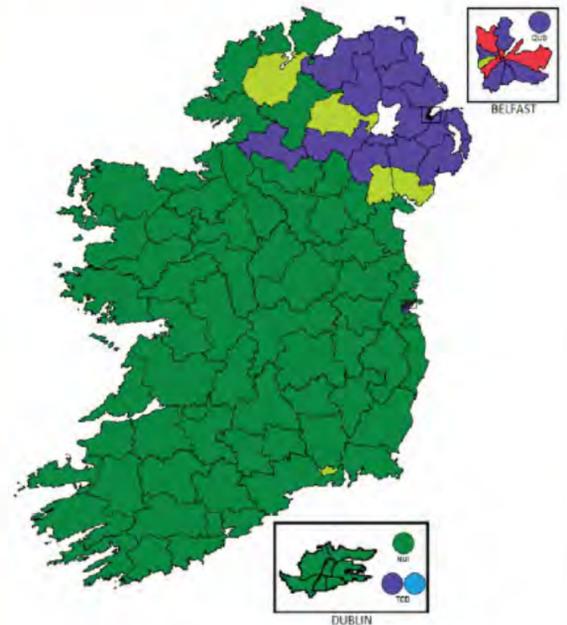
Sinn Féin election poster

General Election 1910



Party	Leader	Seats		Votes	
		No. of Seats	% of Seats	No. of Votes	% of Votes
Irish Parliamentary	John Redmond	73	70.9	90,416	43.6
Irish Unionist Alliance	Viscount Midleton	17	16.5	56,408	28.6
All-for-Ireland	William O'Brien	8	7.8	30,322	14.6
Liberal	H. H. Asquith	1	1.0	19,003	9.6
Independent Nationalist		2	1.9	911	0.4
Totals		103	100	207,598	100

General Election 1918



Party	Leader	Votes	% Votes	Swing% TDs/MPs	Change (since Dec. 1910)	% of seats
Sinn Féin ⁽¹⁾	Éamon de Valera	476,087	46.9	▲46.0	73	▲73 69.5
Irish Unionist	Edward Carson	257,314	25.3	▼3.3	22	▲5 20.9
Irish Parliamentary	John Dillon	220,837	21.7	▼21.9	6	▼67 5.7
Labour Unionist	None	30,304	3.0	▲3.0	3	▲3 2.8
Belfast Labour	None	12,164	1.2	▲1.2	0	—0 0
Independent Unionist	—	9,531	0.9	▲0.9	1	▲1 0.95
Independent Nationalist	—	8,183	0.8	N/A	0	▼2 0
Independent Labour	—	659	0.1	▲0.1	0	—0 0
Independent	—	436	0.1	▲0.1	0	—0 0
Total		1,015,515	100		105	

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Cork in the 1918 General Election



Cork elected nine MPs across eight constituencies (there were 2 seats in Cork city), with all the seats going to Sinn Féin. Only the Cork Borough (City) constituency was contested with the other six constituencies having unopposed Sinn Féin candidates.

J.J Walsh topped the poll in Cork City with 20,801 votes. His fellow Sinn Féin running mate Liam De Roiste finished just behind on 20,506. The closest nationalist challenger was Maurice Talbot Crosbie on 7,480, an officer in the Irish Volunteers who had sided with Redmond.

Other MPs elected were Michael Collins for Cork South, Sean Hayes for Cork West, David Kent for Cork East, Terence Mac Swiney for Mid Cork, Thomas Hunter for Cork North East, Diarmuid Lynch for Cork South East and Patrick O' Keeffe for Cork North.



Liam De Róiste

Liam De Róiste was born in Fountainstown County Cork on June 29, 1882. He was Vice-Chairman of Sinn Féin in Cork, chairing its first meeting in 1906. He was elected in second place in the Cork City constituency in 1918. He took part in the first Dáil and was re-elected unopposed in 1921. De Roiste supported the Anglo-Irish treaty and was re-elected as a Pro-Treaty Sinn Féin TD in 1922 but was an unsuccessful Cumann na nGaedhal candidate at the 1927 General Election. In 1936-37, he was involved in the Irish Christian Front, supporters of Franco during the Spanish Civil War. Later he would become a City Councillor for The Civic Party, retiring from politics in 1950. He died on May 15, 1959.



Michael Collins

Collins was born in Woodfield near Clonakilty in West Cork, on 16 October 1890. Leaving school at fifteen, Collins took the British Civil Service examination in Cork in February 1906 and moved to the home of his sister Hannie in London. In the British capital he was involved in Conradh na Gaeilge and the GAA along with fellow West Cork man Sam Maguire. He joined the IRB in 1910 at the age of 19, took part in the GPO in 1916 and was subsequently imprisoned in Frongoch. He was elected unopposed as an MP for Cork South in 1918 and became Minister for Finance in the First Dáil. As one of the signatories of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, he became chief of Staff of the Free State Army. On August 22, 1922, he was assassinated at Béal na mBláth in County Cork.

Terence MacSwiney

Born at 23 North Main Street, Cork on March 28, 1879, **MacSwiney** was one of eight children. In the 1918 General Election, MacSwiney was returned unopposed as Sinn Féin MP for the Mid Cork Constituency. He replaced Tomás McCurtain as Lord Mayor of Cork after his murder in March 1920. Arrested and court martialled in August 1920, he was sentenced to two years imprisonment in Brixton Prison. He immediately began a hunger strike and died on October 25, 1920 after 73 days.



David Kent

David Kent was born on 2 February 1867 in Coole, Castlelyons, East Cork, to David Kent and Mary Rice, a well-known Fenian and nationalist family. He along with his brothers took part in a gunfight with the RIC in Easter Week 1916, during which his brother Richard was fatally wounded; his other brother Thomas was subsequently executed. After having his death sentence commuted to penal servitude for life, David was released within a year and went on to be elected unopposed for the Cork East Constituency during the 1918 General Election. Taking his seat in the first Dáil, he was subsequently re-elected to the new Cork East and North East constituency in 1921. Kent opposed the Anglo Irish treaty and was elected as an anti-treaty Sinn Féin TD in 1922, a Republican TD in the 1923 general election and a Sinn Féin TD in June 1927. Kent died on 16 November 1930.



Diarmuid Lynch

Baptised **Jeremiah Lynch**, he changed his first name to Diarmuid. He was born in Granig, Tracton, County Cork on January 10, 1878. Emigrating to the US in his late teens, he soon became a member of Clann Na Gael. Returning to Ireland in 1907, he subsequently joined the IRB in 1911. He was 'Aide De Camp' to James Connolly in 1916. Deported back to America in 1918, he was an absentee MP when elected in December that year. He would stay in America until 1933 and did not take a side during the Irish Civil War. An unsuccessful Seanad candidate in 1944, he died on November 9, 1950.

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“He fell in October 1918, on a day that was so quiet and still on the whole front that the army report confined itself to the single sentence: All quiet on the Western front”

Erich Maria Remarque
from *All quiet on the Western front*

November 1918 was an Armistice, the conflict was not yet over. Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, for one, soon recognized that harsh terms for the losers would mean that “we shall have to do the whole thing over again in 25 years”. In fact it took just 21 years.



The young men who came home ‘out of the trenches’ have often been referred to as the **Lost Generation**. Long before the term ‘post traumatic stress disorder’ was coined, the men

had to deal with that condition. They survived gassing, shelling, bombing from the air – the first time men experienced this horror – and the filth and disease of the trenches.

For Corkmen who came back there was the added trauma of being disowned by neighbours and even family because of how this country had changed – the 1916 Rising and the execution of its leaders, the Conscription Crisis, the loss of so many local men in Gallipoli and the Western Front, and general disgust and despair at the conduct of the war.

It was from this ‘Lost Generation’ in Britain that Dublin Castle recruited the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries. Already damaged by their experiences in the trenches, their cruelty during the War of Independence helped to convince the Irish people that they had no future in the UK.

The other momentous event at the end of 1918 was the December Election, which heralded a new era – as Cork and Ireland would see just one month later. An elected parliament sitting in Dublin for the first time in 119 years, and the world’s first woman government minister

“at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month”

the bells rang out across Europe, at least where church towers were still standing. But the War had changed everything and those bells were in reality ringing in a new era, rather than a return to what went before.



The Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German Empires were no more, and within a short few years the world would see the beginning of the end of the British Empire, although in 1918 that Empire seemed the victor. According to the historian Eric Hobsbawm the UK “was never the same again after 1918, because the country had ruined its economy by waging a war substantially beyond its resources”.

And when the War is over what will the soldiers do?

They’ll be walking around with a leg and a half and the slackers will have two.

And when the War is over what will the slackers do?

They’ll be all around the soldiers for the loan of a bob or two

And when the War is over, what will the slackers do

For every kid in America in Cork there will be two

from ‘Salonika’ the popular Cork song of the era

When “that which is precious has not proved to be enduring”

World War I was such a rupture in how Europeans thought of themselves, their countries and their continent, that it simply was not possible to go as before when the conflict ended in 1918



“The outbreak of war shattered our pride at the accomplishments of our civilisation, our respect for so many thinkers and artists, our hopes of finally overcoming the differences among peoples and races. It unleashed within us the evil spirits that we thought had been tamed by centuries of education on the part of our most noble men. It made our fatherland small again. In this way, it robbed us of so much that we had loved and showed us the fragility of so much that we had considered stable”.

From “Transience” Sigmund Freud, 1915.