

## **Irish Nationalism Reading:**

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#### **Michael Collins:**

Michael Collins played a major part in Ireland's history after 1916. Collins had been involved in the Easter Uprising in 1916, but he played a relatively low key part. It was after the uprising that Collins made his mark leading to the treaty of 1921 that gave Ireland dominion status (autonomous communities within British empire equal in status to Britain) within the British empire.

In 1916, Collins' goal now was to revitalise the campaign to get independence for Ireland. Collins was elected to the executive committee of Sinn Fein (Irish political party that fight for Irish independence) and led a violent campaign against anything that represented British authority in Ireland- primarily the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Army. The murder of the RIC officers brought a tit-for-tat policy from the British. Ireland, post-World War One, was a dangerous country to be in. The more killings that were carried out by Collins and the men he led in the newly formed Irish Republican Army (IRA), the more the British responded with like.

Violence led to more violence on both sides. On November 21, 1920, the IRA killed 14 British officers in the Secret Service. In reprisal, the British army sent armoured vehicles on the field at Croke Park where people were watching a football match, and opened fire on them. In May 1921, the IRA set fire to the Custom House in Dublin- one of the symbols of Britain's authority in Ireland. However, many of those in Dublin IRA were captured. In December 1921, it was agreed that Ireland should have dominion status within the British Empire.

There were many in the south who believed that Collins had betrayed the republican movement. These people wanted an independent and united Ireland. Some had believed that Collins had sold out to the British government. Few seemed to realize that Collins was not a politician and that he had been put into a situation in which he had no experience of what to do. The IRA split into the Regulars (those who supported the treaty) and the Irregulars (those who did not.)

On August 22, 1922, Collins journeyed to County Cork. He was due to meet troops of the new Irish army. His car was ambushed and Collins was shot dead. To this day, no one is completely sure what happened or who killed him. No one else was killed in the ambush.