

Irish Women Rise in 1916



Nora and Ina Connolly were members of the only girls branch of the Na Fianna. Nora was the Chief Officer and Ina served as the Branch secretary. Ina attended the Inaugural Meeting of the Cumann na mBan. In July 1914, the sisters were camping with Countess Markievicz and some Na Fianna Boys. The next day the Connolly sisters were told that they would take small arms to Belfast. Countess Markievicz told them "You are the first women to run guns to the North. Show what you are made of. Deliver them safely is all I ask. I have every confidence in you" Nora and her sister Ina also couriered Rifles from the Asgard to hiding places all over Dublin. They are the daughters of James Connolly.



Elizabeth O'Farrell worked for Irish freedom from her sixteenth year. In 1906, she joined Inghinidhe na hÉireann and in 1914 joined the Cumann na mBan. Constance Markievicz introduced her to James Connolly informing him that she was very trustworthy. Elizabeth was attached to the Irish Citizen Army. Immediately prior to the Rising, she was sent to Galway advising of the change of the date. During the Rising she served in the GPO and as a courier. She was one of the last 3 women in the GPO. At 12.45 pm on Saturday 29 April, O'Farrell was handed a Red Cross insignia and a white flag and asked to deliver the surrender to the British military. She was with Padraic Pearse at the time of the formal surrender. After the surrender, she was a prisoner in Kilmainham Gaol for several months.



Elizabeth O'Farrell



Winifred Carney

Winifred Carney was born in County Down but grew up in Belfast. She became involved with the Suffragettes and then the socialist movement, meeting James Connolly for the first time while working in a small trade union office. Through a national progression of socialist trade union activity, she moved into republicanism, joining Belfast No.1 branch of Cumann Na mBan in 1914. She was a confidante and secretary of James Connolly. She was the first woman to serve in the General Post Office and one of the last women to leave the garrison.

In Liberty Hall, she found herself typing dispatches and mobilisation orders. She was aware that a Rising would happen and was trained in first aid and how to use a gun. After the surrender, she was imprisoned and released on Christmas Eve 1916.



Dr. Kathleen Lynn (1874-1955) was born in County Mayo, she was the daughter of a Church of Ireland rector and related to Countess Markievicz. Lynn qualified as a doctor in 1899 and in 1904 set up a practice in Rathmines, Dublin. As well as her medical career, Lynn was an active suffragist (who assisted hunger striking suffragists), labour activist, feminist and nationalist. The influence of James Connolly, her work in the soup kitchens during the 1913 lockout, and involvement with the Irish Women Workers Union (she was honorary vice-president in 1917) brought her into close contact with the Dublin poor. This led to a lifelong campaign to improve the living conditions of Dublin's poorer citizens. In 1913 she became a support of the labour movement and subsequently joined the Irish Citizen Army. She was stationed at City Hall during the Rising and was chief medical officer. In the aftermath of the rising she was imprisoned in Kilmainham. Lynn later practiced as a doctor during the War of Independence and in 1919 established the first infant hospital in Ireland, St Ultans, with her friend Madelaine French-Mullen to primarily serve the impoverished. For a period, the establishment was entirely staffed by women. In 1955, Dr. Lynn was buried with full military honours for the role she played in the Rising, at Deansgrange Cemetery, Dublin.



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