

# An insight into michael collin's life



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In 1916 during the Easter Rising his role was relatively low key, but by 1922 he ultimately gave his life in the Civil War for what he believed in. Michael Collins took part in the Easter Rising in Dublin. He fought alongside others in the General Post Office, and he was singled out as the most active and efficient officer in the place' by Desmond Fitzgerald, who had been put in charge of the General Post Office canteen. This would suggest that Collins always had leadership qualities and a passion for Ireland's Freedom, which would play such an important part in later events such as the treaty negotiations of 1922.

It would also imply that he had an important part in the Rising. However, Collins only played a relatively low key part, which was shown because he wasn't one of the people who were court-martialed. This factual evidence contradicts the source, which shows even though this source is from a witness of the Rising and would have seen first-hand Collins' part, it automatically has a low weight of argument because of its provenance. The source is from one of his close associates who were on the same side as Collins in the Rising and therefore it will be in Collins favor towards his significance in the Rising.

Also, Desmond Fitzgerald isn't the right person to judge his part in the rising because he was in charge of the Canteen, so only really saw Collins during meal times, which isn't when he would be making decisions or under pressure from the British forces closing in. Desmond Ryan, however, fought alongside Collins in the General Post Office, paints the image of Collins very different to Fitzgerald. He said that Collins 'sat in a corner, a look of horror in his eyes, a pallor spreading across his face... Straining his control to breaking

point'2 this suggests that he wasn't efficient or significant and broke under the pressure of the Rising.

Therefore, this indicates the Rising could have happened without Michael Collins. Both these sources were dated to 1916 which makes the source reliable because it gives a good indication of the feelings towards Michael Collins at the time of the General Post Office takeover. However, Despond Ryan was Parse's literary executor, and as Pears was executed after the rising for being one of its leaders, Ryan resented Collins for receiving limelight from the Rising, and not being executed like his close associate. Consequently, he is likely to describe Collins in a critical and negative light.

The aftermath of the Rising resulted in Collins being sent to Foregone and whilst there he was one of the organizers of a program of protest and non-cooperation with authorities. He saw it as an opportunity to improve his guerrilla tactics and spread revolutionary gospel until it was emptied in December 1916. During his time in Foregone Collins made sure that the other refugees did NOT give information about themselves up, as he knew that it was possible to beat them by wearing them down. He wrote to a friend 'For a time they'll raise war - in the end they'll despair' 3.

Collins knew the British would be of trying to get information, and he saw it as an opportunity for networking with physical-force republicans from all over the country and improving his guerrilla tactics. The provenance of this source is from a letter. Collins wrote to a friend while in Foregone, so it gives a clear insight into his intentions which makes this source accurate.

However, because it is from himself he may think he is making more of an

impact than he actually is. Yet, this is unlikely because they all got released quickly from the camp which would back up this letter and give it a good weight of argument.

The canteen staff in Foregone described Collins as 'highly respected' and when they took problems to him he 'always listened logically. This helps us understand Michael Collins' short term significance because he learnt from the military blunders made; such as the seizure of indefensible and very vulnerable positions like SST Stephens Greene and filled the vacuum made by the executions of the leaders of the Rising. Likewise, Foregone would have been different without Collins as the internees wouldn't have been able to hold out and the Irish wouldn't have developed such a fighting force.

It's a useful source because they were employed to work in the Foregone canteens so they are indifferent to Collins, which gives this source a high weight of argument which can be generalized to how others must have seen him who weren't closely involved with him. Then again, as it is written so long after, it can be doubted On the contrary, the source was wrote over half a century later, so it's questionable how far someone can precisely remember what the canteen staff thought about Collins. Michael Collins had many responsibilities after leaving Foregone.

He was appointed Finance Minister and is described as 'the unlikely Finance Minister who proved himself an administrator par excellence. '6 Collins produced a Finance Ministry that was able to organize a large bond issue in the form of a " National Loan" to fund the new Irish Republic which was placed in bank accounts of the trustees. This proves how exceptionally

significant he was and what a great asset to Ireland he was. The British declared the finances Collins acquired as illegal but Collins carried the money through successfully even though he held down four major positions.

The other three being Adjutant- General, Director Of Intelligence and the Director Of Organization. ) FINANCE MINISTER SOURCE He also organized jail breaks because 'he would obtain information from a wide variety of people' (Lick O'Connor). Lick O'Connor was he is a well- known intellectual figure in contemporary Irish affairs who was born after the death of Michael Collins which makes him a secondary source, his great- grandfather was Matt Harris, Land Leaguer, Fabian, and Irish Parliamentary party Member of Parliament, which means he grew up being surrounded by animal views to Michael Collins and be more likely to support him.

Also without Collins, the finance effort would have been a lot weaker and there would have been less information known by Ireland to aid themselves in jail breaks ACT. Collins was a man of 'charismatic nature' and his 'reputation for decisiveness' made people want to seek his assistance and advice, which meant he was significant in the sense that he had leadership qualities which helped the Sin Feint, for example in elections.

This was said by Winston Churchill which gives it a high weight of argument because he was an enemy of Collins so if he was complimenting Collins then it is more valid as information as he is likely to oppose him. In the Anglo- Irish war, Michael Collins played the most important role in this struggle. As director of intelligence of the AIR he crippled the British intelligence system

in Ireland and replaced it with an effective Irish network. At the same time he performed his other responsibilities.

He was significant because he maximized efficiency of and minimized losses which made Ireland able to withstand the larger British forces. For example 'the British made desirously high estimates of their enemy' because of Collins tactics they thought that Ireland had a lot more man power than they really had, also, republican victories had widespread support from the Irish, including every level of society, and reaching deep into the British administration in Ireland.

Without Collins the Irish Revolution would have been less effective without his skill in guerrilla warfare. The British government perceived him as a murdering criminal mastermind and thought about placing 'E 10, 000' on his head if he was 'dead or alive. This was discussed with Winston Churchill but ejected making Collins both Britain's most wanted man and a Hero to Ireland. It seemed to be futile because he was anonymous to the British authorities and Collins used this to his advantage to unease his enemies, which would suggest why the price would have been so high.

Mark Sutures wrote 'I wonder how it is that the archbishop sees Collins apparently without difficulty and our intelligence fails' These sources all give a good insight into how exasperated the British became with the notorious Michael Collins, and even though they desperately tried to capture him, they just couldn't. These al are primary sources with a high weight of argument because they were on the opposing side Of the Anglo- Irish war so they

wouldn't want to outline their failures to capture him, and/or compliment him in the process.

ANALYSIS When the war ended Collins was sent to go to the treaty negotiations. He went out of loyalty to De Valier, even though he was opposed to being sent to London as part of the Treaty delegation. 'To me the task is a loathsome one.'<sup>8</sup> This source gives a good insight into how Collins felt at the time. Also Collins negotiation skills and political knowledge was small compared to De Baler's. ND it meant giving up his shrouded identity.

Nevertheless, David Lloyd George said that Collins 'did not have De Baler's slippery political cunning' but he didn't doubt he was 'the head and front of the movement';<sup>9</sup> this source is important and has a high weight of argument because someone opposing him recognized his significance. Lloyd George was very unfavorable of Collins at this time as he was the British prime minister. But then again, why would the British want to negotiate with Collins? They thought he was a murderer, so they must have realized he would be more impartial than De Valier in negotiations.

When, Collins signed the treaty saying 'I may have signed my own death warrant' because he knew that many people wouldn't agree with it but he did it for the long run good of Ireland. Britain wasn't willing to give a better deal than that and he signed it under threat of 'immediate and terrible war' if it wasn't signed. This shows the British had the dominant position at the time of the signing, which suggests it could have been forced. However, he had still achieved a lot because Ireland got half of her freedom back with is half more than she already had, and he was repaper to sacrifice himself for it.