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The 1916 Irish Rebellion

Bríona Nic Dhiarmada

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One hundred years ago, during Easter Week, 1916, rebel Irish leaders and their followers staged an armed uprising in the city of Dublin in an attempt to overthrow British rule and create an autonomous Irish republic. One week later, their rebellion ruthlessly quashed by British forces, the surviving insurgents were jailed and many of their leaders quickly executed. Though their rebellion had failed, their actions galvanized a growing population of sympathizers who would, in years to come, succeed in establishing an independent Irish state.

Documentary writer, producer, and scholar Bríona Nic Dhiarmada has seized the occasion of the centenary of the Irish Rising to reassess this event and its historical significance. Her book explores the crucial role of Irish Americans in both the lead-up to and the aftermath of the events in Dublin and places the Irish Rising in its European and global context, as an expression of the anti-colonialism that found its full voice in the wake of the First World War. *The 1916 Irish Rebellion* includes a historical narrative; a lavish spread of contemporary images and photographs; and a rich selection of sidebar quotations from contemporary documents, prisoners' statements, and other eyewitness accounts to capture the experiences of nationalists and unionists, Irish rebels and British soldiers, and Irish Americans during the turbulent events of Easter Week, 1916. In the first part of the book, Nic Dhiarmada surveys Ireland's place as part of the British Empire in the decades leading up to 1916, with special emphasis on earlier Irish movements to achieve independence or at least some measure of self-governance. She then outlines the events leading to the Easter Rebellion of 1916, including the crucial events of Thursday through Saturday prior to Easter. The second part details the events of the Easter Rising and the week of violent fighting, ending in the failure of the armed insurrection in Dublin. Her third part discusses the fate of the leaders of the Rising, many of whom were immediately court-martialed and executed. Nic Dhiarmada suggests that the Irish Rising, its ideals, and the subsequent election of members of the nationalist movement to prominent government offices were instrumental to the later creation of the sovereign Republic of Ireland, as well as an inspiration to anti-colonialist insurrections elsewhere in the world.

Nic Dhiarmada's *The 1916 Irish Rebellion* is the companion book to a three-part documentary series to be broadcast worldwide in 2016. Narrated by Liam Neeson, the documentary, entitled "1916 The Irish Rebellion," and its related seventy-minute version are initiatives of the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame. The series was produced by COCO Television and will broadcast on RTÉ and American Public Television. Both *The 1916 Irish Rebellion* and the related documentary are part of the Keough-Naughton Institute's aim to broaden public understanding of the historical interconnections between Britain, Ireland, and the United States, connections that continued to have significance up to and including the recent peace process in Northern Ireland.

"Stylish, pacy, and lucid, this narrative places the Rising in its national and international contexts. In vivid photographs and keynote quotations, it illustrates just how and why revolutionary Ireland became a test case of modernity in a rapidly decolonizing world." —**Declan Kiberd, Donald and Marilyn Keough Professor of Irish Studies and Professor of English and Irish Language and Literature, University of Notre Dame**

"Crisply written, evocative, and, on occasion, poignant, this fine study by Bríona Nic Dhiarmada of Easter Week, 1916, in Ireland and beyond, is wonderfully complemented by a wide range of contemporary materials—poems, speeches, letters, and images—all of which add greatly to the immediacy of her prose and

the impact of her narrative. Not to be missed." —**Thomas Bartlett, professor emeritus of Irish history, University of Aberdeen**

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