

Days in the life: Reading the Michael Collins Diaries 1918-1922

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From 1918 to 1922 Michael Collins kept working diaries of his busy revolutionary life. They are a collection of hurried notes, necessary lists, names and appointments, things to do, and things not done. They are a record of his long working days, and they got him to where he needed to be on time. Though these diaries do not contain conventional lengthy entries in which Collins finally reveals his innermost thoughts, they still tell us much about this extraordinary man.

In this book, Michael Collins's biographers, Anne Dolan and William Murphy, capture the nature of this new Collins source. They reflect on how the diaries change what we know about him, and challenge us to think differently about his life. The diaries begin with Collins a revolutionary among many; they end in 1922 with Collins as the most powerful figure in Ireland. They begin with Collins a single man; they end with him about to be married. The authors present thematic reflections on what the diaries reveal of his transformed life.

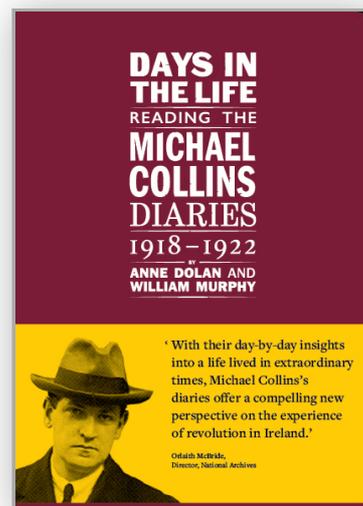
As they are also the diaries of his everyday life, the book examines very particular episodes, the curious and ordinary entries, which allow us to see Collins from new angles. Rather than offering the final piece that will solve the Collins puzzle, the diaries pose new questions to be asked.

Michael Collins (1890–1922), was born in Co. Cork, he was a staff captain in the GPO in 1916, and emerged as a leading figure during his internment in Frongoch camp. As the Director of Organisation with the Irish Volunteers, he masterminded their campaign in the Anglo-Irish war (1919-21). Having signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, in 1922 he became chairman of the Provisional Government and commander-in-chief of the National Army. He was killed in an ambush in Co. Cork on 22 August 1922.

Contributor information

Anne Dolan is an associated professor of modern Irish history at Trinity College Dublin. Her publications include *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: history and memory 1923-2000* (Cambridge, 2003). She is joint editor of 'No surrender here!' *The Civil War papers of Ernie O'Malley* (Dublin, 2007). She co-wrote *Michael Collins: the man and the revolution* (Cork, 2018) with William Murphy.

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