



The Handover of Dublin Castle: *A Centenary Conference*

The Printworks, Dublin Castle

14–15 January 2022



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



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On 16 January 1922 the Provisional Government took possession of Dublin Castle. The events of that day were overtaken and perhaps overshadowed by the civil war that soon followed, but this two-day conference, hosted by Trinity College Dublin at Dublin Castle, will retrieve the historical significance of that day.

The conference, which is part of the Decade of Centenaries Programme, will explore the immediate reactions, the expected consequences, and the implications of this dramatic shift in the centre of power. Speakers will consider the context of the handover, and the response in Ireland, Britain and beyond, to this moment when, as the *Irish Times* reported, *‘the old regime ceased to exist’*.

Illustrations courtesy of **National Library of Ireland**

Programme

Friday 14 January

2.00 **Welcome**

2.05 **Dr Conor Mulvagh:** A Framework for Transition: Negotiating the Anglo-Irish Treaty in London

2.30 **Keynote 1**

Chair: **Professor Eve Patten**

Professor Eunan O’Halpin: Winding Down or Setting Up? The Last Days of Dublin Castle, 1920-22

Professor Alvin Jackson: Unionist Views of Dublin Castle

4.00 *Break*

4.15 **Panel 1: *Implications of the Handover***

Chair: **Dr Carole Holohan**

Dr Martin Maguire: The Civil Service and the Handover of Dublin Castle

Dr Laura Cahillane: Legal Authority in the State Following the Handover of Dublin Castle

Dr Robin Adams: Irish Independence: Financial Considerations

Saturday 15 January

9.30 **Keynote 2**

Chair: **Dr Anne Dolan**

Professor Bill Kissane: The Provisional Government and the Idea of an Irish State Tradition

Respondents: **Dr Ciara Meehan, Dr William Murphy**

11.00 *Break*

11.15 **Panel 2: *Reactions to the Handover***

Chair: **Dr Ciarán Wallace**

Dr Ian d’Alton: ‘A Tugging at the Heartstrings’: the Place of the Castle Handover in the Southern Loyalist Narrative

Dr Margaret O’Callaghan: The Reaction of James Craig’s Government to the Treaty

Dr Elspeth Payne: ‘Friendly and Hopeful Spectators’? British Reactions to the Handover of Dublin Castle

Dr Niamh Gallagher: Empire and Settlers’ Reactions to the Handover of Dublin Castle

1.00	<i>Break</i>
2.00	<p>Panel 3: <i>The Castle in Irish Life and Imagination</i> Chair: Professor Patrick Geoghegan William Derham: The Castle is Dead: Long Live the Castle Professor Margaret Kelleher: From the Duties of Clerks to the Great Muslin Market: Dublin Castle in the Irish Literary Imagination Dr Anne Dolan: Popular Reactions to the Handover of Dublin Castle</p>
3.30	Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, T.D.
4.00	<p>Roundtable Discussion Dr David McCullagh in conversation with: Dr Catriona Crowe Professor Diarmaid Ferriter Dr Brian Hanley Dr Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid</p>

Notes on Contributors

Laura Cahillane is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Law, University of Limerick. Her research interests lie in the areas of Constitutional Law, Legal History, Judicial Politics and Comparative Law and she has published nationally and internationally in these areas. Her monograph on the 1922 Constitution was published by Manchester University Press in 2016. She is a frequent contributor to the media on legal and constitutional issues and has advised the Oireachtas on law reform on a number of occasions. Her work has been cited in the Dáil and the Seanad and also by the Irish superior Courts. She is editor-in-chief of the *Irish Judicial Studies Journal*.

Catriona Crowe is former Head of Special Projects at the National Archives of Ireland. She was Manager of the Census Online Project, which placed the Irish 1901 and 1911 censuses online free to access. She is editor of *Dublin 1911*, published by the Royal Irish Academy in late 2011. She presented the RTÉ documentaries *Ireland before the Rising*, shown in February 2016, and *Life After the Rising*, shown in January 1919. She is an Honorary President of the Irish Labour History Society and a former President of the Women's History Association of Ireland. She is a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

Ian d'Alton is a Visiting Research Fellow in the Centre for Contemporary Irish History, Trinity College, Dublin, and was a Visiting Fellow at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge in 2014. He is the author of *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork, 1812-1844*

Robin Adams is an Honorary Lecturer at the Centre for Economic History, Queen's University Belfast, strategic adviser to the Long Run Institute, and senior consultant to tech start-up The 350 Club. He received his DPhil in economic and social history from the University of Oxford, winning the Economic History Society's Thirsk-Feinstein prize for best dissertation in economic or social history and the Economic History Association's Gerschenkron prize for best dissertation focussing outside North America. His first monograph, *Shadow of a Taxman: Who Funded the Irish Revolution?*, is forthcoming with Oxford University Press in March 2022.

(Cork UP, 1980) and of numerous chapters and journal articles on aspects of southern Irish unionism and Protestantism. He co-edited (with Dr Ida Milne) *Protestant and Irish: the Minority's Search for Place in Independent Ireland* (Cork UP, 2019). He is presently co-writing the volume on *Wicklow* in the Four Courts Press county histories of the Irish revolution, 1912-23.

William Derham is a curator working in the Collections, Research and Interpretation Office at Dublin Castle. He has been involved in many projects that seek to bring a deeper understanding to the Castle's history, including 'The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Architectural History' (2015); 'Making Majesty: The Throne Room at Dublin Castle, A Cultural History' (2017); and 'Splendour & Scandal: The Office of Arms at Dublin Castle' (2020). He is currently researching the history of Dublin Castle in the twentieth century.

Caoimhe Níc Dháibhéid is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Sheffield and a member of the Centenary Historical Advisory Panel to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Her research interests include the history of Irish republicanism and the comparative history of political violence, and her current research project, which is funded by the Leverhulme Trust, is titled 'Emotions and the Irish Revolution'.

Anne Dolan is Associate Professor in Modern Irish History in the Department of History, and a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin. She is author of *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: History and Memory 1923-2000* and, with William Murphy, *Michael Collins: the Man and the Revolution*, and has published widely on the history of violence in the revolutionary period, the politics of memory, and the social and cultural history of inter-war Ireland.

Diarmaid Ferriter is Professor of Modern Irish History at UCD and author of numerous books, including *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (2004), *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (2009), *Ambiguous Republic: Ireland in the 1970s* (2012), *The Border: The Legacy of a Century of Anglo-Irish Politics* (2019) and *Between Two Hells: The Irish Civil War* (2021). He is a regular television and radio broadcaster and a weekly columnist with the *Irish Times*. In 2019 he was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

Niamh Gallagher is Lecturer in Modern British and Irish History and a Fellow of St Catharine's College at the University of Cambridge. Her books include *Ireland and the Great War: A Social and Political History* (Bloomsbury, 2019), which won the Royal Historical Society's Whitfield Prize in 2020, the first work of Irish history to win the prize since its establishment in 1976, and *The Political Thought of the Irish Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), co-edited with Richard

Bourke. She has published on the cultural, political, and social history of the First World War and other aspects of Irish and British History. In 2021, Niamh participated in the President of Ireland's *Machnamh 100* series on Empire, filmed by RTÉ. She appears regularly in the UK, Irish and international media, and co-convenes the Cambridge *Future of the Island of Ireland* public seminar series.

Patrick Geoghegan is Professor of History in the Department of History, part of the School of Histories and Humanities, at Trinity College Dublin, and presents the award-winning *Talking History* on Newstalk radio. The author of books on Robert Emmet, the Act of Union, and a two-volume study of Daniel O'Connell, he was a special adviser to the Taoiseach between June 2017 and June 2020. He is a member of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations.

Brian Hanley, a native of Limerick, has written widely on Irish republicanism and radicalism. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin, he has lectured at universities in Ireland and Britain for the last 20 years. His books include *The IRA, 1926-36* (2002), *The Lost Revolution: the Story of the Official IRA and the Workers Party* (with Scott Millar) (2009) and *The Impact of the Troubles on the Republic of Ireland, 1968-79* (2018). He is currently writing about the global impact of the Irish revolution.

Carole Holohan is Assistant Professor of Modern Irish History at Trinity College Dublin. She teaches the social history of nineteenth and twentieth-century Ireland. Author of *Reframing Irish Youth in the Sixties* (Liverpool University Press, 2018), she has also published on the history of youth and the history of poverty in *Social History, History of European Ideas*, and *Irish Historical Studies*.

Margaret Kelleher is Professor and Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin. Her publications include *The Maamtrasna Murders: Language, Life and Death in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (UCD Press), which was awarded the Michael J. Durkan Prize for Books on Language and Culture by the American Conference of Irish Studies in 2019 and shortlisted for the Michel Déon Prize. She is Chair of the Irish Film Institute and UCD academic lead for the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI).

Bill Kissane was raised in Wexford and educated at Trinity College Dublin and the LSE where he is an Associate Professor of Politics. His expertise is on European, Irish and comparative politics and has published widely in those fields. Both his 2005 *The Politics of the Irish Civil War* and his 2016 *Nations Torn Asunder: the Challenge of Civil War* were published by Oxford University Press. He is currently working on a comparative study of the European periphery in the twentieth century.

Alvin Jackson was educated at Oxford and has taught at University College Dublin, Boston College and Queen's University Belfast, where he was Professor of Modern Irish History. He is currently Richard Lodge Professor of History at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of seven books, including (most recently) *Judging Redmond and Carson* (2018) and his edited *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (2017). He is currently working on a comparative history of multinational union states in a project supported by the Leverhulme Trust. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and an honorary Member of the Royal Irish Academy.

David McCullagh is a journalist with RTÉ. He was political correspondent for more than a decade, and has presented *Prime Time* on television and *This Week* on radio, and is currently a presenter of the *Six One News*. He has a PhD from UCD, and is the author of five books: *A Makeshift Majority: A History of the First Inter-Party Government*, *The Reluctant Taoiseach: a Biography of John A. Costello*, a two-volume biography of Éamon de Valera, *Rise: 1882-1932 and Rule: 1832-1975*; and most recently a guide to politics for children, *The Great Irish Politics Book*.

Martin Maguire is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Trinity Centre for Contemporary Irish History and also Visiting Lecturer at the UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy. He has extensive publications on the history of civil service trade unionism in Ireland. His book on the civil service

experience of revolutionary change, *The Civil Service and the Revolution in Ireland, 1912-38 'Shaking the blood-stained hand of Mr Collins'*, is published by MUP. He is currently writing the history of two civil service trade unions, the Civil and Public Services Union and the Public Service Executive Union, both now merged into Fórsa Trade Union.

Ciara Meehan is a Reader in History and an Associate Dean at the School of Humanities, University of Hertfordshire. She has published widely on independent Ireland, including a book, *The Cosgrave Party*, which explores the Cumann na nGaedheal government and the first decade of independence. Most recently, she co-authored a history of Fine Gael with Stephen Collins.

Conor Mulvagh is Associate Professor in Modern Irish History at the School of History, University College Dublin. His research centres primarily on Irish and British political history from the 1870s to the 1920s. His current research focusses on a comparative study of partitions. He lectures on nineteenth and twentieth-century Irish history including home rule, memory and commemoration; the Irish revolution; and Northern Ireland. He is the author of *The Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster, 1900-18* (Manchester University Press, 2016) and *Irish Days, Indian Memories: V. V. Giri and Indian Law Students at University College Dublin, 1913-1916* (Irish Academic Press, 2016). He is a contributor to the *Cambridge History of Ireland* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). His next work is a collection on the life of

Eoin MacNeill co-edited with Dr Emer Purcell which will be published by Cork University Press in spring 2022.

William Murphy is Associate Professor at the School of History and Geography, Dublin City University. He is the author of *Political Imprisonment and the Irish, 1912-1921* (2014) and co-author, with Anne Dolan, of *Michael Collins: the Man and the Revolution* (2018). He is also co-editor of *Leisure and the Irish in the Nineteenth Century* (2016) and *The Gaelic Athletic Association, 1884-2009* (2009). Currently, he co-edits the journal *Studia Hibernica*.

Margaret O'Callaghan MA (NUI) PhD (Cambridge) is an historian and political analyst at the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics at Queen's University, Belfast. A former Laski Research Scholar at St John's College Cambridge and a former Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, she has taught at the Universities of Cambridge and Notre Dame. She is the author of numerous works on aspects of British high politics and the state apparatus in Ireland from the late nineteenth century to the revolution, including *British High Politics and a Nationalist Ireland; Criminality, Land and the Law Under Forster and Balfour*. She has written on the Royal Irish Constabulary, on the genealogy and high politics of partition, on the Boundary Commission of 1925. She has also written articles on the fringe-Fenian press, the careers of Richard Pigott and Tom Kettle, on Belfast in the 1960s and 70s, and on Ian Paisley and the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

She co-edited with Mary E. Daly *1916 in 1966; Commemorating the Easter Rising* (Royal Irish Academy, 2007). Her most recent publications are on commemorating the Easter Rising of 1916 in the 1970s, on Roger Casement and the First World War and on female political autobiography. She is currently writing a book on Alice Stopford Green.

Eunan O'Halpin retired in September 2020 from the Bank of Ireland Chair of Contemporary Irish History, and as Director of the Trinity Research Centre for Contemporary Irish History. Educated at UCD and Cambridge, he has written widely on aspects of twentieth-century Irish and British history and politics. His most recent books are *Kevin Barry: an Irish Rebel in Life and Death* (Dublin, 2020), *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (New Haven and London, 2020) (with Daithí Ó Corráin). He is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin. Joint editor of the Royal Irish Academy Documents on Irish Foreign Policy series (1996-), he is a member of the International Board of *20th Century British History*. Professor O'Halpin is a member of the government's Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations.

Elsbeth Payne is a Research Fellow and Coordinator of the Schuler Democracy Forum at the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute, Trinity College Dublin. Her research examines the renegotiation of Anglo-Irish relationships in the British tabloids from 1922 to 1932. She is currently working on a project which brings

together practitioners and researchers to interrogate questions relating to democracy, media, technology and communication. Elspeth holds a PhD and MPhil from Trinity College Dublin and a BA from the University of Oxford.

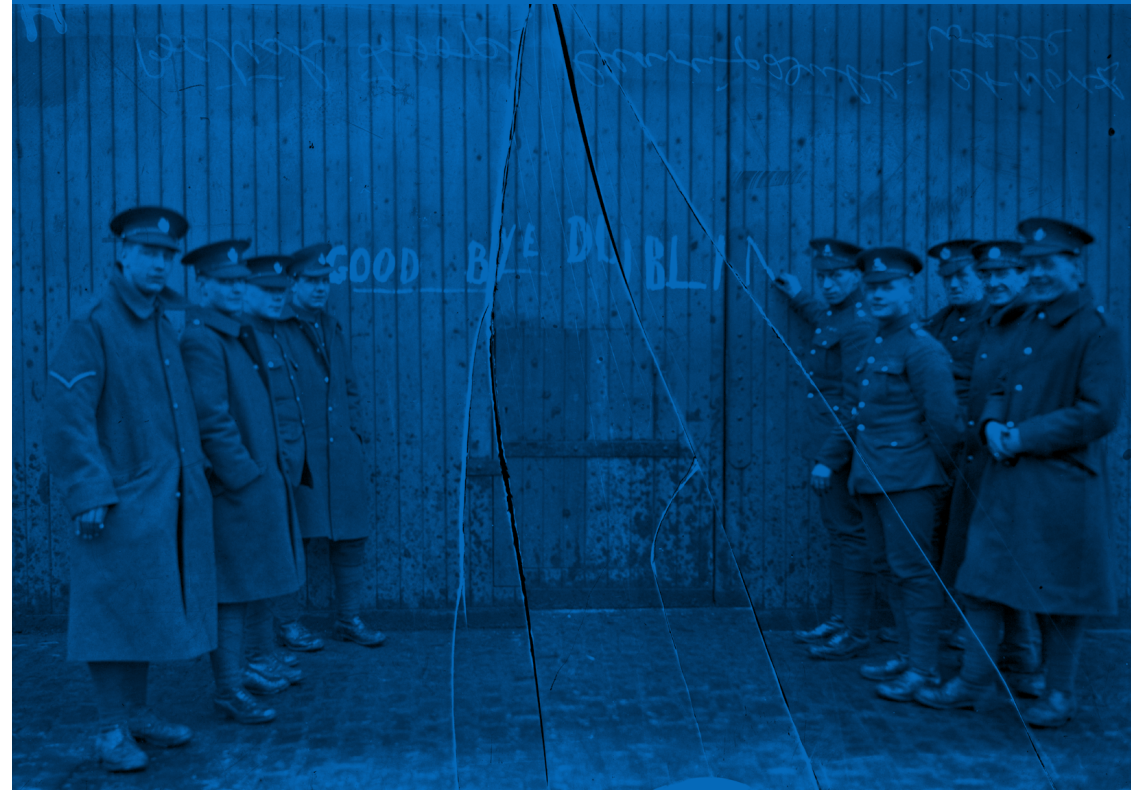
Eve Patten is Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute and Professor of English at Trinity College, Dublin. A scholar in nineteenth and twentieth-century Irish and British literature and cultural history, she is editor of the recent volume of essays, *Irish Literature in Transition, 1940-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), and author of a monograph on representations of Ireland's revolutionary decade in English writing, *Ireland, Revolution, and the English Modernist Imagination*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2022. A graduate of Oxford University, she has lectured at Trinity since 1996 and is a Fellow of the College.

Ciarán Wallace completed his PhD on early twentieth-century municipal politics in Dublin at Trinity College Dublin (2010). He was a co-designer of Trinity's inaugural Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) 'Irish Lives in War and Rebellion: 1912-1923'. Having lectured in Modern Irish History at Trinity College Dublin, Dublin City University and Liverpool John Moore's University Ciarán returned to Dublin to take up the post of Deputy Director of Beyond 2022: the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland. Ciarán has published on Dublin history, civil society, political cartoons and social history. From 2018-20 he was Secretary to the Irish Historical Society and is a founder and convenor of the Dublin History Research Network.

Contemporary Sources on the Handover of Dublin Castle

Compiled by **Dr Martin Maguire**

British troops standing beside a sign reading 'Goodbye Dublin' prior to evacuation, 1922, — *Independent Newspapers Collection*



Final text of the Articles of Agreement for a Treaty Between Great Britain and Ireland as signed on December 6th, 1921

Article 17.

By way of provisional arrangement for the administration of Southern Ireland during the interval which must elapse between the date hereof and the constitution of a Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State in accordance therewith, steps shall be taken forthwith for summoning a meeting of members of Parliament elected for constituencies in Southern Ireland since the passing of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and for constituting a provisional Government, and the British Government shall take the steps necessary to transfer to such provisional Government the powers and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties, provided that every member of such provisional Government shall have signified in writing his or her acceptance of this instrument. But this arrangement shall not continue in force beyond the expiration of twelve months from the date hereof.

Debate on the Articles of Agreement

[House of Commons, Westminster, 14-15 December 1921](#)

[The Prime Minister \[David Lloyd George\], 14 December 1921, *House of Commons Debates*, vol. 149, cols. 42-3](#)

What is to be done before the Constitution is set up? There are two ways of dealing with that. One would be the status quo, leaving the forces of the Crown there to operate. But that is obviously undesirable once we have arrived at an agreement. There is a danger of incidents occurring which might imperil the whole Agreement. We therefore propose that a Provisional Government should be set up with such powers as are now vested in the Crown. That Government must represent the existing majority of Irish representatives. As soon as that is arranged, the whole responsibility for the Government of Ireland outside the Northern Province would be handed over to this Provisional Government and the Crown forces will be withdrawn.

[The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs \[the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston\], 14 December 1921, *House of Lords Debates*, vol. 48, col. 25](#)

The next point about which your Lordships may not unnaturally ask for some information is as to the stages through which, in the immediate future, you will be asked to proceed. We are engaged upon the first stage to-day; that is, asking the approval of both Houses of Parliament—and the same thing is going on in Ireland—of the Agreement that has been concluded. The second stage will be that which is provided for in Article 17 of the Agreement, under Which

a Provisional Government is to be set up in Ireland during the period while the Constitution of the Free State is being drafted and set in motion. This will no doubt require some discussion and will take up a certain amount of time. Legislation will not be required for that object, though it may be that when the Constitution is set up an Act of Indemnity may be called for in order to cover any informality that may have occurred.

[Colonel John Gretton, Conservative MP for Burton, 15 December 1921, *House of Commons Debates*, vol. 149, cols. 151-2](#)

Take Clause 17 for a moment. All the proposals of Clause 17 are as illegal as anything in the present position of Ireland. The Act of 1920 provided that a Parliament should be summoned for Southern Ireland as for Northern Ireland, and that when the oath of allegiance was taken the powers conferred by the Act should be handed over to the Parliament and an administration should be established. But if the oath of allegiance was not taken, the Southern Parliament was not properly constituted, and the Act provided that in that case a Provisional Government should be set up under the Crown by the Lord Lieutenant to carry out that Statute until such time as the Lord Lieutenant was enabled to certify that elections in Ireland had been properly held, and a Parliament properly constituted, and that the powers might be safely handed over to them. Why has that Statute not been put into operation? Instead of putting into operation that Statute which they passed themselves through this House, the Government have allowed all the real powers of administration in Southern Ireland to drift into the hands of those who are actively engaged in rebellion against this country, and to-day everyone knows that there are two systems of administration in Ireland, the rebel Irish Republic, and the remnants of that nervous, weak and broken administration for which the Government is now responsible.

[Frederick MacQuisten, Conservative MP for Glasgow Springburn, 15 December 1921, *House of Commons Debates*, vol. 149, cols. 235](#)

The real reason why these gunmen were not suppressed long ago is that we had far too many Sinn Féiners in Dublin Castle and too many Sinn Féin officers in the Army in Ireland. Everybody who knows the inside working of what goes on in Ireland knows that whenever there was an opportunity of getting in a good stroke by the Government some person in control would interfere with the forces of the Crown, who never got a fair chance of operation. The Chief Secretary told us that he had got the murderers by the throat, and that the murderers were on the run, though how they could be on the run when he had them by the throat I do not know. I believe that if you had taken away your political soldiers from Ireland, and if you had sent a few men like General Maxwell, who knew their job, they would very soon have put an end to the whole business. But when I have said all that, I should add that Ireland, I think,

has had considerable cause for discontent since the Act of Union. One of the reasons has been the existence of that bureaucracy known as Dublin Castle. It has always been a sore and an irritation in Ireland. It is appointed from Westminster and it has irritated the Irish people to an extraordinary degree.

Dáil Éireann Debates

10 January 1922, vol. T, no. 17



Michael Collins, Arthur Griffith and Eamonn Duggan, Anglo-Irish Treaty plenipotentiaries, 1921
— *Independent Newspapers Collection*.

The Speaker: Item number three on the Agenda is a motion by Mr Michael Collins 'that Mr Arthur Griffith be appointed President of Dáil Eireann'. I take it that the first thing that it is necessary for us to do is to make arrangements for the administration of the country.

...

Michael Collins: ...We must form some kind of a stable Government to stop the position of anarchy that we are allowing the country to drift into ... The difficulties we may be faced with cannot be overstated. Any young government – I can see the difficulties that come before it. I can see the frightful difficulties. Every new government has these difficulties to go through. Some of the governments that have been started in Europe found their difficulties enormous. You have only to point to any one of these new governments that have been formed to see that up to the present moment it is an unstable government. My belief about the thing is this: that whether we like it or whether we do not, the world is entering on a different era.

...

Arthur Griffith: The questions, I think, which the Deputies refer to were sent across by Mr Stack. They are:

1. Whether he had any communication, direct or indirect, from the British Government, in connection with the Treaty?

The only communication I had was this produced here, except one where he stated it was not a Treaty, and I got the official title: 'Articles of Agreement between Ireland and Great Britain'.

2. Whether he had been informed what kind of legislation they proposed to pass in the British Parliament in order to carry into effect the Articles of Agreement?

The legislation they will pass must be a Free State Act. Of course, they must pass an Act of Ratification.

3. Who would summon the members of the Southern Parliament, and when?

I will have them summoned.

4. Whether the proposed Provisional Government would be elected by and from these members?

They would.

5. Whether the Provisional Government would act in conjunction with the Lord Lieutenant, and would it function under the statutory powers conferred by the Partition Act?

If it is necessary to use the Lord Lieutenant as it is necessary to use liaison officers we will use him.

6. What were the powers referred to in Clause 17 of the Treaty which would be transferred by the British Government to the Provisional Government?

The general powers for maintaining law and order, police, and the evacuation of the country by British troops. These are the answers to these questions. As to Mr Boland's question and President de Valera's question: if I am elected I shall use my position to give effect to the constitutional vote of this assembly in approving of the Treaty. I shall use the resources at our disposal for the keeping of public order and security until such time as we can have an election for the Free State Parliament, and at that Free State Election I will let the will of the people decide whether we have a right to accept the Free State, or whether they wish something else.

The Irish Times

Monday, 16 January 1922

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE CASTLE

It was semi-officially known last night that the members of the new Government, or a deputation representing it, would present themselves at the Castle this morning. It is not known whether the formal transfer of authority will be open to representatives of the Press, or will be merely a private function. In any case, it will be at most a formality.

... It is assumed that, once the Provisional Government takes full control, it will establish itself in offices in Dublin Castle.

As to the plan upon which the new Government will operate during the transition period, it appears that nothing definite has yet been decided, but in conversation with Mr Collins on Saturday it was ascertained that the various departments would probably be administered by committees of members willing to take part in such work. In connection with these committees it seems likely that some of the Dublin University members will be asked to give their assistance. There are, no doubt, many phases of the work in which their special knowledge would be of great advantage, and it is quite certain that their services will be available if required.

Official Report issued from Dublin Castle

Monday, 16 January 1922

In the Council Chamber at Dublin Castle this afternoon His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant received Mr Michael Collins as head of the Provisional Government provided for in Article 17 of the Treaty of the 6th of December. Mr Collins handed to the Lord Lieutenant a copy of the Treaty, on which the acceptance of its provisions by himself and his colleagues had been endorsed. The other members of the Provisional Government were then introduced. The Lord Lieutenant congratulated Mr Collins and his colleagues and informed them that they were now duly installed as the Provisional Government, and that, in conformity with Article 17 of the Treaty, he would at once communicate with the British Government in order that the necessary steps may be taken for transfer to the Provisional Government of the powers and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties. He wished them every success in the task they had undertaken, and expressed the earnest hope that, under their auspices, the ideal of a happy, free, and prosperous Ireland would be attained.

The Mansion House

Monday, 16 January 1922

The members of Rialtas Sealadach Na hÉireann received the surrender of Dublin Castle at 1:45 p.m. today. It is now in the hands of the Irish nation...

Rialtas Sealadach na hÉireann (Irish Provisional Government)

NOTICE

TRANSFER OF SERVICES HITHERTO ADMINISTERED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND

...WE do hereby direct that all Law Courts, Corporations, Councils, Departments of State, Boards, Judges, Civil Servants, Officers of the Peace, and all Public Servants and functionaries hitherto acting under the authority of the British Government shall continue to carry out their functions unless and until otherwise ordered by us, pending the constitution of the Parliament and Government of Saorstát na hÉireann, and without prejudice to the full and free exercise by that Parliament and Government, when constituted, of all and every its powers and authorities in regard to them or any of them

...Published at Dublin this 16th day of January, 1922

Letter from Michael Collins to Kitty Kiernan

16 January 1922



Envelope addressed by Michael Collins to Kitty Kiernan — Ms49,618

My dearest, dearest Kitty,

I am as happy a man as there is in Ireland today. My thoughts just now are all with you, and you have every kind wish and feeling of mine. Have just taken over Dublin Castle and am writing this note while awaiting a meeting of the Provisional Government. What do you think of that? Otherwise I see all sorts of difficulties ahead, but never mind...

The Irish Times

Tuesday, 17 January 1922

EDITORIAL : THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

Yesterday afternoon the Provisional Government of Ireland 'received the surrender of Dublin Castle'. The phrase contrasts ungraciously with the Lord Lieutenant's courteous language to Mr Collins and his colleagues. We may suppose, however, that these gentlemen had no desire to hurt the feelings of Irish loyalists, but have flung the word 'surrender' triumphantly at the Republicans who still refuse to admit that Ireland is free. At any rate, yesterday's ceremony marked a tremendous event in Irish history. Its significance will be appreciated more fully by our grandchildren than we can appreciate it now...

PASSING OF THE CASTLE DAWN OF NEW EPOCH

Dublin Castle, in all its history, has experienced no scenes comparable to those which took place within its ancient walls yesterday, when the reins of government were formally handed over to the Irish Provisional Government.

Few, probably, of the crowd that waited patiently outside the Lower Castle Yard for hours throughout a cold, raw winter day realised their full import of the events which they were about to witness.

...Inside the Lower Yard were gathered groups of Auxiliary police, military police, and soldiers, who were there out of curiosity to see the passing of British authority to Irish control.

...A volley of cheering came from Dame Street, and immediately three taxi-cabs, bearing Mr Michael Collins and his seven colleagues in the Provisional Government, whisked through the eastern archway and swung round to the entrance of the Chief Secretary's office, pursued hotfoot by numerous photographers. Mr Collins bounded from his car through the hospitable portals, and was lost to view, to the chagrin of the camera men. Swift at his heels were Mr Cosgrave, Mr Duggan, and the others.

FROM OLD TO NEW ASPECTS OF THE CHANGE

The taking over yesterday of Dublin Castle and all that it stands for in Ireland by the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State is something more than an important event in Irish history; it is epochal. It marks the end of the Act of Union, after its existence for over 122 years.

...The great fact is that the 16th January, 1922, will be written in history as the day on which the old *regime* ceased to exist and the Irish Free State took possession of Dublin Castle.

...it was a disappointment to the Press representatives that no one, except the persons immediately concerned, was admitted to the Council Chamber.

The Times

Tuesday, 17 January 1922

DUBLIN CASTLE HANDED OVER



Lord FitzAlan arriving at Dublin Castle, 16 January 1922 — Hogan-Wilson Collection

The Irish people are informed by the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State that Dublin Castle was 'surrendered' to them to-day. What actually has happened may be briefly described in more exact, if less picturesque, terms.

The members of the Provisional Government went in a body to the Castle, where they were received by Lord FitzAlan, the Lord Lieutenant. Mr Michael Collins produced a copy of the Treaty, on which the acceptance of its provisions by himself and his colleagues was endorsed. The existence and authority of the Provisional Government were then formally and officially acknowledged, and they were informed that the British Government would be immediately communicated with in order that the necessary steps might be taken for the transfer to the Provisional Government of the powers and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties.

...It is understood that the powers and machinery of government cannot be transferred without an Order in Council, but there will be no undue delay in its promulgation, and representatives of the Provisional Government are leaving for London to-night to arrange with the British Cabinet Committee the various details of handing over.

...For centuries Dublin Castle has been the symbol, as well as the citadel, of British rule in Ireland. Its transfer to the representatives of the Irish people is hailed in Dublin with infinite satisfaction. It is regarded as the supreme outward and visible sign that British rule is indeed at an end, and that Ireland has at last come into her own. In Irish minds, the 'fall of Dublin Castle' will find in Irish history a place no less prominent and unforgettable than the fall of the Bastille holds in the history of France.

Morning Post

Tuesday, 17 January 1921

'The members of Rialtas Sealadach na hÉireann received the surrender of Dublin Castle at 1:45 today. It is now in the hands of the Irish Nation.' Such are the terms of the official announcement issued yesterday evening by the Provisional Government of Southern Ireland. They describe the taking over from the King's servants of the historic citadel of British ascendancy. There is, it will be noted, no suggestion of a pact between a Sovereign and subjects owing him allegiance. No, the only suggestion is of a victory crowned by the surrender of the enemy...and it is true! Thanks are, indeed, due to the Provisional Government for so ruthlessly stripping away all pretences and presenting the British nation with the facts as they are...

Belfast Newsletter

Tuesday, 17 January 1922

DUBLIN CASTLE'S SURRENDER VICEROY'S HUMILIATING ROLE

At Dublin Castle yesterday the Lord Lieutenant received the members of the new provisional government, headed by Michael Collins and congratulated them on their installation. The celebrated Mr Cope was amongst those present at the transaction. Subsequently Collins issued a statement gloating over the 'surrender' and announcing that he will make known the provisional government's policy today.

...Yesterday saw the beginning of the realization of Michael Collins's repeated desire to 'get the English out of Ireland' when he attended at Dublin Castle accompanied by his fellow-members of the 'provisional government' and was received by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant (Viscount FitzAlan) who informed these strange visitors that they were now duly installed, and that he (the Viceroy) would take steps for the transfer of powers.

The Manchester Guardian

Tuesday, 17 January 1922

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CASTLE

(From our Special Correspondent 'Politious')

At half-past one to-day a small procession of taxicabs, carrying the Ministers of Ireland's first Irish Government, passed through the gate of Dublin Castle. A few minutes later an imposing motor-car brought the last of the Lord Lieutenants, and in a room upstairs the control of the Castle was transferred to Mr Collins and his colleagues. In the streets and the yards the Dublin citizens cheered and laughed and bantered. Soldiers stood about in groups. Black-and-Tans were to be seen packing their lorries for the last time.

In this atmosphere of democratic informality Dublin Castle was deposed. Many an Irishman must have died dreaming of a day when Irish soldiers would march into the hated stronghold with flags and drums. Tone, Emmett, Fitzgerald, Smith O'Brien – did any of them ever picture so casual a ceremony of abdication?



Soldiers packing up at Dublin Castle – Independent Newspapers Collection

But no march of troops could have been so dramatic as the surrender of the fortress to an Irishman on whose head a fortune had been set, while boys and girls from Dublin streets were playing on the stones across which their fathers and brothers stepped yesterday on their way to prison. It was as if by that one act of throwing open these guarded doors the new Ministers had brought daylight, democracy, and freedom into Ireland's darkest dungeons.

Victor Hugo has a great passage about the wickedness that seems to haunt some places, giving them a terrible and sinister look of life. With barbed wire and Black-and-Tans in their dreadful uniform, Dublin Castle seems to have all its wicked and melancholy history stamped on its face. There is much talk about what is to become of it. I hope no Irish Government will ever make it the seat of authority. One need not be superstitious to feel that to live there, and to rule from there, would be tempting the malice of destiny. Dublin Castle will live in Irish history as a terrible legend; the buildings which few self-respecting Irishmen have entered during these bitter years, except as prisoners, would be a fatal home for any Government in this country, where memory and imagination are never at a loss for sharp and wounding taunt.

New York Times

Tuesday, 17 January 1922

THE 'CASTLE'

Occupation of Dublin Castle yesterday by the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State was more than a physical act. It was a spiritual symbol. For centuries the Castle has been the object of as much hatred as ever beat in waves against the Bastille. It was the visible token of English ascendancy. It was the seat of a Government that never understood Ireland. From its portals issued bands of police and military forces. Viceroy after Viceroy lived in it and Irish Secretary after Irish Secretary visited it, but none of them was able to make it anything but a provocation to hissing and cursing by the Irish people.

...Now the Castle is in Irish hands. Lord FitzAlan turns the strong place over to 'Mickey' Collins. The building which meant so long English domination now stands for Irish triumph. Its possession by the Irish Free State is one more powerful advantage of the Provisional Government against the Irish irreconcilables. Will De Valera presently be found ranting in the old way against 'Castle' influence after Michael Collins has taken up his official residence there? Not unless Irish humor is extinct. The steps already taken cannot be retraced. The abhorred Castle has now become Irish, and it is for Irishmen to make of it, if they can, the source and centre of a free and stable Government.

The Times of India

Wednesday, 18 January 1922

IRISH CONTRASTS THE HANDING OVER GOVERNMENT'S BRILLIANT START

The members of the provisional Government of Ireland received the surrender of Dublin Castle to-day. 'This is now in the hands of the nation', is the wording of the official notice posted on the Mansion House, Dublin, the temporary seat of the provisional Government.

The ceremony of handing over the Castle was a study in contrasts. The members of Government arrived regardless of decorum in a straggling procession of motors, and dressed in everyday attire, whereas Lord FitzAlan motored down with every circumstance or dignity.

He welcomed Mr Collins ceremoniously in the brocaded Privy Council room. Mr Collins' previous visit to the Castle was in the guise of the driver of a coal cart with a price on his head. Later he sent an ironical letter complementing the Castle on the smart appearance of the guard. Now, he leaped from the taxi and rushed indoors over the red carpets laid specially for the occasion...

A BRILLIANT START

The Irish Provisional Government has started its career in brilliant style. Mr Collins, in the role of Premier, is already showing firm control, although the newly formed Government is confronted by formidable difficulties.

Diary of Mark Sturgis, Volume 5,

[The National Archives, London, PRO30/59/5](#)



Mark Sturgis, Dublin Castle civil servant [left], alongside two men, one of whom is identified in an annotation as 'Byrne' — [Piarás Béaslai Collection](#)

[Wednesday, 18 January 1922] ...The papers yesterday announce the ‘Surrender of Dublin Castle’ – the phrase used in the SF Official from the Mansion House. It leaves a nasty taste in the mouth. It is so ‘caddish’. They might with advantage have confined themselves to prompting the papers to such talk and not indulged in it ‘officially’. I hope the Special Honours List will come quick – it will be the best Counter to this Surrender talk, which is galling to us, to the soldiers and the police alike, and will show that L.[loyd] G.[eorge] does not share this view that we are beaten...

Irish Times

Friday, 20 January 1922

UNIONISTS AND FREE STATE LORD MAYO’S MEETING

At a meeting of Unionists from the South and West of Ireland, which was held in the Engineers’ Hall, Dawson street, Dublin, yesterday, the following resolution was passed unanimously:

‘That we, the Unionists of the South and West of Ireland, recognising that a Provisional Government has been formed, desire to support our fellow-countrymen in this Government in order that peace may be brought about and the welfare of the community secured.’

The Earl of Mayo was called to the chair, and there was a small, but fairly representative, attendance.

Periscope

[G.C. Duggan, a civil servant who worked in the Castle],

‘The Last Days of Dublin Castle’ *Blackwood’s Magazine*, vol. CCXII, no. MCCLXXXII, August 1922, pp 188-90

This acceptance [of the Treaty by Dáil Éireann] marked the end of Dublin Castle, and a few days later a ceremony was arranged to signalise the event ... With fair punctuality Mr Collins and his entourage entered the Castle precincts. At the gateway, game to the end, stood the last of the Auxiliaries, in their hats jauntily fluttering miniature Union Jacks. At least they were spared the indignity of being asked to take part in any ceremonial. The half-dozen motor-cars sped to the Upper Castle Yard, and at the door of the Chief Secretary’s office disgorged a motley assemblage: some in tweed caps and unpolished boots; others with the beard of yesterday eve still fresh on their chins; others with long lanky hair, collars and ties *au peintre*. Mr Collins himself was first in the door, and though the red carpet had in its time been laid down in the hall and up the stairway for many strange personages, yet surely this was the strangest scene of all it had yet beheld. A few minutes later the Lord Lieutenant appeared and his Ministers, some of whom had six months before

a price fixed on their heads, or were spending a leisured existence in the walls of Mountjoy Prison, were introduced to His Excellency. The chiefs of the Irish Departments...had been roped in, and now stood about the Council Chamber, for the most part obviously ill at ease, or regarding the proceedings with that air of cynical detachment which most responsible civil servants in Ireland are bound to cultivate if they intend to pass their life with some slight measure of enjoyment. It was a scene worthy of a painter, fit for the master-hand of some great dramatist. The drama of seven hundred odd years – was it comedy, farce, or tragedy? – was about to be played out; the curtain was about to fall on the last act and the last scene. When it would rise again it would not be on the same play. The characters, the situation, the stuff would be altered ... Dublin Castle’s day is over. It now exists but as a name - Castle Rule – a symbol of government without the consent of the governed; but in its time it did govern: it accomplished its purpose, though that purpose was often narrow, ill-advised, and, above all, unimaginative. In the mouth of the Irish peasant it was a synonym for repression, but the peasant had broken its power twenty years before its end came. Yet the tradition is such that the Government of the Free State has hesitated to set up within its walls even the least of its Departments. It fears the taint that still clings to the name. To-day in its all but deserted rooms the dust is beginning to gather; the silence becomes oppressive. One feels that in spite of all the curses that were heaped upon it by a nation, in spite of the wrongs that it did, the evils that it condoned, here was something which lived, and now the life has gone from it.

Sir Henry Robinson

Memories Wise and Otherwise (London & New York, 1923), pp 324-5

On the day fixed for the surrender of the Government to Sinn Féin I received a telephone message to attend at the Council to be introduced to the victors. I found on arriving there all the heads of departments sitting on one side of the Under-Secretary’s room and the Sinn Féin leaders sitting opposite, glowering at each other. I did not join the glad throng, and went out into the corridor, where I was followed by Mr Justice Wylie, who I suspect found it anything but pleasant to be confronted with the new Ministers, most of whom he had prosecuted when Solicitor-General for various offences in connexion with the rebellion. Inside the Privy Council Chamber Lord FitzAlan was making the formal abdication of the Irish Government to Michael Collins and having got through with this he left by the door to the State Chambers, and so avoided meeting his trusty and well-beloved civil servants with a *Sauve qui peut*, which was the only advice he could have had to offer them. After his departure the Irish Ministers designate were marched into the Council Chamber to join Mr Collins, and took their seats round the council table.

Kevin O'Higgins

Three Years Hard Labour: an Address Delivered to the Irish Society of Oxford University on the 31st October 1924 (Dublin, 1924), p. 7

But in Ireland in 1922 there was no State and no organised forces. The Provisional Government was simply eight young men in the City Hall, standing amidst the ruins of one administration, with the foundations of another not yet laid, and with wild men screaming through the keyholes. No police force was functioning through the country, no system of justice was operating, the wheels of administration hung idle, battered out of recognition by the clash of rival jurisdictions.

