

GAELIC LEAGUE POSTER

Related Object:
British Army Recruitment Poster



CURRICULUM LINKS

History

Junior Cycle

Political developments in Ireland
in the late 19th century and the
20th century

Leaving Certificate

The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition 1912-1949:

Perspectives: culture and religion
(identity)

Movements for political and social reform, 1870-1914

Key concept: political agitation

Visual Arts

Colours, line, print, typographic
prints, letterpress print
Symbolism

THINGS TO THINK AND TALK ABOUT

OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS

Design and Meaning

- What symbolism was used to express ideas of Irish independence and Irish identity in this poster?
- Look at the poster in two halves and compare
 - » The posture and expression of the figures (tall and proud or cowered and shackled)
 - » Style and symbolism of clothing
 - » What she holds in her hands, her gestures
 - » What does the landmass on left and right-hand sides of the picture stand for?
 - » The title and font of the respective section: Éire vs. West Britain

Her clothing has a spiral pattern, which is a reference to decorations in ancient Ireland.

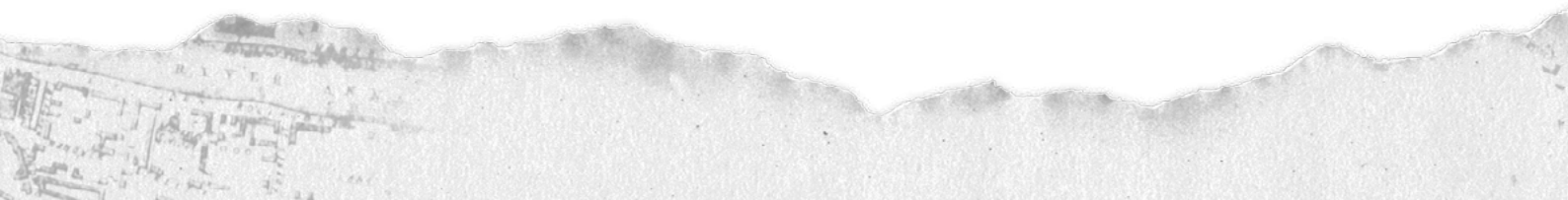
- What other designs or symbols did people use in 1916 (and today) to refer to Ireland and to express an Irish identity?

Personification of Ireland

The leaders of the 1916 Rising also thought of Ireland as a woman.

- Can you spot where this becomes evident in the language they used for the text of the [*Irish Proclamation of Independence?*](#)
- How does the language change when they talk about the Irish 'republic'?

**THIS OBJECT IS CURRENTLY
LOCATED IN THE COLLECTION
STORES**



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THE GAELIC LEAGUE AND “GAELIC REVIVAL”

The Gaelic League was part of the “Gaelic revival” movement. It was set up in 1893 to revive the Irish language, which was in severe decline at this time. Patrick Pearse succeeded Douglas Hyde as president of the Gaelic League in 1915. At the same time, he joined the military committee of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which was the leading force in planning the Easter Rising. This is just one example of a person being a member of two different Irish organisations (cultural and political, military) at the same time. Objectives and activities of those organisations and their members often overlapped.

- The Gaelic League promoted the Irish language. What other aspects of the Irish tradition did they encourage? (music, dance, mythologies, training teachers in Irish)

IN THE MUSEUM

- Find other objects in the *Proclaiming a Republic* exhibition, which relate to the Gaelic League and its members, for example:
 - » Typewriter featuring Gaelic lettering
 - » Patrick Pearse’s spectacles
 - » Éamonn Ceannt’s traditional style Piper’s tunic
- There were many cultural, political and military organisations in Ireland in 1915, promoting different goals. Why might you

have joined

- » The Gaelic League
- » The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)
- » The Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB)
- » The British Army to fight in World War One? **Where did their goals overlap?**

ACTIVITY

- Use the touchscreen with The Politics Quiz in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition to discover with which group or political cause you may have identified with in 1916.
 - » The touchscreen is to your left upon entering the exhibition.

RESOURCES

ONLINE

The original art work for the poster was made in crayons on brown paper and copies were then printed from this, including a similar poster kept at the National Library:

<http://www.nli.ie>

First World War Recruitment posters and suggested activities can be found on the website of the Imperial War Museum (UK):
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources/first-world-war-recruitment-posters>

READING

Morris, Ewan, *Our Own Devices*. National Symbols and Political Conflict in Twentieth-Century Ireland, Irish Academic Press: Dublin, Portland 2005. pp. 20-26.