

4.0 The seven members of the Provisional Government

4.3 Thomas MacDonagh

Thomas MacDonagh, member of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic and commandant of the 2nd Battalion of the Irish Volunteers.

Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916) was born in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, the son of Joseph MacDonagh and Mary Parker, both of whom were teachers. He was educated at Rockwell College near Cashel, Co. Tipperary, where he spent seven years training for the priesthood.

On leaving Rockwell, MacDonagh worked as a teacher at St Kieran's College, Kilkenny (1901-3) and at St Colman's College, Fermoy, Co. Cork (1903-8). During this time he joined the Gaelic League, which first introduced him to nationalist ideals. To improve his fluency in Irish he visited the Aran Islands, where he first met Patrick Pearse. When Pearse opened St Enda's in 1908, MacDonagh joined the sta? as assistant head teacher. While teaching full-time, MacDonagh also studied part-time at University College, Dublin, graduating as BA in 1910; the following year he gained the degree of MA for his thesis, 'Thomas Campion and the Art of Poetry' (published in 1913). Also in 1911, he was appointed lecturer in English at UCD.

Meanwhile, MacDonagh was developing his talents as a poet, his first volume, Through the Ivory Gate, being published at his own expense in 1902; it was followed by further volumes including his most accomplished work Lyrical Poems (1913). He also wrote three plays; When The Dawn is Come had an Irish insurrection as its theme; and Pagans contrasted

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the conventional with the bohemian. In addition, he contributed articles to various journals, including The Nation and The Leader, establishing a reputation for himself in Dublin literary and theatrical circles.

He was also active on other fronts. He was an enthusiastic member of the National Literary Society, and in 1909 he was a founding member of the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland. He was also a founding member of the literary monthly Irish Review (1911), which he edited jointly for a period. Believing in the need for a theatre devoted to the drama of realism (as an alternative to the romanticism of the Abbey Theatre), in 1914 MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett and Edward Martyn established the Irish Theatre in Hardwicke Street.

MacDonagh was always politically aware: he was active in the Irish Women's Franchise League set up in 1911, and he was a member of the Dublin Industrial Peace Committee during the 1913 labour dispute. He joined the Irish Volunteers on their formation in November 1913, becoming a member of the provisional committee and taking part in the Howth gun-running. He also wrote 'The Marching Song of the Irish Volunteers'. In March 1915 he became commandant of the 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Brigade. At this time he believed that Irish freedom would be achieved by what he called 'zealous martyrs', hopefully through peace but if necessary by war. Although a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood from April 1915, he was not co-opted to the Military Council until early April 1916, and so had little part in planning the arrangements for the Rising. He is believed, however, to have contributed to the content of the Proclamation.

As one of the four Dublin battalion commandants, he took an active part in the Rising, being in charge at Jacobs' biscuit factory in Bishop Street. His two most senior olders were Major John MacBride and Michael O'Hanrahan, a close personal friend. Mainly because of its location in a densely built-up area providing no easy approach, Jacob's was not directly assaulted. When Pearse's surrender order reached the garrison on Sunday, MacDonagh and his men were initially reluctant to comply.

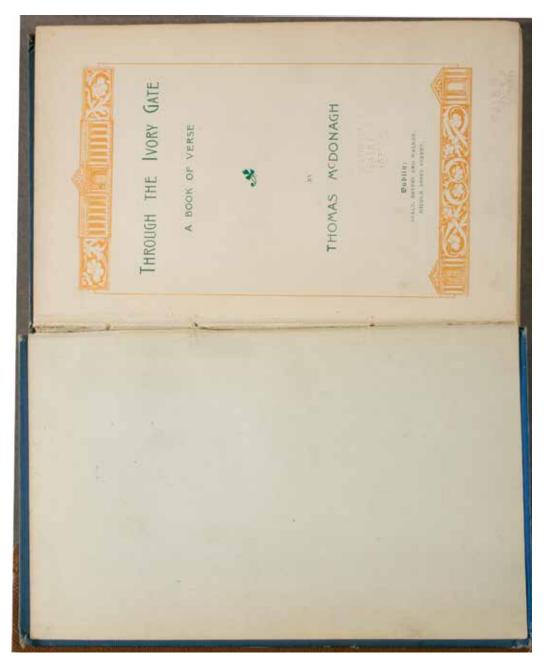
Thomas MacDonagh was tried by court-martial and executed by firing squad in Kilmainham Jail on 3 May. He was survived by his wife Muriel Gifford and his children Donagh and Barbara.

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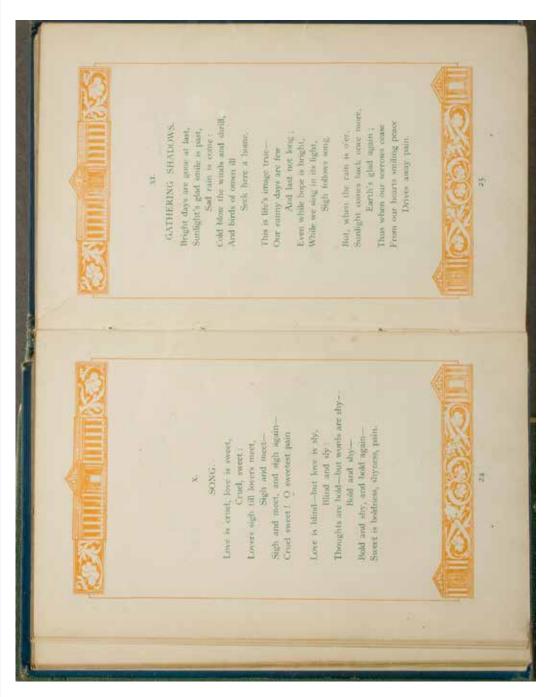
Thomas MacDonagh.



Pages from MacDonagh's first collection of poems which was published in 1902.

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Thomas MacDonagh



Pages from MacDonagh's first collection of poems which was published in 1902.

4.3

Thomas MacDonagh

a Matriculated Student of that University, has, on his application, pursuant to Soction 13 (3), Irish Universities Act (1908), been this day registered as a who at the time of the Dissolution of the late Royal University of Ireland was The Unitersity of Ireland. Registrar. Matriculated Student of the National University of Ireland, THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT. C. LOTING Dated 10-54.

Certificate from the National University. (Ms. 10,855).

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Agreement between Edward Martyn, MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett concerning the establishment of the Irish Theatre, 30 June 1914. (Ms. 17,301).

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Agreement between Edward Martyn, MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett concerning the establishment of the Irish Theatre, 30 June 1914. (Ms. 17,301).

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Agreement between Edward Martyn, MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett concerning the establishment of the Irish Theatre, 30 June 1914. (Ms. 17,301).

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Agreement between Edward Martyn, MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett concerning the establishment of the Irish Theatre, 30 June 1914. (Ms. 17,301).

4.3 | Thomas MacDonagh

Transcript

An agreement for the foundation and maintenance of a partnership made this 30th day of June 1914 between Edward Martyn of Tulira of the first part, Thomas MacDonagh of Woodlands, Fairview of the second part and Joseph Plunkett of 17 Marlboro Road, Donnybrook of the third part.

Whereas the aforesaid parties are desirous of establishing a partnership for the production of plays in the city of Dublin upon the terms hereinafter set forth, now it is hereby agreed as follows:

 A partnership is hereby established for the production in the city of Dublin of the plays of three classes, namely: (1) Plays in the Irish language,
(2) Plays, other than peasant plays by Irish authors, and (3) Plays translated from foreign languages.

2. The name of the partnership shall be The Irish Theatre.

3. Messrs Edward Martyn, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett shall be the partners. The term of the partnership shall be the calendar year, beginning the 1st day of July 1914.

4. The partners shall have complete control of the enterprise and all business connected therewith.

5. They shall chose the plays to be performed, but any one partner shall have a veto on the production of any play.

6. Outside the routine business of the partnership as initiated at the commencement by the partners nothing shall be done by the managing partner without the sanction and approval of the partners voting together.

7. Mr Joseph Plunkett, one of the partners shall place at the disposal of the partnership for the calender year beginning the 1st July, 1914, his house in Hardwicke Street Dublin consisting of a hall and rooms, known as the Hardwicke Street Theatre, and shall execute a written lease of the same for one year, at a pepper-corn rent, to the partners. He shall supply the hall as it stands with its present furniture and fittings. He shall be responsible for upkeep of the house as it at present stands. He shall keep the same in good repair, and the lease above mentioned shall contain a clause to that effect.

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8. Mr Joseph Plunkett shall supply and pay the wages of the caretaker, who shall act as door-keeper and the like at ordinary times, when the hall is not actually being used for performances.

9. All improvements which in the opinion of the partners shall be necessary to fit the hall for the production of plays shall be at the expense of Mr Edward Martyn, who shall have a veto on the execution of any such improvements.

10. The expense of lighting the hall and rooms for rehearsals and performances shall be paid by Mr Edward Martyn.

11. Mr Edward Martyn shall bear all the expenses of management. He shall on the last day of each of the twelve calendar months, beginning the 31st July 1914 and ending the 30th June 1915, pay to the managing partner

Mr Thomas MacDonagh, the sum of twelve pounds and ten shillings (£12-10-0). Mr Thomas MacDonagh shall thereupon repay all residual and managerial expenses, save such expenses as are provided for by articles 12 and 13 hereof.

12. Mr Martyn shall pay for stationary and stamps, advertisements, theatre programmes and necessary general printing, accounts to be furnished by the managing partner and duly audited.

13. Mr Martyn shall bear all the expenses of the production of the plays by the partnership.

14. All monies received by the partnership, from any source whatever, shall be placed to the account of Mr Edward Martyn at his bank within one week of the receipt thereof.

15. Mr Thomas MacDonagh one of the partners, shall act as managing partner of The Irish Theatre during the term of this agreement.

16. Mr Thomas MacDonagh may appoint, and pay out of the money received by him as provided by article 11 hereof, a secretary and manager to assist him in conducting the business of The Irish Theatre. The appointment and dismissal of such secretary and manager and the terms of such appointment to be absolutely in Mr MacDonagh's hands.

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17. Mr Thomas MacDonagh, as managing partner, shall be responsible for the rehearsal and production of all the plays chosen for production by the partners.

18. Mr Thomas MacDonagh shall be responsible for supplying a company of actors and actresses to fill the roles in all the plays, but shall not be responsible for the payment of any salary to the same.

19. The details of this agreement shall not be disclosed without the permission of each of the partners.

20. There shall be, unless the partner otherwise by agreement decide fifty (50) performances of plays during the term of the agreement, namely five per month for ten months, September 1914 to June 1915, inclusive.

21. The terms of admission of the public as of any other persons to the performances shall be fixed by the partners.

22. The partners shall on the 31st March 1915 or within one week thereof state to each other in writing whether they are willing to enter into an agreement of partnership substantially similar in terms to these present to continue for a further year.

23. It is agreed that of the total number of plays in the English language, original or translated, produced by the partnership during the ten months, September 1914 to June 1915, at least one half shall be plays written by Mr Edward Martyn, if so many be available and approved by the partners.

24. The accounts of the partnership shall be audited at the end of the term by an independent accountant to be selected by Mr Edmund Martyn and Mr Joseph Plunkett. Any liabilities then found due, same as heretofore provided for shall be borne by and any profits shall be placed to the credit of Mr Edmund Martyn.

Dated this 3rd day of June 1914. Edmund Martyn, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett

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Thomas MacDonagh

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Drafts of a poem by MacDonagh. (Ms. 1645).

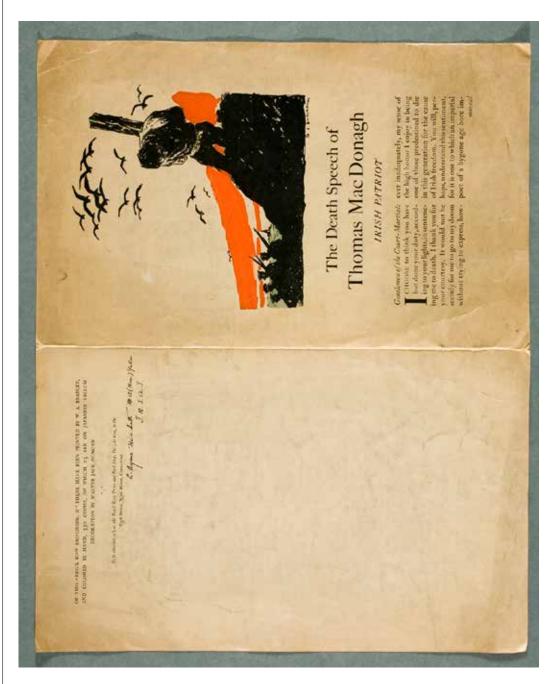
4.3 Thomas MacDonagh

R14-274. THE MATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND. 49 Merrion Square, Dublin, Devember 2nd., 1914. Sir. I beg to state that the Standing Committee at its Meeting on December 1st., 1914, appointed you Assistant Examiner in English...... for the Matriculation Examinations of the year 1915. I beg to inform you that the Senate at its Meeting on February §7th., 1914 adopted the following resolutions:-That the rate of pay of Acsistant Examiners at the Matriculation Examination should be raised from 1s. for the reading of a three hours paper or 6d. for the reading of a half-section of such a paper to 2s.5d. for an entire paper or 1s.3d. for a half-section. "(a) That the Senior Examiner should read the work of at least twenty candidates, and where the total number of candidates answering upon the paper does not exceed 30, should read the work of all the candidates; the work read by the Senior Examiner not to be re-read by the Assistant Examiner. (8) In the case of the subject "English" the Standing Committee having appointed three Assistant Examiners for the Matriculation Examinations of the year 1915, has directed that the total remuneration to be paid to the three Assistant Examiners shall be the same as if only two Assistant Examiners had been appointed." Kindly let me know by return whether you accept the above appointment. Faithfully yours. JOSEPH M'GRATH, Registrur. Thomas he Donagh how

Appointment of MacDonagh as an examiner for matriculation examinations, 2 Dec. 1914. (Ms. 10,855, MacDonagh Papers).

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Thomas MacDonagh



An undated American edition of MacDonagh's speech to the court-martial. The imagery echoes the legendary Cú Chulainn who tied himself to a pillar so that he would die standing. (Proclamations).

Thomas MacDonagh

4.3

[3]

A MEMBER OF THE COURT, YOU speak of Britain as our imperial patron?

THE PRISONER. Yes, for some of you are Irishmen.

A MEMBER OF THE COURT. And what of your imperial patron; what of Germany?

THE PRISONER. Not if Germany had violated and despoiled my country and persisted in withholding her birthright of freedom.

THE PRESIDENT. Better not interrupt the prisoner. [The prisoner bound.]

There is not much left to say. The proclamation of the Irish Republic has been adduced in evidence against me as one of the signatories; you think it already a dead and buried letter, but it lives, it lives. From minds alight with Ireland's vivid intellect it sprang. In hearts afiame with Ireland's mighty love it was conceived. Such documents do not die

The British occupation of Ireland has never for more than one hundred years been compelled to confront in the field of fight a rising so formidable as that which overwhelming forces have for the moment succeeded in quelling. This rising did not result from accidental cir-cumstances. It came in due recurrent season as the necessary outcome of forces that are ever at work. The fierce pulsation of resurgent pride that dis-claims servitade may one day cease to keynote of whose nature chimes har-throb in the heart of Ireland—but the monitously with the swan song of my heart of Ireland will that day be dead, soul. It is the great Florentine, whose While Ireland lives, the brains and weapon was not the sword, but prayer brawn of her manhood will strive to and preaching. The seed he sowed destroy the last vestige of British rule in her territory. In this ceaseless struggle there will be, as there has been and must the sacred soil of Ireland. I die in the be, an alternate ebb and flow. But let certainty that once more the seed will England make no mistake. The gener- fructify.

mortal testimony: "'T is sweet and glorious to die for one's country." You would all be proud to die for Britain, your imperial patron, and I am proud and happy to die for Ireland, my glori-ous fatherland. but they must do or die. It will be said that our movement was

doomed to failure. It was proved so. Yet it might have been otherwise. There is always a chance of success for brave men who challenge fortune. That we had such a chance none knows so well as your statesmen and military experts. The mass of the people of Ireland will doubtless lull their consciences to sleep for another generation by the exploded fable that Ireland cannot successfully

faile that fream cannot successfully fight England. We do not profess to represent the mass of the people of Ireland. We stand for the intellect and the soul of Ireland. To Ireland's soul and intellect the inert mass, drugged and degenerated by ages of aervitude, must in the distant day of resurrection, render homage and free service-receiving in return the vivify-ing impress of a free people.

Gentlemen, you have sentenced me to death, and I accept your sentence with joy and pride, since it is for Ireland I am to die I go to join the goodly company of the men who died worthier far than I can claim to be, and that noble band are themselves but a small section of the great unnumbered army of martyrs whose captain is the Christ who died on Calvary. Of every

white-robed knight in all that goodly company we are the spiritual kin. The forms of heroes fit before my vis-ion, and there is one the star of whose and preaching. The seed he sowed fructifies to this day in God's church. Take me away and let my blood bedew

An undated American edition of MacDonagh's speech to the court-martial. The imagery echoes the legendary Cú Chulainn who tied himself to a pillar so that he would die standing. (Proclamations).

4.3 | Thomas MacDonagh

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Autograph manuscript of Francis Ledwidge's poem in memory of Thomas MacDonagh. Ledwidge gave it to his friend Lord Dunsany who presented it to MacDonagh's son Donagh in 1940. A former member of the Irish Volunteers, Ledwidge was killed in action in Belgium on 31 July 1917. Lord Dunsany was a captain in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers at the time of the Rising and was wounded in the Church Street area near the Four Courts on the Tuesday of Easter Week. (Ms. 15,542).

Networking 1916 The 1916 Rising: Personalities and Perspectives

4.3 Thomas MacDonagh

Transcript

Thomas McDonagh

He shall not hear the bittern cry In the wild sky, where he is lain, Nor voices of the sweeter birds Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud march blows Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill, Blowing to flame the golden cup Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the Dark Cow leaves the moor, And pastures poor with greedy weeds, Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn Lifting her horn in pleasant meads