

Irish Women Rise in 1916

The political role of women in the early twentieth century may have been restricted to providing support but Cumann na mBan paved the way for women to gain more political influence in the Irish government. Cumann na mBan held their first official meeting at Wynn's hotel in Dublin. Nationalist in outlook, its aims centered on arming Irish men and presenting a united Irish opposition to English rule.

With members such as Mary and Muriel MacSwiney, Kathleen Clarke, Mabel Fitzgerald and Countess Markievicz, Cumann na mBan reflected nationalist Ireland and played a crucial role in the politics of the time. Members were invaluable in gathering intelligence, transporting arms, nursing wounded men, providing safe houses, and organizing support for IRA men in prison.

In 1922 the organization overwhelmingly rejected the Anglo Irish Treaty.

The Free State Government's awareness of Cumann na mBan's assistance to the IRA after the 1916 Rising resulted in large-scale imprisonment of republican women during the Civil War. But Cumann na mBan had placed equality for women on the political agenda and demonstrated women could be as politically active and capable as men.



*Ladies' Ancient Order of Hibernians Inc.
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