PART I MüScAILT (AWAKENING)

- Boer War: As a first instance of the historical interest of film there is a sequence on the Boer War by Dr. R.A. Mitchell of Belfast. President Paul Kruger is seen entering his carriage to drive to the Volksraad.

Action shots during the South African campaign are by Joseph Rosenthal working for the Warwick Trading Co. From a technical point of view, they are among the most interesting in the film, their sophistication remaining unequalled for 15 years. They were found among material preserved by Cumann na Scannáin (The Irish Film Society). We see British troops in training, Gordon Highlanders, British cavalry, and infantry in operation. There is a reference to General Sir George White of Co. Antrim. His son Jack was there too, but a decade later Jack was prominent in a very different role, drilling the Irish Citizen Army—shots in Mise Éire show the precision of his training.

- Queen Victoria paid her third State visit to Dublin on 7th April 1900. The newsreel by Cecil Hepworth in Mise Éire gives the impression of an overwhelmingly loyal populace, but there were events which his camera missed. Dublin Corporation refused to present her with a loyal address. A manifesto against the tyranny of the monarchy was issued by James Connolly and Maud Gonne founded a women's organisation, Inghinidhe na h-Eireann, to stage a counter-attraction for the city's young women.

- Conradh na Gaeilge: During this period, too, a number of sparks had been lit which were later to unite into one great conflagration. In 1893, Douglas Hyde, a scholar who was to become President of his country, founded Conradh na Gaeilge (the Gaelic League), which called on all Irishmen, irrespective of their religious or political affiliations, to help to preserve the Irish language. As editor of its journal, Conradh na Gaeilge employed a young barrister of Anglo-Irish parentage, Patrick Pearse. Educationist, poet, visionary and soldier he was to proclaim the Irish Republic under arms and become for succeeding generations the embodiment of the rising of Easter Week.

- Gaelic Athletic Association: The GAA was founded in 1884—partly to combat the recruitment to the British Army which often accompanied sport in Ireland, and was building up a national spirit throughout the country and was sometimes used as a cover for IRB activities.

- Sinn Féin: In 1900 Arthur Griffith, a Dublin journalist later returned from South Africa where he had written in defence of the Boers, founded, along with others, a movement named Cumann na nGaedheal the hard core of which developed in 1905 into Sinn Féin. Griffith's idea was a dual monarchy for Ireland and England following a pattern established between Hungary and Austria, the withdrawal of Irish Members from Westminster and the development of national self-reliance and economic independence. The first parliamentary election contested by Sinn Féin was in Leitrim in 1908 when the Sinn Féin candidate C.J. Dolan was defeated by S.F. Meehan of the Irish Party by almost 2,000 votes.

- In the industrial North, James Larkin, founder of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, and later Connolly, were uniting Catholic and Protestant workers in a solidarity never achieved since.

- In Dublin, the flickering revolutionary flame was being tended by a Dungannon tradesman Thomas Clarke, defiant and inflexible in his revolutionary faith after 15 savage years in English prisons. He was released in 1898, having been sentenced in 1883 on explosives charges. He was now working in the IRB, unbearably guiding events towards a new resurgence. Mise Éire features the only known film of Clarke—there is no indication of where it was taken.

- But these stirrings beneath the surface were unperceived by the great mass of the people who were pleased to live quiet lives, and to place their political trust in the Westminster Irish Party, glad that the King's representative, Lord Aberdeen, and indeed his wife, were interested in the welfare of Ireland.

- There are references to the founding of Abbey Theatre and Colaiste na Mumhan, the first Irish summer college, in Ballygarvey, Co. Cork.

- The British Vice-Voy in Ireland, Lord Aberdeen and Lady Aberdeen attending the Horse Show in Dublin.

- On April 9, 1912, two days before the Home Rule Bill was introduced at Westminster, the Leader of the Conservative Party, Sir Bonar Law, attended a demonstration at Balmoral Showground, Belfast, where, with Carson and Lord Londonderry and others, he reviewed a protest parade 80,000 strong. There are dramatic shots of the scene in Mise Éire.

- Sir Edward Carson and others sign the Solemn League and Covenant against Home Rule.

- Sir Edward Carson reviews Ulster Volunteers accompanied by Lord and Lady Londonderry and Sir Reginald Carew. Coverage of the Ulster Volunteers in Mise Éire highlights their splendid equipment, uniforms and weapons, in contrast with their compatriots in the south. The film is taken mainly by Gordon Lewis, the most famous of Irish cameramen of his time; he died in 1945.

- Sir Edward Carson inspecting an ambulance unit of the Ulster Volunteers.

- Viceroy Lord Aberdeen, Lady Aberdeen and Chief Secretary, Augustine Birrell, attending a Civic Exhibition in Dublin.

- The Asgard. Erskine Childers and Darrell Figgis bought 1,500 rifles and 49,000 rounds in Hamburg for Irish Volunteers. The Asgard lands at Howth on July 26 1914 (with Mrs Erskine Childers and Mary Spring-Rice on board).

- Funeral of Bachelor's Walk victims. Townspeople, exhilarated at the news of the gun-running, jeered and stoned the military who fired into a crowd at Bachelor's Walk. Many were injured and two men and a woman died. Note Labour leader James Larkin marching in parade (recognisable by large black hat and great height) and Countess Markievicz driving at the head of Cumann na mBun.

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- John Redmond M.P., leader of Irish Parliamentary Party, addresses Irish Volunteer meeting in Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow. Redmond advocated support for Allied cause which led to division in Irish Volunteers.

- Lord Aberdeen recalled to London. Succeeded as Viceroy by Lord Wimborne.


- O'Donovan Rossa funeral 1915: In the whole of Mise Éire there is scarcely a shot more dramatic than a close-up of the lying-in-state of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Born in 1831, he was sworn into the Fenian organisation by James Stephens who is seen earlier in the film. O'Donovan Rossa became the most vigorous organiser in the country and in 1865 was condemned to penal servitude for life on a charge of treason felony. Under pressure of public opinion, in 1871 was released and deported to America.
PART II ÉIRÍ AMACH (RISING)

- The Rising 1916: On the morning of Easter Monday, April 24, Dublin’s streets were thronged with carefree bank holiday crowds, many of them on their way to Fairyhouse races—a holiday newsreel in Mise Éire was taken at 11.25am, just 35 minutes before the Tricolour was raised over the General Post Office and Ireland was proclaimed a republic.
- The taking of cinematograph shots during the fighting was banned by military order but some were taken unofficially by the British War Office and others were taken clandestinely. Gordon Lewis was one of the principal cameramen at work during the week. A selection of both are included in the film.
- Irish Volunteers are shown marching towards the city.
- British troops move in from Curragh Camp, Trinity College taken over as headquarters of British forces.
- Sequence on Rising up to surrender order signed by Patrick Pearse.
- Prisoners of war: Countess Markievicz and Michael Mallin; Eoin MacNeill.
- Sequence of devastation suffered by Dublin city; then on to recovery and beginning of reconstruction.
- Lord Wimborne recalled to London.
- Sequence on execution of the fifteen leaders of the Rising, beginning with Patrick Pearse, Thomas McDonagh, Thomas Clarke and ending with James Connolly and Sean Mac Diarmada.
- Irish Volunteer prisoners being led off to internment in Britain. They left a forlorn silent city with no fanfares, no farewells. The revolution was over. It was the end.

PART III FAINNE AN LAE (DAYBREAK)

But it was not the end. It was the beginning. The fires of Dublin had spread and the Fenian spirit was set alight through the country. The English Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, noticed the change at once. Following a visit to Dublin and interviews with prisoners, he foresaw that British supremacy was doomed to disappear and on May 25, 1916 he announced that there must be a new settlement for Ireland. Moreover, Irish influence was strong in America and the Allies were in desperate need of American intervention in the war. The prisoners became an increasing embarrassment to the British Government and at Christmas, 600 internees were released from Frongoch and from Reading Jail.

- Further sequence on Irish units in Great War in France.
- Irish-Canadian Officers visit Cardinal Logue at St. Patrick’s Cathedral Armagh—on their way to France.
- North Roscommon by-election, February 1917: Sinn Féin candidate, Count Plunkett wins.
- 1917: Release of Irish Volunteer prisoners.

One of the most significant passages in Mise Éire brings to life the full drama of the contrast: the prisoners’ departure, friendless, weary, defeated, and the splendid vindication of their return. Across the years, the tremendous upsurge of national fervour which greeted them strikes from the screen with the impact of a dumbstruck.

On the morning of June 18, delirious crowds, who had kept vigil through the night, waited at Westland Row Railway Station and the men from the jail got a hero’s welcome as they surged through streets to Fleming’s Hotel, Belvedere Place.

In the evening, Countess Markievicz, freed from Aylesbury Prison, got an equally tumultuous reception and ovation in her triumphant progress through the city to Liberty Hall where she addresses a large gathering. The tide was flowing strongly and carrying with it an entire people.

- Clare By-Election, July 1917: Election of Eamon de Valera. Also visible in the sequence are Arthur Griffith and Count Plunkett.
- The Irish Convention (1917-1918) was established by the British Government to foster understanding. Film of those who attended includes Dr Mahaffy (Provo of Trinity College), Lord Middleton, John Redmond M.P., Horace Plunkett, AE (George Russell), Erskine Childers and Joe Devlin of Belfast.

- Kilkenny By-Election, August 1917: W.T. Cosgrave elected by two to one majority.

- Funeral of Thomas Ashe: Irish Volunteer officer who died from forced feeding in Mountjoy Jail while on hunger strike (25 September 1917). Larry O’Neill, Lord Mayor of Dublin offers his condolences. His body, dressed in uniform, lay in state at the City Hall, guarded by uniformed volunteers and 30,000 people followed his remains to Glasnevin. Michael Collins is seen at the graveside delivering the famous oration which followed the three bursts of rifle fire: ‘Nothing additional remains. That volley which we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian.’

- Following the funeral, Irish Volunteers assemble in Smithfield, Dublin.

- Sinn Féin Convention—October 1917

While Lloyd George’s convention had ended without success, preparations were now going forward for the real parliament of the country, the 10th Sinn Féin convention. Sinn Féin’s 1,200 clubs sent 1,700 delegates to the Mansion House on October 25 and there they denied the right of the British Parliament and the Crown to legislate for Ireland and resolved to render impotent the power of England to hold Ireland in subjection by military force. In order to avoid a split in the movement, Arthur Griffith, the
founder of Sinn Féin and its president for six years, stood down and proposed Eamon de Valera. He was unanimously chosen as leader with Griffith and Fr O’Flanagan, who had been prominent in Sinn Féin election campaigns, as vice-presidents. Austin Stack and Darrel Figgis were secretaries, Cosgrave and Ginnell treasurers and among the executive were Eoin MacNeill and Collins.

- **Limerick Commemoration of the Manchester Martyrs**, November 1917, organised by Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan. Austin Stack can be seen.

- Further sequence on Irish units in British army in the trenches in France

- **Armagh By-Election**
  Unionist candidate, Mr Richardson, withdrew leaving contest to Sinn Féin and Irish Parliamentary Party. Shots of Darrel Figgis, Honorary Secretary of Sinn Féin, in Armagh; Eamon de Valera electioneering; Larry Ginnell M.P. (Co. Meath) Countess Markievicz and Eamon de Valera electioneering. Election won by P Donnelly, Irish Parliamentary candidate.

- **Conscription**
  British Government seeks to impose conscription in Ireland. Shots of Cardinal Logue and other Bishops emerging from a meeting of the Hierarchy in Maynooth, from which strong anti-conscription statement was issued. Massive anti-conscription public campaign organised. Citizens sign anti-conscription pledge.

- **Military Commander Lord French** appointed Viceroy. Signal indicating more forceful approach on part of British Government.

- **Fr. Michael O’Flanagan**, Vice-President of Sinn Féin, prominent public figure at the time.

- Rumours of ‘**German Plot**’, 73 Sinn Féin leaders, including Eamon de Valera and other prominent supporters rounded up and interned.

- **November 1918: Great War ends and a General Election announced**
  On November 11 the Great War ended, a war in which at least 49,000 Irishmen had died. The British parliament was dissolved and a general election announced.

  This would be the people’s opportunity to give their final answer to the men who took the decision to rise in 1916—and Sinn Féin’s election manifesto was unambiguous: its aim was a sovereign Irish Republic.

  From newsreel coverage of the campaign comes some of the most striking personality shots in **Mise Eire**, those of Michael Collins, the candidate for Cork and Armagh constituencies. Sequence on Collins seen arriving in Armagh; being driven through streets to election meetings; addressing a large meeting in a field outside the city.

  Polling day in the General Election was December 14 and the result was a landslide victory for Sinn Féin. Of 105 successful candidates, 73 were republican, 26 Unionist and six Irish Party.

  The people had given their verdict. The Irish Party’s leader, John Dillon, lost his seat in Mayo to Eamon de Valera. For the Irish Party, it was not so much a defeat as a rout.

  For the men who died in 1916, it was a triumphant vindication.

  In the fortunes of the nation, it was spring tide.

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