

# History Project

Years 1912-1923

My great granant was Margaret Buckley Goulding.

She was an independent socialist, suffragist and Republican woman who began her long and lustrous career of activism and politics as the president of the Cork chapter of Inghinidhe na hEirean before the organization merged with Cumann Na mBan. Later as a married woman she became a prominent organizer of the Irish Women's Workers Union and eventually returned to her role as President, but the next time she did it as the head of a newly revamped Sinn Fein.

Between her two presidencies she was arrested in the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising and jailed. When she was released under amnesty in 1917 she led a quieter life for about 3 years while she cared for her dying father. After his death she returned to Dublin and became a District Court judge. She was tossed into the clink again for rejecting the Anglo-Irish Treaty where she became the OC of the female republican prisoners in Mountjoy prison. She took care of the other Republican woman and always had the courage to speak out on their behalf. While imprisoned she went on hunger strike to protest their treatment and the conditions they were forced into at the prison.

Upon her release in 1923, she became an active member of the Women Prisoners Defence League founded by Maud Gonne and a member of Sinn Fein, as well as a lot of other organizations. Eventually Sinn Fein named her as President, thus marking her the first female leader of an Irish political party at the time. As leader and as a woman, she opposed many edicts that Eamon De Valera was putting forth. She remained a fiery suffragist and when she was heckled at a meeting regarding the Constitution he was formulating, she retorted with "If I were dealing with the Constitution I would have something to say about De Valera's treating the women of this country as half-wits."

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