New book shines fresh light on fight for independence

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LAST year marked the launch of a major event in Irish history, commemorating the centenary of the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence. The story of these two conflicts is well known, but the latest publication in this anniversary year is about to come to the market. It is entitled "John Joe's Story" and it deals with the life and work of John Joe O'Brien of Galway and later of Tipperary and Dublin.

John Joe was born in Mitchelstown in 1877, the youngest of five children born to William and Bridget O'Brien. When John Joe was still very young, his father died and his mother took over the huge family. They lived in Galway where they opened a drapery shop and a public house. The story of Galway and its hinterland had a strong tradition of feminism and it was in this environment that John Joe grew up.

In 1914 when he was only seventeen years of age, John Joe O'Brien was arrested in Galway on charges of high treason. He was accompanied by Bridget O'Brien, who had been involved in the 1916 Rising. When the trial came to court, the police were unable to produce any evidence against John Joe. However, the trial was continued and John Joe was convicted of high treason and sentenced to death. He was later released on appeal.

When the War of Independence broke out in 1919, John Joe was one of the leaders of the War of Independence. He was a member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and was involved in many of the major battles of the war. He was arrested multiple times and was eventually released after serving just over two years in prison.

After the War of Independence, John Joe returned to his public life in Galway. He opened a drapery shop and later became a politician. He was elected to the Dáil Éireann (the Irish Parliament) for the Galway constituency in 1922 and served as a member of the Dáil until 1932.

John Joe O'Brien died in 1932, but his story continues to be told in Ireland and around the world. The new book "John Joe's Story" is a valuable addition to the story of Irish history and the fight for independence.