

 [Owen O'Shea](https://owenoshea.ie/author/owenoshea/) (https://owenoshea.ie/author/owenoshea/) -  December 12, 2023 -

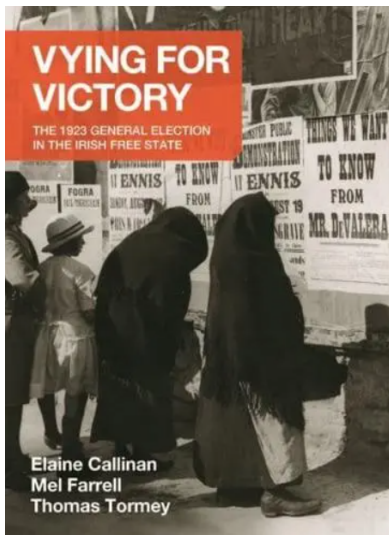
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The research of Kerry writer and historian, Owen O'Shea, features in a new book on the 1923 general election. *Vying for Victory*, edited by Elaine Callinan, Mel Farrel and Thomas Tormey, is an essential series of essays on the crucially important election of 1923, which took place just a few months after the end of the Irish Civil War.

In the new book, published by UCD Press, Owen O'Shea analyses the influence of local newspapers on the election campaign in County Kerry where the Civil War had been more divisive and violent than most of the rest of the country.

After 11 arduous months, on 24 May 1923, the guns fell silent, and the Irish Civil War finally came to an end. Twelve weeks later, all adults aged 21 or over – regardless of social status or gender – cast their vote in the State's first general election. The 1923 General Election marks the true beginning of modern Irish democracy.



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Born in blood, the new Irish Free state was set on course to become a remarkably stable democracy in the late 1920s and early 1930s, in stark contrast to the rise of dictatorships across Europe. The Irish public had an opportunity to cast their judgement on who they wanted to govern their new free state, and cast their opinion on the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, even though it had been ratified in January 1922. A record 376 candidates stood for election, so every seat was contested – another first in Irish electoral history.

Vying for Victory: The 1923 General Election in the Irish Free State unifies writings by leading scholars on various aspects of the 1923 election. It offers fresh and thought-provoking insights rooted deeply in original archival research. The Cumann na nGaedheal Party's 'safety first' election campaign; the importance of the election for Éamon de Valera; the perspectives of the Labour and Farmers' Parties; the propaganda and electioneering tactics deployed by the various parties, and newspaper coverage of the election, amongst many other areas, are all richly explored. Further this collection takes a forensic look at: the end of the Irish Civil War and the August 1923 Election in a wider European context; the Catholic Church's attitude to the election; the roles of women in the 1923 election; and the engagement of the Irish diaspora in North America.

Vying for Victory offers a deeply researched, original, and fascinating analysis of the very first democratic step of a free Irish nation. It will be a valuable resource to Irish history enthusiasts, as well as students and scholars of Irish history.

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