

Task 3a: Form groups of five students. Divide the speaking parts amongst one another. Read through the excerpt from the screenplay “Ruling Passions: The story of Roger Casement” together.

List of roles

1st person: to read the stage directions/background information

2nd person: Roger 1

3rd person: Roger 2

4th person: POW 1, POW 3

5th person: POW 2, POW 4, POW 5

Ext. Limburg. Day.

[1] Inside the prison camp compound a tightly packed group of washed-out, surly IRISH POWs¹ are shivering in their sodden British Army greatcoats. They are being mustered by GERMAN GUARDS as Roger enters with the General and the Camp COMMANDANT Major. Roger puts down his umbrella and shakes it. He looks over at them, trying hard to be official:

ROGER [1]: Good day, men. I trust you are being treated decently?

[8] There is a slight undertone of sarcastic response.

ROGER [1]: Like you, my friends, I am an Irishman...

POW 1 (under his breath): You don't fecking sound like one.

[12] One of the guards glares at him, shutting him up.

ROGER [1]: Germany is not at war with people like us... but with England. And who among you can deny that England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity? The Imperial German Government has given me its full assurance² that it desires, like us, national independence for our dear land.

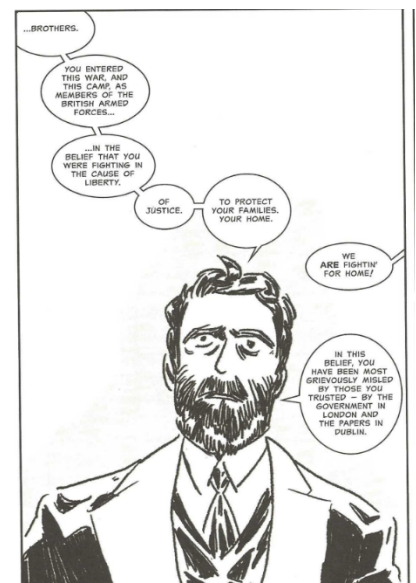


Image 8. Casement in Germany (Doran)

[18] The sweat starts to break out on Roger's brow – the recurrence of malarial fever. He tries to ignore it.

ROGER [2]: Who among you now will join me to wear the proud badge of an Irish Brigade raised for the sole purpose or returning to our shores to fight? To fight for

¹ Prisoners of war

² Versprechen/Zusicherung

neither King nor Kaiser³ but for Ourselves Alone... And to usher⁴ in, at last, a new dawn of freedom for the land we all love.

[24] There is slow hand clapping and facetious⁵ singing:

POWs (*singing*): Belgium put the kaibosh on the Kaiser
England took a stick and made him sore...⁶

ROGER [2]: I am not here to coerce⁷ you – you've been coerced enough.
I seek only willing volunteers. We are Irishmen...

POW 3: We're British soldiers...

POW 2: Soldiers of the King.

POW 1: Aye and proud of it!

[32] The mood of the crowd is becoming uglier. They are not listening to him.

POW 4: How much are they paying you, mister?

One of them pushes forward and jostles⁸ Roger.

POW 5: You fecking traitor!

ROGER [2]: Please... please...

[37] But as others surge⁹ forward, he has to pick up his umbrella and absurdly defends himself, as the Guards rush back into the room and pull Roger out of the fray.

³ King as the head of England, and the Kaiser as the monarch of Germany

⁴ einführen

⁵ scherhaft

⁶ popular British patriotic song of World War I

⁷ zwingen

⁸ anrempeIn

⁹ drängen

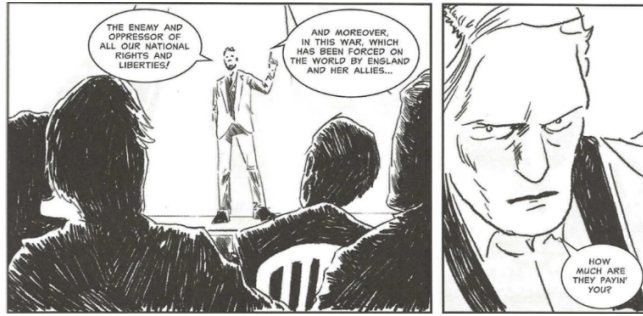


Image 9. Casement in Germany (Doran)

Task 3b: After reading the excerpt, discuss in groups between which nations/individual people there are conflicts (in a larger context, but also just looking at this particular scene). Find at least two conflicts.

Conflict 1:

Conflict 2:

Task 3c: Why do the soldiers not trust Roger Casement? Look closely at line 10-11 (“You don’t fecking sound like one”). What role do accents play?

3d: Watch the video on ‘accentism’. Answer the following questions:

1. From which regions does the video introduce accents?

2. What is the name of the Queen’s English?

3. What forms of discrimination exist? Name three examples.

4. What do people think when they hear someone with a strong regional accent?

5. What is the overall connection the video makes between regional accents and (good) jobs?

Task 3e: Work with a partner or in groups of threes. Discuss your perception of English accents. Answer the following questions:

1. Which English accents do you know?
2. Which ones do you (dis-)like? Why?
3. Which associations do you have with particular accents?