



History In-Service Team,  
Supporting Leaving Certificate History  
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Later Modern Ireland  
*Judging Dev: a selection of documents, 1913–72*

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## Introduction

De Valera is the most prominent personality in twentieth-century Irish history, with a career stretching over six decades. He played a pivotal role in the shaping of the Irish state. Central to the struggle for independence and the ensuing Civil War, he was the first Taoiseach and third president of Ireland, and drafted the 1937 Constitution. Under his leadership, Ireland remained neutral during the Second World War.

This edited set of documents is made available as part of a wide-ranging, multimedia series of resources relating to Eamon de Valera. The documents are drawn mostly from Diarmaid Ferriter's book, *Judging Dev: a reassessment of the life and legacy of Eamon de Valera* published by the Royal Irish Academy in 2007 (where they are not reproduced from the book this is noted in the source information).

The Judging Dev project comprised the book, a ten-part RTÉ radio series and an RTÉ online exhibition. At its launch in October 2007, Professor James Slevin, President of the Royal Irish Academy, said, 'The Judging Dev project is timely because 2007 is the 70th anniversary of the Irish Constitution as well as being the 125th anniversary of Eamon de Valera's birth, but also because a re-examination of Eamon de Valera's important and sometimes controversial legacy is long overdue'.

Cathal Goan, Director General of RTÉ, welcomed RTÉ's collaboration with the Royal Irish Academy and said, 'RTÉ hopes that the book, radio series and online archive exhibition will stimulate lively and widespread interest in Eamon de Valera's complex legacy'.

Through these recently released documents, students can investigate the various facets of his career, and arrive at their own judgements on his influence and his significance. The material will be invaluable in providing fresh teaching material for teachers to use at Junior Certificate, Transition Year and Leaving Certificate levels.

In using this material, teachers should be familiar with the learning outcomes associated with 'working with evidence' (Leaving Certificate History syllabus, p.12). Learning outcomes, such as the following, indicate suitable approaches: 'Identify the main strengths and limitations of different sources by asking appropriate questions relating to such aspects as the purpose for which they were produced, the motives of the person(s) who produced them, their historical context, and their relevance to the event(s) and issue(s) being studied'.

The documents are relevant to many of the elements, case studies, key personalities and key concepts associated with the Leaving Certificate History syllabus:

Leaving Certificate History, Later Modern Ireland, Topic 2:

*Movements for political and social reform, 1870–1914* [Document 1]

Leaving Certificate History, Later Modern Ireland, Topic 3:

*The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912–49* [Documents 1, 2–4, 6, 17, 23–4]

Leaving Certificate History, Later Modern Ireland, Topic 4:

*Ireland and the diaspora, 1845–1966* [Document 5]

Leaving Certificate History, Later Modern Ireland, Topic 6:

*Government, economy and society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949–89* [Documents 18 to 22]

The Junior Certificate syllabus section on 'Understanding the Modern World' requires students to study 'political developments in Ireland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century' and 'changing life-styles in Ireland in 20<sup>th</sup> century'. De Valera's career is central to the many aspects of these themes. The emphasis on the work of the historian at Junior Certificate level provides opportunities for source-based work on de Valera, incorporating the use of photographs and documents.

The RIA has produced a special website ([www.dev.ie](http://www.dev.ie)) and RTÉ Radio 1 produced a ten-part radio series, *Judging Dev*, and this is available for podcasting ([www.rte.ie/radio/judgingdev](http://www.rte.ie/radio/judgingdev)). The *Judging Dev* radio series and book are complemented by a permanent online exhibition of archive clips and stills ([www.rte.ie/libraries](http://www.rte.ie/libraries)). Further information on educational resources relating to Eamon de Valera can be found on [www.hist.ie](http://www.hist.ie).

The History In-Service Team is grateful to the Royal Irish Academy for its support and encouragement in making this material available for classroom use.

**December 2007**

## Biographical notes

### Frank Aiken

(1898–1983) IRA chief of staff, 1923, founder member of Fianna Fáil, offices included: Minister for Defence (1932–9); Minister for External Affairs (1951–4 and 1957–69).

### Thomas Ashe

(1885–1917) teacher and member of the Gaelic League, the IRB and a founding member of the Irish Volunteers. Died on hunger strike, 1917.

### Herbert Asquith

(1852–1928) British Liberal politician and barrister; Home Secretary (1892–5); Chancellor of the Exchequer (1905–8) and prime minister (1908–17). Visited Ireland after the Rising.

### Robert Barton

(1881–1975) lawyer, one of the plenipotentiaries at the Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations. Cousin of Robert Erskine Childers.

### Patrick Belton

Fianna Fáil TD for Dublin County; one of the first two Fianna Fáil TDs to enter the Dáil.

### Dan Breen

(1894–1969) Tipperary Volunteer involved in Soloheadbeg ambush. Fianna Fáil TD for Tipperary 1932–48.

### Robert Brennan

(1881–1948) Sinn Féin Director of Publicity (1918–20); Minister Plenipotentiary, Washington, 1938–47; RTÉ Director of Broadcasting (1948–9).

### C. Brooks Peters

*New York Times*’ journalist; wrote from Berlin at the outbreak of the Second World War; covered the events of Kristallnacht in November 1938; credited with helping the paper win a 1941 Pulitzer Prize.

### Cathal Brugha

(1874–1922) born Charles William St John Burgess. Active in the Rising, War of Independence and the Civil War. Wounded in action during the Civil War, dying from his wounds eleven days later.

### Roger Casement (Sir)

(1864–1916) involved in the German attempt to land guns on Banna Strand, Co. Kerry, in April 1916; found guilty of treason after trial in London; hanged in August 1916 at Pentonville Prison, London.

### (Arthur) Neville Chamberlain

(1869–1940) British Conservative politician; prime minister, 1937–40. Noted for his policy of appeasement towards Germany which resulted in the signing of the Munich Agreement in 1938.

### (Robert) Erskine Childers

(1879–1922) author; executed during the Civil War. Cousin of Robert Barton and father of the fourth president of Ireland, Erskine Childers. Secretary to Irish delegation that signed the Treaty in 1921.

### Winston Churchill

(1874–1965) politician; British prime minister, 1940–5 and 1951–5. Member of British delegation that negotiated the Anglo–Irish Treaty; he famously clashed with de Valera during the Second World War via radio broadcasts.

### Catherine (‘Kate’) Coll

(1858–1932) mother of Eamon de Valera, born Bruree, Co. Limerick, emigrated to New York, 1879.

### Michael (‘Mick’) Collins

(1890–1922) Minister for Finance, 1919; IRA Director of Intelligence, and member of the Irish delegation during the Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations. Killed in August 1922 by anti-Treaty forces.

### James Connolly

(1868–1916) socialist; founded Irish Labour Party in 1912; in response to Dublin Lockout founded Irish Citizen Army in 1913; one of the leaders of 1916 Rising; executed by firing squad.

### William T. Cosgrave

(1880–1965) upon the death of Collins, became Chairman of the Irish Provisional government in 1922. Served as the first President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, 1922–32.

### John A. Costello

(1891–1976) Attorney General, 1926–32; Fine Gael Taoiseach, 1948–51, 1954–7.

### Eamonn Duggan

(1874–1936) involved in 1916 Rising; plenipotentiary at the Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations.

### George Gavan Duffy

(1882–1951) son of Charles Gavan Duffy; barrister for Sir Roger Casement; plenipotentiary at the Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations.

**Arthur Griffith**

(1871–1922) journalist and politician; active in Gaelic League and IRB; set up first Sinn Féin party, 1907; acting President of Sinn Féin, 1919–20; plenipotentiary at Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations.

**Seán Lemass**

(1899–1971) took part in Rising and War of Independence; founder member of Fianna Fáil, 1926; Minister for Industry and Commerce, 1932–9, 1941–8, 1951–4, 1957–9; Taoiseach, 1959–66.

**David Lloyd George**

(1863–1945) British prime minister (1916–22); leader of the British delegation in the Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations, 1921.

**Lord Longford (Frank Pakenham)**

(1905–2001) politician and author; co-wrote with Thomas P. O'Neill the official biography of Eamon de Valera published in 1970.

**Seán MacDiarmada**

(1883–1916) arrested in 1915 in Tuam for giving a speech against enlisting in the British Army; upon release became one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising, after which he was executed.

**Malcolm MacDonald**

(1901–81) British Labour politician; Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1935–9; son of Ramsay MacDonald, British prime minister, 1924, 1929–31, 1931–5.

**Seán MacEntee**

(1889–1984) involved in 1916 Rising and War of Independence; supported anti-Treaty side in Civil War; founder member of Fianna Fáil, 1926; Minister for Industry and Commerce, 1939–41; Tánaiste, 1959–65.

**Eoin McNeill**

(1867–1945) co-founder of the Gaelic League; chief of staff of the Irish Volunteers; pro-Treaty.

**Joseph McGarrity**

(1874–1940) leading member of Clan na Gael; managed de Valera's 1919–20 US tour.

**John Charles McQuaid (Dr)**

(1895–1973) ordained as Holy Ghost Father, 1924; taught in Blackrock College; Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, 1940–72.

**William Norton**

(1900–63) Irish Labour Party leader, 1932–60; Tánaiste and Minister for Social Welfare, 1954–7.

**Kathleen O'Connell**

(1888–1956) assigned as personal secretary to de Valera during his USA tour, 1919; returned to Ireland in this position and remained so until her death; succeeded by her niece, Marie O'Kelly.

**Kevin O'Higgins**

(1892–1927) elected as Sinn Féin MP in 1918; pro-Treaty; formed An Garda Síochána, 1922; Minister for Home Affairs (known as Justice after 1924), 1922–7; introduced harsh measures during Civil War.

**Seán T. O'Kelly**

(1883–1966) took part in 1916 Rising; founder member of Fianna Fáil; Tánaiste, 1937–45; President of Ireland, 1945–59.

**Pádraig Pearse**

(1879–1916) teacher, poet; founded St Enda's School in 1908; one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising; executed along with his brother, Willie, and fourteen others upon its failure.

**Hanna Sheehy Skeffington**

(1877–1946) eldest daughter of David Sheehy, Irish Parliamentary Party MP; niece of Father Eugene Sheehy; Irish feminist; founder member of the Irish Women's Franchise League in 1908.

**Austin Stack**

(1879–1929) member of IRB; Sinn Féin MP, 1918–21; Sinn Féin TD, 1921–7; Secretary of State for Home Affairs, 1921–2; anti-Treaty.

**Strongbow (Richard de Clare, Second Earl of Pembroke)**

(1130–76) Norman Earl whose deal with Diarmuid MacMurrough led to the Norman invasion of Ireland.

**Joseph P. Walshe**

(1886–1956) Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1927–46; Ambassador to the Holy See 1946–54.

**Woodrow Wilson**

(1856–1924) US Democratic politician; twenty-eighth president of the US, 1913–21.

## Glossary

### ***An Claidheamh Soluis***

Nationalist newspaper published by the Gaelic League; edited from 1903 to 1909 by Pádraig Pearse.

### **Anglo-Irish Treaty**

Between Great Britain and Ireland, signed 6 December 1921; followed the War of Independence; implemented a year later; UK representatives (David Lloyd George, Lord Birkenhead, Winston Churchill, Austen Chamberlain, Sir Gordon Hewart, L. Worthington-Evans) and Irish plenipotentiaries (Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, Robert Barton, Eamonn Duggan, George Gavan Duffy, Erskine Childers as secretary).

### **Ascendancy**

Grouping of Anglican landowners, clergy, and professionals that dominated the political, economic, and social spheres of Ireland from the seventeenth to the late-nineteenth century.

### **Boland's Mills**

Cut-stone grain store, Grand Canal Street, Dublin, dating from the 1830s; occupied by battalion of Volunteers under de Valera's leadership during the 1916 Rising; mill ceased production in 2001.

### **Chippewa Indians**

One of the largest American Indian groups in North America; their original homeland lies in the northern United States (especially Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan) and southern Canada (especially Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan).

### **Civil War**

(28 June 1922–24 May 1923) conflict between pro- and anti-Treaty forces following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921.

### **Cumann na nGaedheal**

Formed by pro-Treaty Sinn Féin TDs in Dáil Éireann in Dublin on 27 April 1923; led by W.T. Cosgrave.

### ***Dublin Opinion***

Started in 1922; satirical political journal; magazine motto 'Humour Is the Safety Valve Of A Nation'; cartoons featured at one time in the *New York Times*.

### **Easter Rising**

(24 April–30 April 1916) rebellion against British rule in Ireland; organised by members of the IRB; involved Irish Volunteers, Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan; ended after six days of fighting; executions led to public support.

### **Economic War**

(1932–8) arising from Ireland's refusal to pay land annuities to Britain; UK imposed 20% import duty on Irish agricultural products; Ireland taxed coal imports; ended with settlement to UK of £10 million in 1938 and Treaty Ports returned to Ireland.

### **Emergency**

(1939–45) official term in Ireland for the Second World War; Ireland was neutral during this period. The state of emergency continued until August, 1946.

### **Free State**

(1922–37) 26-county state created by signing of Anglo-Irish Treaty; had dominion status within the British Empire.

### **Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)**

(1884 onwards) organisation which promotes Gaelic games (e.g. hurling, Gaelic football); largest and most popular sporting organisation in Ireland with some 800,000 members.

### **Gaelic League**

(1893 onwards) organisation founded to promote the use of Irish as a spoken language; founder members included Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill.

### **Great Depression**

(1929–1938) followed stock market crash in US on 29 October 1929; income, trade and revenues fell worldwide.

### ***Irish Press***

(1931–95) newspaper established by Eamon de Valera; often used as a mouthpiece for Fianna Fáil; peak circulation 200,000.

**Irish Volunteers**

(1913–19) force established in response to the Ulster Volunteers which had been created to resist Home Rule; split upon outbreak of First World War—National Volunteers supported war effort, minority Irish Volunteers opposed joining the British Army.

**League of Nations**

(1919–46) established to find peaceful solutions to disputes between nations; no military force so required larger nations to support its recommendations; largely ineffectual; precursor to United Nations.

**Marriage bar**

(1932–73) law requiring women working in the public and civil service to resign upon marriage; later reinforced by the Civil Regulations Act, 1956.

**Oath of Allegiance**

Oath sworn by TDs and senators under the 1922 Constitution; by swearing allegiance to the Constitution TDs pledged to be faithful to the crown.

**Partition**

Originally a consequence of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, the signing of the Anglo–Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921 confirmed the partition of Ireland; 6-county Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom while 26-county (Southern Ireland) Irish Free State had dominion status in the British Empire.

**Peace treaties, Paris, after the First World War**

Treaties prepared at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–20: Treaty of Versailles (Weimar Republic of Germany), Treaty of Saint-Germain (Austria), Treaty of Neuilly (Bulgaria), Treaty of Trianon, (Hungary), and the Treaty of Sèvres (The Ottoman Empire).

**Plenipotentiaries**

Person with ‘full powers’ of negotiation; term used to describe the members of the Irish delegation to the Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations.

**Sinn Féin**

(1905 onwards) original party founded by Arthur Griffith; reconstituted under de Valera’s leadership, 1917; following the Treaty split into pro- and anti-Treaty group; Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil later emerged from the split.

**Six Point Group**

(1921–83) London-based civil rights group; concerned with equality (political, occupational, moral, social, economic and legal) for women; hence the name The Six Point Group.

**Suffragettes**

Members of the women’s suffrage movement in the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century.

**Treaty Ports**

Berehaven, Cobh and Lough Swilly; deep-water ports retained by the United Kingdom following the signing of the Anglo–Irish Treaty; returned in 1938.

**War of Independence**

(January 1919–July 1921) guerrilla war against the British forces in Ireland by the IRA in support of the moves towards independence of the government of the first Dáil.

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## Biographical note on Eamon de Valera

Eamon de Valera was born Edward George Coll on 14 October 1882 in New York. His mother, Catherine Coll, was from Knockmore, Bruree, Co. Limerick, and his father, Vivion Juan de Valera, was Spanish. At a young age, he was sent home to be raised chiefly by his uncle, Edward Coll. He attended the local school before being sent to CBS, Charleville, and later to Blackrock College. He was a keen student with a particular interest in mathematics and having completed his education in 1903 was appointed Professor of Mathematics, Rockwell College, Co. Tipperary. He subsequently taught mathematics at various colleges including Carysfort Teacher Training College and Maynooth.

In 1908, he joined the Gaelic League, and while taking Irish lessons fell in love with his teacher, Sinéad (Jane) Flanagan, whom he married in 1910. He and Sinéad went on to have seven children, one of whom, Brian, died tragically in a horse-riding accident in 1936.

Having read an article in *An Claidheamh Soluis* in November 1913, he attended a meeting where he enrolled in the Irish Volunteers. This moment radicalised him, and during the Rising he was Commandant of the garrison at Boland's Mills. In the trial following his capture, he was sentenced to death but was reprieved under contentious circumstances. Owing to the executions following the Rising, he was then one of the most senior leaders of the republican independence movement. Following imprisonment in Britain, he was released in June 1917 and was persuaded to stand as a Sinn Féin candidate in the 1918 East-Clare by-election in which he was elected. In October 1917, he became President of Sinn Féin but was arrested in May 1918 during an anti-conscription campaign and again imprisoned. Arthur Griffith, his deputy, maintained the momentum of the independence movement; Dáil Éireann declared independence on 21 January 1919.

In February 1919, he made a daring escape from Lincoln Jail and that April was elected President of the Irish Republic by the Dáil. In June 1919, he went to the USA to raise the profile of the Irish Republic, and badly needed funds. He returned in December 1920. On 11 July 1921, a truce was declared between the IRA and British forces. Upon agreeing to a peace conference with Lloyd George, rather than attending himself, de Valera sent plenipotentiaries instead. When the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed on 6 December 1921, de Valera was outraged at the terms. Ireland would remain in the British Empire and its politicians would have to take an Oath of Allegiance. The debates on the Treaty, which followed in the Dáil, were heated. De Valera was continually questioned about his 'Irishness' and those who signed the Treaty were labelled 'traitors'. On 7 January 1922, the Treaty's terms were approved by 7 votes (64 for, 57 against). De Valera resigned as president and he and his followers staged a walkout.

The pro-Treaty TDs formed a provisional government with Griffith as president. A majority of the IRA was against the Treaty and this group became known as the Irregulars, a section of which under Rory O'Connor set up its headquarters in the Four Courts on 13 April 1922. On 28 June, in the first act of the Civil War, Free State forces bombarded the building with British shells. The more organised Free State Army took control and the war itself was virtually over by December. On 7 February 1923, de Valera was arrested and interned and on 24 May, the IRA enacted a ceasefire.

In 1926, de Valera founded Fianna Fáil and in the June 1927 general election Fianna Fáil won 44 seats and following some prevarication, de Valera signed the Oath of Allegiance, and entered the Dáil. Over the next five years he nurtured the new party, and in 1931, founded the *Irish Press*. In the 1932 election, the first Fianna Fáil government was elected. His party held power for the next sixteen years during which time he served as president of the Executive Council (until 1937 and as Taoiseach thereafter) and also as Minister for External Affairs. In 1932, he began the Economic War with Britain, by withholding land annuities. Owing to concerns for the security of the state, he declared the IRA illegal in 1936. He drafted the new Irish Constitution, which was narrowly ratified by the Dáil in 1937. The following year, with the help of British Dominions Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, he negotiated the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which secured the return of the Treaty Ports and ended the Economic War. Seeing the hostilities in Europe develop, on 19 February 1939, he declared for neutrality in the event of a Second World War. He held fast to this policy in the years that followed. Following the 1948 election, Fianna Fáil was ousted from government by John A. Costello's coalition; de Valera returned to government in 1951 but was again defeated in 1954.

From the 1930s, de Valera suffered retina trouble and by 1952, his sight was limited to peripheral vision only. In his final days in politics, he was Taoiseach one last time in 1957 before running for election as president in 1959, an office he held twice. He retired in June 1973, and died two years later at the age of 92 on 29 August 1975.



## 1. De Valera the revolutionary: Irish Volunteers and 1916

**Document 1a:** de Valera reflects on his joining of the Irish Volunteers in 1913

De Valera, writing in 1950, recalls a crucial period of his life when he joined the Irish Volunteers. At this time, in 1913, he was a 31-year-old married father weighing up his responsibilities. Eoin McNeill’s provocative article ‘The North Began’, published in the Gaelic League’s newspaper, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, had inspired de Valera to go to the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers at the Rotunda. To use his own words, he had indeed ‘crossed the Rubicon’.

I read the art.[article] in the C.S [An Claidheamh Soluis] and went to the meeting. Enrolment forms were handed out and after the speeches I considered whether I should join. I was married and my wife and children were dependent on me. I had no doubt that the formation of the Volunteers meant that there w[oul]d be an armed insurrection. The question was—was I justified in entering into an engagement to take part in an insurrection with its likely consequences. I decided that our man power was such that if the movement was confined to unmarried men it would not be numerous enough to succeed. So I crossed the Rubicon and joined. From the moment I signed my name I regarded myself as a soldier with battle inevitably in the offing.

Immediately in front of me at the Rotunda meeting was two persons I never expected to see there. One was my old parish priest (of Rockhill and Bruree) Fr Eugene Sheehy brother of David Sheehy, MP, and uncle of Mrs Sheehy Skeffington, and side by side with Father Sheehy was Larry Roche. Larry was an athlete of some note in our area, he lived on the road near Kilmallock. He became a Major in the Br.[British] Army in the First World War. He was a nephew of Bob Coll of Wardstone [?] and of Brig. Pat of Baile na Godach. Their presence at the meeting made me feel that Bruree had its fair representation.

I was ... directed to attend at ( ) York St at 8 o'clock. ...

My recruit training then began. Two instructors were Br. Army Non Com. [Commissioned] officers: Corporals, Sergeants, Sergeant Majors.

**Source:** Typescript of an extract from personal notes written by de Valera on 22 February 1950, UCDA, P122/113. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 25–6, 43–4.

### Questions:

1. What made de Valera decide to join the Irish Volunteers?
2. De Valera obviously considered his options carefully. Why?
3. What encouraged him when he went to the meeting?
4. Did the Irish Volunteers have a widespread appeal? Explain your answer.
5. Who was the Mrs Sheehy Skeffington mentioned in the document? (See glossary)
6. Why might Larry Roche, a member of the Irish Volunteers, have chosen to serve in the British Army in the First World War?

**Document 1b:** de Valera's prisoner of 1916 recalls the events of the Rising, 27 June 1959

Here we have a warm letter, written to de Valera in June 1959 when he was president. The author, Lieutenant Colonel G.F. Mackay, was an eighteen-year-old soldier in 1916, when he was taken prisoner by rebel forces under de Valera's command. Mackay goes on to discuss his fears while being held in Boland's Mills. Even though he was terrified and feared he would be killed, he became convinced that his life was saved by de Valera.

27/6/59

Dear Mr de Valera,

I have often wanted to send you a short note and here now is a good opportunity! To congratulate you on your election to president.

You may have looked at the signature, but even then perhaps you wont remember who I am until I remind you!

I was your only prisoner in Boland's Mills in 1916.

Now you may remember the scared boy of 18, and I have always thought you saved my life.

Do you remember once you came to see me in my little den or had me brought in front of you and said 'The English have shot some of my men on the exit from the Mills[s] to the city' which could only be covered from the roof of the hospital opposite and you sent them a message that you had me and if they shot any more of your men you would shoot me. I was scared but knew you never would.

And then do you remember the surrender when you sent me out to arrange the terms under cover of a white flag and all being arranged you marched out at the head of your people and as you passed me standing on the side walk you held out your hand to say 'Thank you and goodbye'. I shook you by the hand and on the spot was arrested and marched ahead of you and your men with two soldiers with fixed bayonets on either side of me. We were all taken to Ballsbridge. The show grounds I think it was and I was locked up in a horse box next to you. ...

With my very best wishes and all the very best of luck

Your sincerely,

G. F. Mackay

**Source:** Typescript of a letter to de Valera from the only British Army prisoner held in Boland's Mills, 27 June 1959; UCDA, P150/506. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership. See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 28, 45–8.

**Questions:**

1. Why do you think that de Valera spared Mackay's life?
2. What do we learn about de Valera from Mackay's account of his experiences?
3. Why do you think Mackay wrote the letter in 1959, 43 years after the event?
3. Write a short account of the surrender at Boland's Mills.
4. Boland's Mills was de Valera's headquarters. Name some of the other key buildings that were occupied during Easter Week 1916.
5. What brought about the surrender?

**Document 1c:** de Valera considers the possible reasons why he, a military leader during the Rising, was not executed by the British in its aftermath

This document (see next page), dealing with de Valera’s reprieve, was signed by him in 1969. It describes the circumstances that spared him from execution in 1916. Here, he clearly contradicts one of the long-standing myths surrounding that period of his life, which was that his American citizenship spared him from the firing squad. A much more likely explanation emerges; he avoided death through a fortunate series of events. He wasn’t sent to Kilmainham immediately from Richmond Prison and so was separated from the main body of prisoners. Furthermore, the authorities were belatedly sensing the revulsion that the ordinary men and women of Dublin (and indeed Ireland) were feeling at the spate of executions.

**Source:** ‘Statement by de Valera on his reprieve in 1916, 3 July 1969’; UCDA, P150/524. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 28–30, 49.

**Questions:**

1. What statement was made by Asquith that possibly saved de Valera’s life?
2. Asquith referred to the ‘ringleaders’ of the Rising. In de Valera’s opinion, who was Asquith referring to?
3. De Valera was an American citizen. Did he believe that this was an important factor in saving him from execution? Explain your answer.
4. How did de Valera use the case of Thomas Ashe to back up his argument?
5. At the time of his capture, de Valera was 34 years old and married with young children. What effect did the capture and imprisonment have on his life?
6. Were the British too harsh in executing the rebels? Explain the reasons for your opinion.
7. What role did the executed leaders, Pearse and Connolly, play in the 1916 Rising?

Reprieve of Eamon de Valera

I have not the slightest doubt that my reprieve in 1916 was due to the fact that my courtmartial and sentence came late.

My sentence came just when Asquith said that there would be no further executions save those of the ringleaders, which, apparently, he interpreted as those who had signed the Proclamation. Only Connolly and MacDiarmada were executed after my courtmartial. The fact that I was born in America would not, I am convinced, have saved me. I know of nothing in international law which could be cited in my defence or made an excuse for American intervention, except, perhaps, to see that I got a fair trial.

It is, of course, true that my wife was encouraged by friends to make, and did make, representations to the American Consul here. He was sympathetic, I understand. Similarly, my mother and American friends, including Joe McGarrity no doubt, made representations to Washington. I do not know if they got any reply, but I feel certain that the Administration took no official action.

By the way, Thomas Ashe was courtmartialled the same day that I was. He, too, would have been executed, I have no doubt, had he been tried earlier because of the part he took at the Battle of Ashbourne, Co. Dublin, where he was in charge, and where a number of Royal Irish Constabulary were killed. He was not an American citizen, and it could not be suggested, therefore, that it was on that account he was reprieved.

*Eamon de Valera*  
3-7-69

## 2. De Valera's mission to the USA, 1919–20

**Document 2:** Arthur Griffith appeals to Irish–Americans to support de Valera during his tour of America, 1920

Eamon de Valera spent eighteen months in the USA during 1919 and 1920. In this letter, Arthur Griffith, who remained in Dublin as acting president, appealed to John Devoy and Daniel Cohalan to end their attacks on de Valera. According to Ferriter, the 'American tour was a long, exhausting, occasionally exhilarating but often frustrating journey' for de Valera.

Gentlemen,

The British Propaganda is circulating through the press in this country and abroad stories of attacks being made at present by prominent citizens of America of Irish blood on the authority and credit of the President of the Irish Republic.

The object of the enemy is to strengthen its hands for the reconquest of Ireland by the overthrow of the Republic of Ireland now in law and fact established.

President de Valera is in the United States vested with the full authority of the Cabinet and Congress of Ireland to secure explicit recognition by the Government of the United States for the Irish Republic. In such circumstances any word or action which might tend to discredit his office or his mission constitutes an affront and an injury to the Irish Republic. Bitter indignation exists in Ireland at the moment over the reports of these attacks on the Irish President. Public expression of that indignation, I am seeking to avoid. I therefore write personally to appeal to you gentlemen to give your loyal support to our President in his great work.

**Source:** Typescript of an extract from Arthur Griffith's letter to Cohalan and Devoy, 23 June 1920; UCDA, P150/728. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp.33–6, 58.

### Questions:

1. Why did Griffith write in this critical manner to Devoy and Cohalan?
2. Why did de Valera visit the USA, according to Griffith?
3. Why did Griffith wish to see an end to the attacks on de Valera?

### 3. De Valera and the Anglo–Irish Treaty negotiations, 1921

**Document 3a:** de Valera writes to the British prime minister, David Lloyd George, 12 September 1921, in advance of the meetings in London

De Valera clearly outlines the Irish case in this September 1921 letter to Lloyd George (see next page). He cleverly quotes Lloyd George’s own words back to him (‘government by consent of the governed’) and uses this as the basis of negotiation. This well-constructed letter depicts great clarity of thought from de Valera.

**Source:** De Valera to Lloyd George, 12 September 1921; NAI, DE 2/3026. Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 63–8; *this document is not reproduced in the book.*

#### Questions:

1. What did Lloyd George fear would happen to the Empire if Ireland were to gain its independence?
2. When de Valera quoted ‘the settlement of the new Europe’, to what settlement was he referring?
3. Can you find in the letter any real or potential stumbling block to the negotiations of a final agreement?
4. Does this letter tell us anything about de Valera’s strategy in these negotiations?

#### Resources:

The full correspondence between de Valera and Lloyd George is available, including copies of de Valera’s Irish language originals, on the website of UCC’s Corpus of Electronic Texts (CELT), see [www.ucc.ie/celt/publishd.html](http://www.ucc.ie/celt/publishd.html), last accessed 1 December 2007.



Sir,

We have no hesitation in declaring our willingness "to enter a Conference to ascertain how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire can best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations." Our readiness to contemplate such an association was indicated in our letter of August 10th. We have accordingly summoned Dail Eireann that we may submit to it for ratification the names of the representatives it is our intention to propose. We hope that these representatives will find it possible to be at Inverness on the date you suggest, September 20.

In this final note we deem it our duty to reaffirm that our position is and can only be as we have defined it throughout this correspondence. Our nation has formally declared its independence and recognises itself as a sovereign State. It is only as the representatives of that State and as its chosen guardians that we have any authority or powers to act on behalf of our people.

As regards the principle of "government by consent of the governed" in the very nature of things it must be the basis of any agreement that will achieve the purpose we have at heart, that is, the final reconciliation of our nation with yours. We have suggested no interpretation of that principle save its every-day interpretation, the sense, for example, in which it was understood by the plain men and women of the world when on January 5th, 1918, you said :-

" . . . The settlement of the new Europe must be based on such grounds of reason and justice as will give some promise of stability. Therefore it is that we feel that government with the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war."

These words are the true answer to the criticism of our position which your last letter puts forward. The principle was understood then to mean the right of nations that had been annexed to empires against their will to free themselves from the grappling hook. That is the sense in which we understand it. In reality it is your Government, when it seeks to rend our ancient nation and to partition its territory, that would give to the principle an interpretation that "would undermine the fabric of every democratic state and drive the civilised world back into tribalism."

I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) EAMON DE VALERA.

**Document 3b:** De Valera, writing in 1963, outlines some of the reasons behind the selection of the team to attend the Treaty negotiations, and suggests why he did not go himself

In a 1963 letter (see following pages) to his biographer, Lord Longford, de Valera goes into considerable detail outlining why the negotiating team was selected to go to London in 1921. De Valera’s reasons for remaining in Dublin are not without justification; however, many have suggested that he might have had ulterior motives. Study this detailed explanation to Longford, written on 24 February 1963, and form your own opinion.

**Source:** De Valera to Lord Longford, 24 February 1963 (pages 2–4 of which are reproduced on the following pages); UCDA, P122/119. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 63–8, 82–7.

**Questions:**

1. Outline one significant reason why de Valera did not go to London as part of the negotiating team.
2. Give one reason that de Valera puts forward for including each of the following on the negotiating team: Collins, Griffith, Gavin Duffy and Duggan.
3. Why did the delegation sign the Treaty?
4. When was the Treaty signed?
5. What happened when the delegates returned to Dublin?
6. Indicate two advantages that de Valera gained by staying in Dublin during the negotiations.



(2)

It was thus made clear that during the negotiations there would be constant contact between the Delegation and the Cabinet at home. Indeed I do not believe that until the last moment before signing any member of the Delegation regarded himself otherwise than as bound by these instructions.

But, perhaps, I should begin at the beginning. When the question of choosing a Delegation first arose my thought was to send Brugha and Stack with Griffith and Collins. Brugha and Stack were unwilling. Further, I myself realised on reflection that these four would not work well as a team unless I accompanied them. That would mean, apart from other considerations, taking five members, practically the whole Government, out of the country for a considerable period at a most critical time. In this connection I may remark that it was our purpose unless agreement were reached to prolong the negotiations so that in the case of a "break" it should occur at a time favourable to operations by our army.

This left me with Griffith and Collins. They by themselves alone, it seemed, would form a well balanced team. Griffith would have the confidence of the "moderates" and Collins that of the I.R.B. and the Army, and the latter's being on the Delegation would, I thought, keep this section of public opinion steady, a matter of no small importance, during the negotiations. Griffith was our Minister for Foreign Affairs. Collins was our Minister for Finance as well as our Director of Army Intelligence.

With these two as the leaders no one could suggest that the Delegation was not a strong and representative one. and it would be so regarded if sent by any other state.



(3)

They were both able men who had given great service to our country and were well fitted, I thought, to stand up for Irish rights against any British arguments. Griffith was a man of considerable political experience, and in his book, *The Resurrection of Hungary*, and in the papers he had edited had shown that he was well aware of British diplomatic wiles. The two men had worked together, so far as I was aware, in harmony when I was out of the country.

Lest my reference to the regard which the "moderates" had for Griffith might create any wrong impression I should point out, perhaps, that since the Convention of the new Sinn Féin in 1917 Griffith had accepted the Republican aim, and in all my intercourse with him from that time I had not known him to recede from that position. He had on more than one occasion in my absence signed official documents as Acting President of the Republic.

Collins was reluctant to go but I persuaded him. I was somewhat surprised at his reluctance for he had been rather annoyed with me for not bringing him on the team when I went to meet Lloyd George earlier on, in July. I now considered it essential that he should go with Griffith.

Having fixed on Griffith and Collins as the leaders, we added Barton, our Minister for Economic Affairs; and to strengthen the legal side Gavan Duffy, who had been one of our representatives abroad and had, I knew, a keen legal mind and was well acquainted with diplomatic procedure. Duggan, a solicitor, was a further aid on the legal side. He had been out in Easter Week and was, I believed, a member of the I.R.B. All, had, of course, finally Cabinet approval.



(4)

Childers, I knew, would be an admirable secretary, painstaking, methodical and brilliant; one who with Barton would be likely to understand the British mind and methods and be a further safeguard were there to be any British manoeuvring. We appointed him.

With such a team in constant contact with the Cabinet in Dublin I believed that my presence on the Delegation was unnecessary. There seemed, in fact, at the time to be no good reason why I should be on the Delegation, but I expected to be in the closest contact with it.

There was, on the other hand, a host of good reasons why I should remain at home. One had, above all, to look ahead and provide for the outcome of the negotiations. They would end either in a "make" or a "break" - in a settlement based on the accepted Cabinet policy of external association, or in a failure of the negotiations with a probable renewal of war. In either case I could best serve the national interest by remaining at home.

If the outcome were to be the settlement we had envisaged, that based on external association, it was almost certain that it would be no easy task to get that settlement accepted wholeheartedly by the Dáil and by the Army. The arrangement was a novel one. The kind of association involved was new to our public opinion.

Although such a settlement would leave independence and the Republic intact and give a united Ireland, nevertheless an association in which Britain was involved, even though the association was to be with the States of the Commonwealth rather than with Britain alone, was bound to be unpalatable to those whose political upbringing had been based on "separatism". The whole idea was foreign to the "separatist" way of thinking.

## 4. De Valera and Fianna Fáil, 1926–7

**Document 4a:** de Valera outlines the aims of Fianna Fáil, 1926

The following document is based on an interview given by de Valera to a United Press representative on 17 April 1926 and deals with the aims of the newly established Fianna Fáil party. He has high ambitions, including the establishment of a united Ireland, fully independent from Britain. These aims struck a chord with much of the population, and the party was growing rapidly in popularity with both rural and urban voters. Branches of Fianna Fáil were quickly established throughout the country and prominent members such as Seán Lemass toured the nation converting Sinn Féiners to the new party. In addition to developing support at home, de Valera used some of the capital raised from fund-raising tours in the US to establish the very successful *Irish Press* newspaper. This newspaper proved to be a valuable publicity vehicle for Fianna Fáil.

**Source:** Interview given by de Valera to a United Press representative re the aims of Fianna Fáil, 17 April 1926; UCDA, P150/2011. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 102–3, 113.

### Questions:

1. According to this document, what are the aims of Fianna Fáil?
2. According to this document, why did de Valera establish Fianna Fáil?
3. What was de Valera’s view of the Oath of Allegiance, as indicated in the document?
4. What did de Valera do in order to gain publicity for the new party?
5. When was Fianna Fáil established?



INTERVIEW WITH RAMON De VALERA GIVEN IN PART TO THE  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED PRESS. APRIL 17, 1926.

AIMS OF FIANNA FÁIL

The new Republican organisation, FIANNA FÁIL, has for its purpose the re-uniting of the Irish people, and the banding of them together for the tenacious pursuit of the following ultimate aims, using at every moment such means as are rightfully available:

1. Securing the political independence of a united Ireland as a Republic.
2. The restoration of the Irish language, and the development of a native Irish culture.
3. The development of a social system in which, as far as possible, equal opportunity will be afforded to every Irish citizen to live a noble and useful Christian life.
4. The distribution of the land of Ireland so as to get the greatest number possible of Irish families rooted in the soil of Ireland.
5. The making of Ireland an economic unit, as self-contained and self-sufficient as possible - with a proper balance between agriculture and the other essential industries.

The conviction on which the new Organisation is based is this: That in the heart of every Irishman there is a native undying desire to see his country politically free, and not only free but truly Irish as well, and that the people recently divided are but awaiting an opportunity to come together again and give effective expression to that desire. They are conscious that if real unity can be secured, Ireland is theirs for the taking.

WHY NAME CHOSEN

The name FIANNA FÁIL has been chosen to symbolise a banding together of the people for national service, with a standard of personal honour for all who join, as high as that which characterised the ancient Fianna Eireann, and a spirit of devotion equal to that of the Irish Volunteers from 1913 to 1921.

IMMEDIATE POLITICAL OBJECTIVE

In order to get an authoritative national policy, and unity of direction in the carrying out of it, it is essential that the elected representatives of the people be brought together in a common assembly. The Free State Assembly might be used as a nucleus for such an assembly, were it not for the oath of allegiance to the King of England which is imposed as a political test on all who become members of that assembly. That oath no Republican will take, for it implies acceptance of England's right to overlordship in our country.

## 5. 1937 Constitution, comments on the status of women

The Constitution was passed by the Dáil on 14 June 1937; it was then put to the country in a plebiscite on 1 July of that year and was approved by 56.5% of the vote. Support for the 1937 Constitution came mainly from Fianna Fáil grass roots and republicans. Among those opposed to it were Unionists and Commonwealth supporters, women's rights activists and followers of Fine Gael and Labour.

These following two documents contain responses to de Valera's draft of the 1937 Constitution. The Articles referring to women were controversial. He received passionate letters from people and organisations who either supported or opposed his references to women within the draft Constitution.

**Document 5a:** a male bank official expresses his opinion to de Valera on the role of women in society, May 1937

In his letter to de Valera, J. Walsh, a bank employee, expresses his concerns about the position of women as outlined in the draft Constitution. Walsh's views seem extremely conservative, yet it must be remembered that they were not enormously out of step with the ethos of the day. This was in the wake of the Great Depression, an austere time of high unemployment and emigration in the fledgling state. Another feature of this period was the marriage bar, where women had to resign their positions in the civil service when they married.

**Source:** J. Walsh, bank employee, to de Valera, 15 May 1937; NAI, S9880. Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 237–41, 246.

**Document 5b:** The Six Point Group, based in London, voices its concerns at the draft Constitution's proposals relating to women

Casting a modern, more critical eye on the documents, The Six Point Group, based in London, regarded the treatment of women in the draft Constitution as no improvement on the 1923 Constitution it was due to replace.

**Source:** The Six Point Group to de Valera, 14 June 1937; NAI, S9880. Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland.

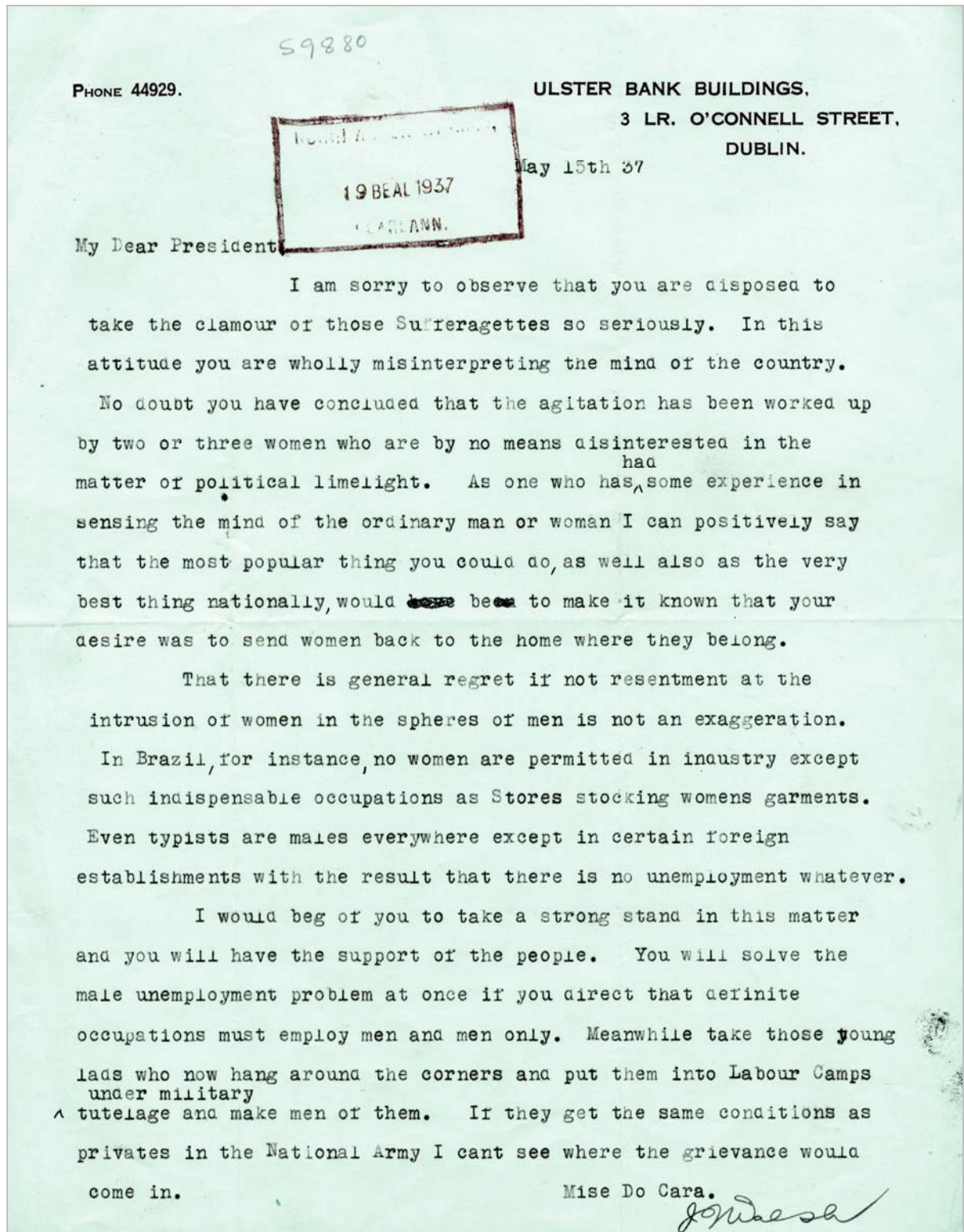
See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 237–41, 247.

### Questions:

1. As expressed in document 5a, what were Walsh's views on the role of women in society? Support your answer, with reference to the document.
2. The Six Point Group is based in London. According to Document 5b, why did it write to him on what the group described as a 'primarily Irish matter'?
3. What were the principal concerns of The Six Point Group about articles in the draft Constitution, as expressed in Document 5b?



## Document 5a



## Document 5b

S 9880

## THE SIX POINT GROUP

Telephone No. 1. VIEW 1727.

31, BROOKFIELD,  
WEST HILL,  
LONDON, N.6.

**Vice-Presidents.**

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR, M.P. LADY BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH MISS VERA BRITTAIN CAPTAIN CAZALET, M.P. LADY VIOLET BONHAM CARTER PROF. WINIFRED CULLIS, C.B.E. MISS CLEMENCE DANE ALDERMAN A. EMIL DAVIES, L.C.C.	MISS AGNES DAWSON, J.P. L.C.C. MRS. BRUCE DICK MR. ISAAC FOOT MISS CICELY HAMILTON MR. E. L. MALLALIEU, M.P. MISS WINIFRED MAYO MISS EVA MOORE MRS. FRANK OGLIVY	MRS. JAMES O'HEA, C.B.E. VISCOUNTESS RHONDDA SYBIL VISCOUNTESS RHONDDA, D.B.E. DAME ETHEL SMYTH, D.B.E., MUS. DOC. LORD STRABOLGI DR. JANE WALKER, M.D., J.P. MRS. CHALMERS WATSON, C.B.E. MRS. MARGARET WINTRINGHAM, J.P.
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 Chairman Nationality Committee: MISS D. E. EVANS  
 .. Social .. MISS E. MAITLAND  
 Hon. Secretary: MISS MONICA WHATELY,  
 TO WHOM ALL COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED.

14th June, 1937.

Dear Mr. de Valera,

I hope you will excuse the Six Point Group writing to you on a primarily Irish Free State matter, but as we have had such help from you in Geneva we felt we could not let this matter pass without approaching you. We also feel that inequalities to women concern all women wherever they may be.

When the I.F.S. adopted her 1923 Constitution women felt elated at the recognition of the equality of men and women in Art 3. For many years at Geneva the I.F.S. has been an invaluable supporter of the women in their efforts to raise the status of women by international means.

You can, therefore, imagine our sense of dismay at the clauses in the draft constitution, particularly clauses 40, 41 (2) and 45 (4) ii. These clauses are based on a fascist and slave conception of woman as being a non-adult person who is very weak and whose place is in the home. Ireland's fight for freedom would not have been so successful if Irish women had obeyed these clauses. You who have fought all your life for the freedom of your Country can surely not wish to deprive Irish women of the freedom for which they also have fought. If you would only help the women to be free instead of clamping these tyrannous restrictions on them you would be doing a great service to women and to Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

*B. Archdale*

Chairman.

Mr. de Valera,  
The Dial,  
Dublin, Ireland.



## 6. 1937 Constitution, comment of John Charles McQuaid

**Document 6:** John Charles McQuaid expresses his opinion on the proposed reference to ‘other Christians’ in the Constitution, *c.* April 1937

This cordial, friendly letter from John Charles McQuaid to de Valera dates from 1937. At the time he was the President of Blackrock College and it was still three years before his elevation to the position of Archbishop of Dublin.

It is clear that McQuaid was troubled by the proposed position of the Catholic Church in the forthcoming Irish Constitution and was anxious to safeguard its dominant position.

My Dear President,

I have compared very carefully the draft and attach two notes.

It reads very well.

Have you in Art.[Article] 45 fixed yet the term ‘other Christians’? I have been thinking much about it. Of course, they claim the title, but as so very many in all these Churches deny the divinity of Christ, unlike their ancestors, they have truly ceased to be Christians. Very often they are only ethical. But you may have already settled the question.

I am sure you will be relieved to have it all printed.

With kind regards,

I am,

Yours very respectfully,

J. McQuaid, C.S.Sp.

**Source:** Dr John Charles McQuaid to de Valera, *c.* April 1937; UCDA, P150/2395. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp.198–200, 207, 218–20.

### Questions:

1. While McQuaid wrote that ‘It [the Constitution] reads very well’, what evidence is there in the document that he was less than happy with its description of the Catholic Church’s position?
2. What were McQuaid’s views on ‘other Christians’?
3. What does this letter show us about relations between de Valera and McQuaid?
4. In the context of the time, was it in de Valera’s interest as a political leader to maintain good relations with Church leaders?

## 7. Economic War, 1932–8

**Document 7:** Malcolm MacDonald writes to de Valera after the ending of the Economic War, 1938

The warm tone of Malcolm MacDonald’s letter (see next page) to de Valera is obvious. British Dominions Secretary since 1935, he and de Valera had met both secretly and publicly to help improve relations between the two states. It is also significant that, in 1937, MacDonald won the backing of the new prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, in this endeavour. This support paved the way for ending the Economic War between Ireland and Britain in April 1938.

**Source:** Malcolm MacDonald to de Valera, 17 May 1938; UCDA, P150/2517. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 127–8, 139–40.

### Questions:

1. What compliments did MacDonald pay to de Valera?
2. What was the Economic War?
3. Who do you think won the Economic War? Explain your answer.
4. Do you think Malcolm MacDonald would have made a good British minister (ambassador) to Ireland? Give reasons for your answer.



DOMINIONS OFFICE,  
DOWNING STREET, S.W.1.

17th May, 1938.

*Personal*

*Dear Mr de Valera,*

I am sending this note just to say that our legislation will be through both Houses of Parliament in time for The King's Assent to be given to it tonight. I should like to add, in no mere formal way, an expression of my pleasure at the final accomplishment of what we have been patiently endeavouring to do over so many months. I do congratulate you and our Prime Minister on what you have done in the cause of friendship between our two peoples, and I shall always feel proud that I was privileged to play some part in the negotiations. I cherish especially the memory of our friendly and fruitful talks together. If the personal relations which we established are a symbol of the friendship

which

Eamon de Valera, Esq., T.D.

## 8. Neutrality, 1939–45

**Document 8a:** UK government offers to promote a ‘united Ireland’, in return for Ireland entering the Second World War on the Allied side, June 1940

It is almost beyond comprehension how our lives today might have been different had de Valera not adhered to his policy of neutrality. If ever anyone walked a fine line, de Valera did during those years that Churchill described as ‘times of wolves and tigers’. Éire was a small country, a fledgling republic in all but name, with revolution and civil war within living memory. Negotiating his country through the six years of the Second World War presented de Valera with his greatest challenge.

In this document of June 1940 (see next page), the carrot of a united Ireland was dangled before de Valera by his old friend Malcolm MacDonald. De Valera declined the offer; he could not enter into any discussions while partition still existed.

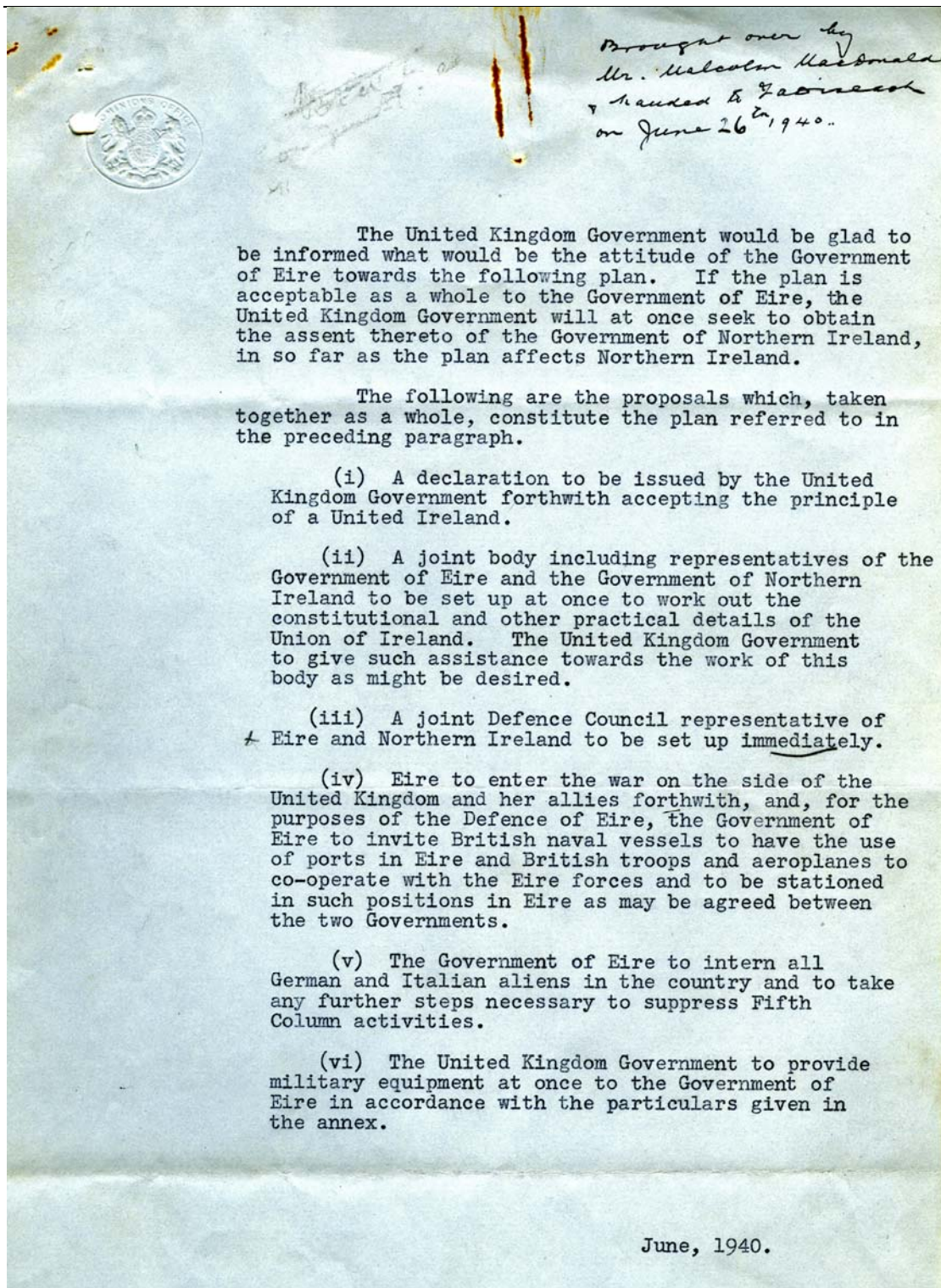
**Source:** UK government document handed to de Valera by Malcolm MacDonald, 26 June 1940; UCDA, P150/2548. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archive; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 153–4, 170.

### Questions:

1. What strategic reason did the prime minister have for making this offer?
2. Which sections of this letter do you think de Valera would find hardest to accept?
3. How would the Unionists have reacted had the offer been accepted?
4. Suggest reasons why de Valera rejected this offer from Britain.
5. Following de Valera’s rejection of the offer, was there a danger that Britain might invade Ireland? Explain your answer.





**Document 8b:** de Valera’s reply to W.T. Cosgrave’s advice regarding Ireland’s neutral status in the Second World War, 13 July 1940

W.T. Cosgrave wrote to de Valera on 9 July 1940 and appeared genuinely anxious to offer advice, in an uncharacteristically friendly fashion for an opposition politician. He wrote: ‘If owing to our lack of defensive power a substantial German force lands in this country the destruction that must inevitably follow from the efforts of the other belligerent to expel them is appalling to contemplate’. It was a time of incredible uncertainty and fear, not just for the government, but for the everyday citizen. Cosgrave seems to suggest that if Ireland is to side with anyone, it had better be quickly before the war moves to Irish soil.

De Valera’s reply is courteous; while outlining his views, he states that he has adhered to neutrality from the outset and will not change his policy now.

**Source:** de Valera to Cosgrave, 13 July 1940, UCDA, P150/2597. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp.170–1; *this document is not reproduced in the book.*

**Questions:**

1. On the evidence of this document, what appears to be the difference between Cosgrave and de Valera in their approach to neutrality?
2. What is the tone of de Valera’s response to Cosgrave? Explain your answer.
3. Was it in de Valera’s interests to be courteous to a leader of the opposition at this time? Explain your answer.
4. What disadvantages did Ireland suffer by remaining neutral? Give two examples.



COPY/

July 13th, 1940

W.T. Cosgrave, Esq., T.D.,  
Leinster House,  
DUBLIN.

A Chara,

I received your letter of the 9th inst., and have discussed it with my colleagues in the Government.

There would appear to be little difference between our view and yours as to what is the paramount national issue at the moment. The aim of Government policy is to preserve the national security and to provide that our independence will remain unimpaired at the end of the war. The difference between your views and those of the Government is in regard to the means by which these objectives can be achieved. The question which you raise is whether we should not immediately ask for military assistance from one belligerent to strengthen our defences against the danger of attack from the other. The Government view is what it has been since the beginning of the war, that the best hope of preserving the country from invasion and its consequences lies in maintaining our neutrality and giving no pretext to either side for violating our territory.

We are fully aware that this policy does not guarantee the country immunity from attack. There is always the possibility of attack should one side or the other decide, during the progress of the war, that the circumstances are such that the resultant advantages to its interests outweigh the disadvantages. The assumption that hostile invasion need be feared from one side only is one which cannot in all circumstances be relied upon. But, so long as we are neutral, there is a possibility that the danger of attack may be averted; whilst, if we invite military assistance from one side, immediate attack by the other side, with all its consequences, will be almost inevitable. There are the two alternatives: one, immediate entry into the war; the other, the maintenance of neutrality with dependance upon our own resources in the first instance to meet an attack, should such be made. The Government are of opinion that the national objectives, present security and the ultimate position when the war ends, are more likely to be secured by choosing the second alternative.

As you are aware, these matters have already been discussed with your representatives on the Defence Conference and the recent British proposals to which you refer were outlined by me to two of these representatives who came to see me. They have been similarly outlined to the leader of the Labour Party.

We have noted your view that the existing scope of the discussions at the Defence Conference is not adequate for the present needs. I am prepared to arrange for further discussions, in addition to those at the Conference, as to the imminence and extent of the danger and the steps necessary to defend the country. We should be glad to have such discussions with you and two or three of your colleagues, and with one or two representatives of the Labour Party, preferably in joint conference. On hearing from you, I shall have the necessary arrangements completed without delay. The ultimate decision as to any steps to be taken in the national interest must, of course, rest with the Government in office.

Mise, le meas,  
(Sgd.) EAMON DE VALÉRA



**Document 8c:** de Valera visits the German legation to offer his sympathies on the death of Adolf Hitler, May 1945

One of the most controversial episodes of the Emergency took place in the closing days of the war. De Valera visited the German ambassador, Eduard Hempel (who up to 1943 was allowed to keep a radio transmitter), and sympathised with him on the death of Hitler. This outraged many abroad and quite a few at home.

Dear Bob,

A line to tell you how pleased we all were with the work of our delegation to the Aviation Conference and particularly with the American Agreement.

I am anticipating that your difficulties over there with the press, etc., will begin to lighten from now on. I am sure you are keeping in the closest touch with our friends and keeping them as fully informed as possible.

I have noted that my call on the German Minister on the announcement of Hitler's death was played up to the utmost. I expected this. G. could not fail to try his usual upon it. I could have had a diplomatic illness but as you know I would scorn that sort of thing. I acted very deliberately in this matter. So long as we retained our diplomatic relations with Germany to have failed to call upon the German representative would have been an act of unpardonable discourtesy to the German nation and to Dr. Hempel himself. During the whole of the war Dr. Hempel's conduct was irreproachable. He was always friendly and invariably correct - in marked contrast with G. I certainly was not going to add to his humiliation in the hour of defeat. I had another reason. It would establish a bad precedent. It is of considerable importance that the formal acts of courtesy paid on such occasions as the death of the head of a State should not have attached to them any further special significance, such as connoting approval or disapproval of the policies of the State in question or of its head. It is important that it should never be inferred that these formal acts imply the passing of any judgment good or bad. I am anxious that you should know my mind on all this. I have carefully refrained from attempting to give any explanation in public. An explanation would have been interpreted as an excuse, and an excuse as a consciousness of having acted wrongly. I acted correctly and I feel certain wisely.

I would like to write to you on two or three other matters, e.g. Broadcasting and Partition. I have not the time however and I shall ask Mr. Leydon to convey my views orally instead.

**Source:** de Valera to Robert Brennan, 21 May 1945; UCDA, P150/2676. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 262–3, 272–3.

### Questions:

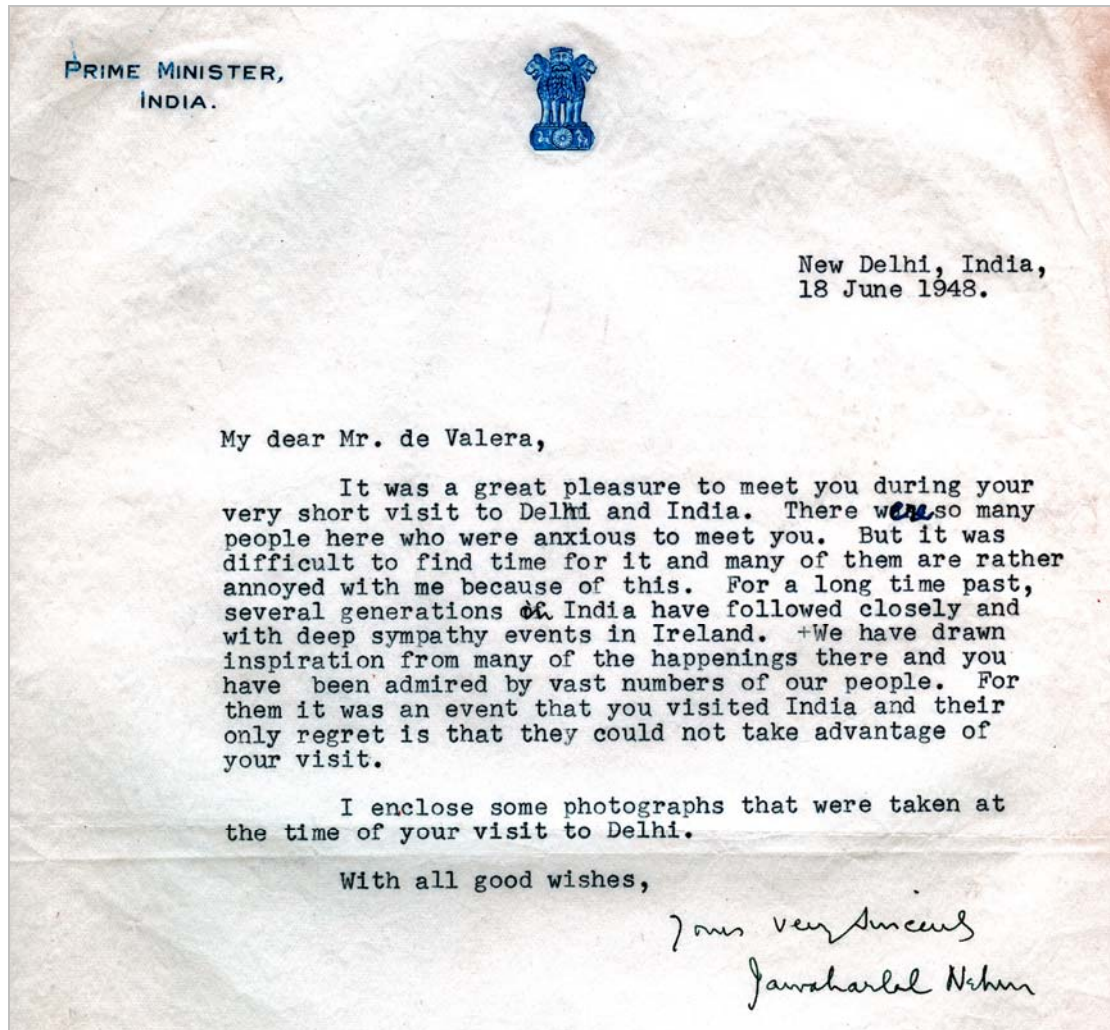
1. On what grounds did de Valera justify his actions?
2. Who is the 'G.' to whom de Valera refers in the document?
3. Are you satisfied with de Valera's explanation for his actions? Why/why not?



## 9. De Valera, the statesman, 1948

### Document 9: Indian Prime Minister writes to de Valera, 1948

This letter from Jawaharlal (Pandit) Nehru, the prime minister of India, to de Valera, was written in 1948. In it Nehru thanked de Valera for his visit to the newly independent India. It is obvious that the Indian prime minister had keenly followed Ireland’s turbulent history over the previous 50 years. Undoubtedly, de Valera was held in high esteem in India due to the parallels in the history of both countries—emancipation from Britain being an obvious one. De Valera was seen by the Indian nation as a world statesman.



**Source:** Pandit Nehru to de Valera, 18 June 1948; UCDA, P150/2955. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp.156–7, 179.

### Questions:

1. What evidence is there that Nehru had a keen interest in Ireland’s struggle for independence?
2. Was de Valera highly regarded in India? Use evidence from the document to support your answer.
3. Which country ruled India prior to independence?
4. When did India gain independence?

## 10. De Valera on the Irish language and emigration, 1951

**Document 10:** de Valera comments on cultural and economic issues, 1951

At a Fianna Fáil dinner in Galway in 1951 to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the party, de Valera gave a speech which was widely reported (see below). Recently returned to office as Taoiseach following three years on the opposition benches, he opened his address by expressing cultural aspirations. Making Irish the spoken language of commerce, and strengthening Irish-speaking districts so as to tackle emigration, were just two government aims that were mentioned.

De Valera then went on to quote alarming statistics regarding emigration, which was an ever-increasing problem. Next he described deplorable conditions facing the Irish workers in British industrial cities. Indeed his tirade provoked Harry Weston, Mayor of Coventry, to express his displeasure with de Valera’s remarks and to demand a retraction.

He said that Ireland’s aim today ought to be to work in the same spiritual field rather than in the material one. The material side, of course, could not be neglected, but the current of their aspirations should be directed towards the spiritual side. If they were to do this effectively, the fount would have to be kept pure by the preservation and the restoration and development of their own language. Galway and the western parts of the country had a particular role to play in this. Galway, which has been called the capital of the Gaeltacht, should endeavour in every way to make itself worthy of that title.

With enthusiasm and effort, Irish could quickly become once more the language spoken in Galway’s streets and the language of ordinary commerce.

It was the aim of the Government to try to strengthen the Irish-speaking districts so that the native speakers who were brought up there might be preserved for the nation, instead of being compelled to emigrate to find a living. Material development was necessary for that, and every department of state would be pressed to co-operate in the work.

Emigration should be recognised by everybody as having reached alarming dimensions. ‘I have been at some pains’, he said, ‘to secure the most reliable estimates indicating the trends in recent years. The best figures which I have been able to get indicate that net emigration, which was estimated as having been 10,000 in the year 1947, went up to 28,000 in the year 1948, reached 34,000 in the year 1949, and was not less than 40,000 in the year 1950. The rate of emigration per thousand of the population is now more than 50% over what it was in the period between 1936 and 1946, which includes the war years’.

Continuing, the Taoiseach said: ‘The saddest part of all this is that work is available at home, and in conditions infinitely better from the point of view both of health and morals. In many occupations, the rates of wages are higher at home than they are in Britain. It is true that, in some cases, an Irish worker’s total earnings in Britain are high, but this is often due to the fact that the conditions in which he finds himself obliged to live are so unattractive that he prefers unduly long hours of overtime to a leisure which he cannot enjoy. There is no doubt that many of those who emigrate could find employment at home at as good, or better, wages—and with living conditions far better—than they find in Britain. Moreover, not only do they fail to improve their own circumstances by going abroad, but they leave enterprises for

the development of our own national resources without sufficient labour to enable progress to be made as rapidly as we would all desire.

In reports which I have received, the conditions of Irish workers in some of the English cities are, as I said on a previous occasion, described as appalling. In Britain, since the renewed rearmament effort began, there is a demand for workers in the midlands industrial cities of England, such as Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry, etc. In these cities there was already a serious housing shortage, and with the influx of new workers the shortage has been intensified to an alarming extent. The Irish emigrants who have been attracted to these cities are, a large number of them, living in conditions of absolute degradation. In one city, where there was already an estimated shortage of 60,000 houses, over 100,000 new workers have come—one-half of whom are Irish—for whom no proper accommodation has been provided. In all, the total number of persons requiring accommodation in that city is stated to be 300,000.

I give you a few examples of the conditions that exist there. In one house fifty Irish workers are lodged, fifteen of them sleeping in one room. They pay £2 a week each for this accommodation, and they have to provide and cook their own food. In another house there are fourteen Irish workers in one room, and they pay £2.10 each week. In another house, in which eighteen workers are housed, they sleep three in a bed and pay £2.10 a week each, no meals being provided other than breakfast. In another the beds are constantly in use for both day and night shifts, and a case has been reported in which beds are occupied in the day by men and in the night by women. The accommodation shortage is exploited by avaricious landlords, and the prestige of our people generally suffers by the suggestion that ‘anything is good enough for the Irish’.

**Source:** Typescript of a report of a speech given by de Valera, April 1951; NAI, S11582. Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 285–6, 298–9.

### Questions:

1. What was the main ‘cultural aspiration’ to which de Valera referred during this speech?
2. What does de Valera see as Galway’s role in the pursuit of that cultural aspiration?
3. What evidence is there in the document that emigration was an increasing problem at the time?
4. What concerns did de Valera express about the conditions of Irish emigrants living in English cities?
5. Why do you think the Mayor of Coventry sent de Valera a telegram demanding a retraction?

## 11. De Valera on rugby, the GAA, and 'the ban', 1957

### Document 11: de Valera in conflict with the views of the GAA, 1957

Here we see how de Valera embroiled himself in a national controversy, stemming from remarks at a Blackrock College Southern Branch Reunion Dinner at Shannon Airport in 1957. He unwittingly offended the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) by expressing a preference for rugby. He stated that if more of the population played rugby, 'not only would Ireland beat England and Wales but every other country too', implying that the GAA ban precluded participation in rugby on a mainstream level. He also asserted that if Ireland was to hold its own as a nation in the face of great economic competition, its young men must have the grit and determination that schools like Blackrock gave them. De Valera also told the assembled guests that he listened to rugby matches (albeit in private) on a regular basis. Furthermore, he admitted that he had not been to a rugby match since 1913 despite having been a keen rugby player himself during his school days.

In the letter to a GAA secretary, Pádraig Ó Caoimh, de Valera clearly stated his opposition to the ban, while acknowledging that it had been useful in the days of Ascendancy influence. He went on to state that the supremacy of the GAA was well established, and did not need the protection it had needed in its infancy long ago.

When de Valera went on to become president, as head of state he attended an Ireland–Scotland rugby international (held at Lansdowne Road) on 27 February 1960.

A Phádhraic, a chara,

In view of your uniform courtesy at Croke Park and on many other occasions I would not like you to misunderstand my reported remarks at the recent Blackrock Union Dinner.

My views are very simple. I am in favour of all outdoor games. I think they make for the health and vigour of our young people. They provide enjoyable recreation and brighten country life. Team games are the most valuable of all. Without damping individual initiative they teach the value of and give practice in combined effort for agreed objectives. ...

For a number of reasons rugby is a favourite game with some of our secondary boarding schools. In some of them it has been established by a long tradition, and generation after generation of students engage in the game with enthusiasm, and follow the fortunes of their team during the season with constant interest. I think it a pity when the season is over that such students should be debarred from turning over to hurling as their summer game.

The ban has this other consequence to which I was referring when I spoke at the Blackrock Dinner. With soccer and rugby established in the international field I think it unlikely that we can succeed in getting hurling and Gaelic football into that field, except where our own are established, as for example in some of the cities of Britain and the United States. If Ireland is to match herself in football and play with national teams from England, Wales, Scotland and from France it must be in rugby or soccer, as at present. We are a relatively small nation in numbers, some four and one third millions, in comparison with countries with a population of

twenty, thirty millions and so on. We have, therefore, much fewer to pick from, and we ought not to do anything which tends to restrict the field. Many who play Gaelic football would, if the ban did not prevent them, be inclined to play rugby also. And, I have not the slightest doubt that if this were permitted our success in the international field would be outstanding, and our prestige abroad enhanced.

I do not think that under present conditions there need be any fear that the national spirit of the GAA players who would also play rugby would be lessened by contact with those who played rugby alone. I would imagine that instead the introduction of the Gaelic players would bring a strong national spirit to the rugby ranks. I know that in the partitioned area one could not be so sure of this, but I think that even there the result would be beneficial.

As you know, I played Gaelic and hurling as a boy. I have no feeling of antagonism against Gaelic football, and as for hurling I think it one of the finest of the manly games. It is distinctively our national game, and I have never seen a visitor from other countries who was not thrilled at watching a good match. I do not hide from myself that I may be somewhat prejudiced. My enthusiasm for rugby ... was developed during my time in Rockwell and Blackrock. But these are my views and I simply give them to you as such. They are, of course, purely personal and, as I indicated at the recent dinner, without any wider significance.

Sincerely yours,

P.S. As regards my remark about refraining from attending a rugby match, my reason for doing so was that I did not think my assertion of my personal right to do so would be worth the fuss, the misrepresentation, and the necessary explanations to which it would give rise.

**Source:** Typescript of letter from de Valera to Pádraig Ó Caoimh, 12 May 1957; UCDA, P150/3110. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp.312–33, 321–3.

### Questions:

1. In what way(s) are de Valera's preferences, as expressed here, at odds with stereotypical images of de Valera as a cultural nationalist?
2. Given de Valera's interest in rugby, what reasons can be given for his non-attendance at rugby matches and his listening to broadcasts of matches in private?
3. What was de Valera's attitude towards the GAA ban on 'foreign games'?
4. According to de Valera, what would be the benefits if rugby were played more widely?
5. What was 'the ban', and why was it introduced?
6. Can you suggest why de Valera as president attended a rugby international in Dublin, when he never attended before that time?

## 12. De Valera as president, 1959–73

### Document 12a: Sean Lemass compliments de Valera, 1959

In this letter, Taoiseach Seán Lemass praises the hard work of the older man, President de Valera. The younger man is in awe of de Valera’s work capacity and stamina.

July 15th

A Uachtaráin, A chara,

Thanks sincerely for your birthday greetings and good wishes. It was very kind of you to remember the occasion. Every milestone passed marks so much of life’s journey completed and reduces the number still ahead—but two score more, notwithstanding your wish, is an intimidating prospect if I have to try to ‘fill each unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run’.

Since I took over as Taoiseach, I have not ceased to wonder how you carried the burden for so long without showing the strain. You are a wonderful man and surely tough as teak.

With kindest regards and all good wishes.

Is mise, le meas mór

Seán Lemass

**Source:** Typescript of letter from Seán Lemass on his sixtieth birthday to de Valera, 15 July 1959, UCDA, P150/3497. Courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives, and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 352, 358–9.

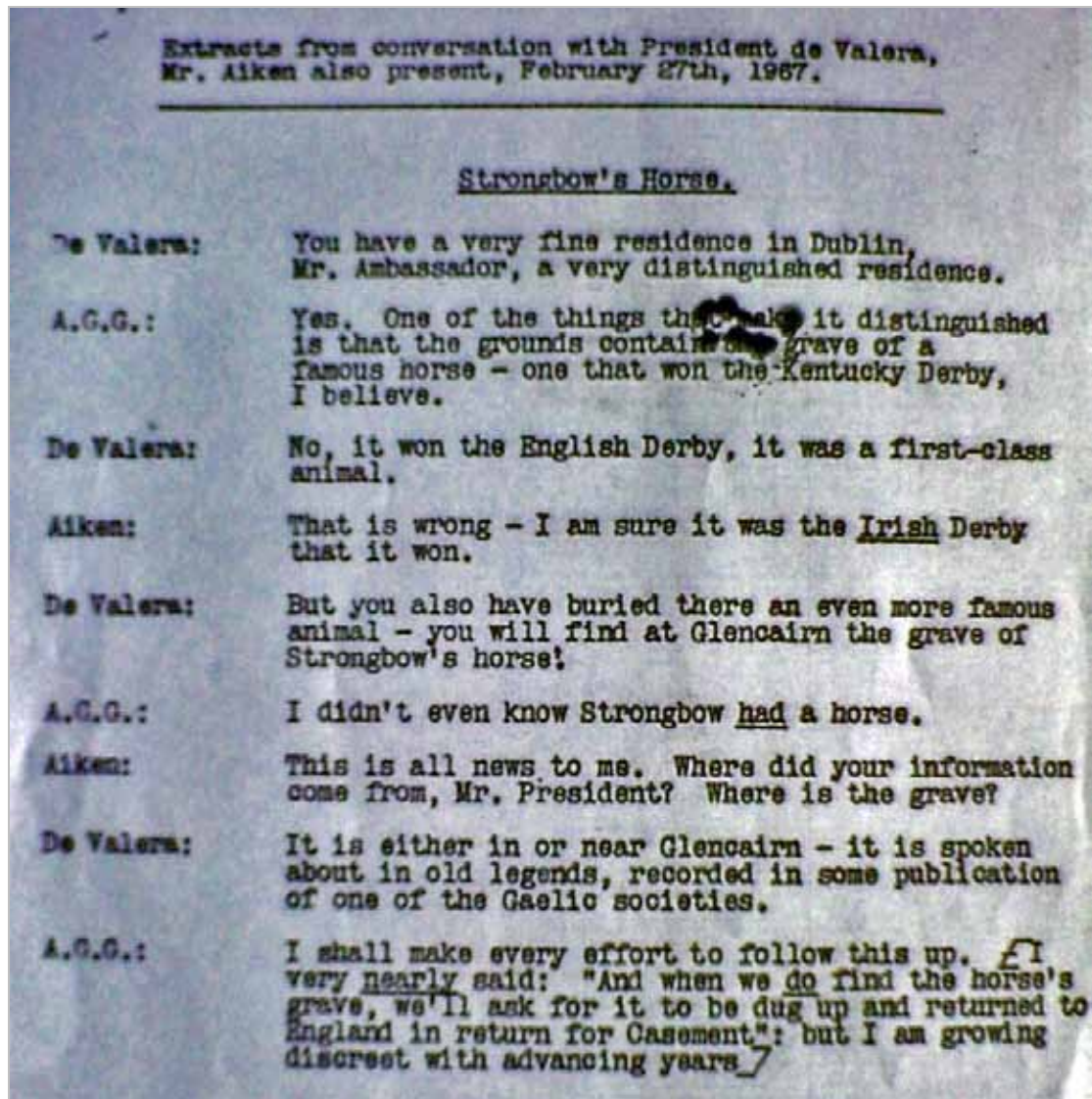
### Questions:

1. What characteristics does Lemass admire in de Valera?
2. What impression of the relationship between de Valera and Lemass does the letter convey?
3. When did Lemass become Taoiseach?
4. In what ways did the policies of Lemass as Taoiseach differ from those of de Valera?



**Document 12b:** de Valera meets the British ambassador, 1967

This document, dating from 1967, features banter between de Valera (at this time president of Ireland), Frank Aiken, Tánaiste, and the British ambassador to Ireland, Sir Andrew Gilchrist. This extract is from a light-hearted discussion about the identity of a horse which was buried in the British Embassy grounds in Dublin. Yet implied in the encounter are the rather delicate relations between Ireland and Britain at the time.



**Source:** Archive personal papers of Sir Andrew Gilchrist (Churchill Archives Centre, Gilchrist Papers, GILC 14B). © Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and Queen's Printer for Scotland.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, p. 210.

**Questions:**

1. What evidence is there in this extract of de Valera's knowledge of Irish history?
2. Suggest one reason for Gilchrist's discretion on this occasion.
3. What overall impression of de Valera's personality does the extract convey?

**Document 12c:** de Valera, a day in the life, 1972

In 1972, in his twilight years, de Valera was approached for an interview by the journalist, C. Brooks Peters, who submitted questions in advance of an interview. One of the questions, for instance, read as follows: 'In your personal view, Sir, is religion the main barrier to re-unification of the island?'. This interview was to be widely syndicated to celebrate the president's ninetieth birthday. The journalist asked a wide ranging series of questions and requested details about the president's daily routine. In response, Brooks Peters was given this outline of a 'Day in the life of the president'.

Day in the life of the president

1. Early breakfast: listens to radio news bulletins.
2. Mail and correspondence—that on private matters dealt with in conjunction with Personal Secretary; correspondence of an official nature referred to the Secretary to the President.
3. Daily Mass in Áras oratory. This is also attended by Mrs de Valera, members of the family when in residence, the Aid de Camp on duty, and members of household staff.
4. Necessary time given daily to deal with official correspondence and matters in consultation with Secretary to the President. Usually a number of documents to be signed—warrants of appointment, army commissions and bills as they are presented from the Taoiseach's Department; messages to and from other heads of state; other official correspondence and matters arising from powers and functions conferred on president by Constitution or law; invitations and arrangements for public engagements—personal engagements—personal attendance or representation at public ceremonies and functions;\* reception of state or other distinguished visitors; presentation of letters of credence etc. as occasion arises.
5. Luncheon (private or official as the case may be).

Afternoon

6. Receives overseas and other visitors, at their direct request and by appointment: (Visitors, from time to time, include representatives of international bodies and of Irish organisations with which the president is connected as patron or in whose work or aims he has a special interest), Public engagements\*; visits friends in hospitals. Receives Taoiseach, at least once a month, who keeps him generally informed on matters of domestic and international policy.

Tea; listens to radio, television; readings.

Occasional walks in grounds.



Receives personal friends.

Official dinners occasionally; formal attendance at opera or other cultural event periodically.

Usually in his study until 10pm.

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(Public engagements—i.e. memorial ceremonies, cultural events, opening of more important or national conferences, etc. may take place in morning or afternoon).

**Source:** Outline of the ‘Day in the life of the president’ sent to journalist, C. Brooks Peters from de Valera’s office, June 1972; NAI, 2003 1866. Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 156, 180–1.

**Questions:**

1. What do we learn about de Valera’s daily routine as president?
2. What might be inferred about de Valera’s personality from the details given in the document?
3. How many terms did he serve as president?

## 13. Cartoons and election posters

### Cartoons

**Cartoons (left to right):** 1. 'If Only', August 1922; 2. 'Listen and learn', June 1945; 3. 'The first meeting of the new Cabinet', March 1948

Political cartoons usually appear in the editorial pages of most daily papers; when pertinent enough, sometimes they even feature on the front pages. We are all familiar with them as they deal with current issues in the news. In fact, they could easily be called visual editorials. However, when you look at political cartoons from yesteryear, it is most important that you see them in their original context in order to 'get the point'. Thus you will need some background information either from history books or your own research to determine the correct interpretation.

This pack contains three cartoons from the *Dublin Opinion* that span several of the decades of de Valera's political career. They vary from the witty and astute slant on the topical issues of the day (William Norton raises a glass to de Valera's portrait as John A. Costello dances on the table in the cartoon entitled 'The first meeting of the new Cabinet') to the classic depiction of Churchill listening to de Valera's famous reply to the British prime minister's disdainful comments on Ireland's wartime neutrality called 'Listen and learn'.

**Source:** 1 and 2 from *Thirty Years of the Dublin Opinion*. 3 *Dublin Opinion* (dates given above), courtesy of the National Library of Ireland. 1 is also reproduced in the preliminary pages of *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter.

'If only', August 1922

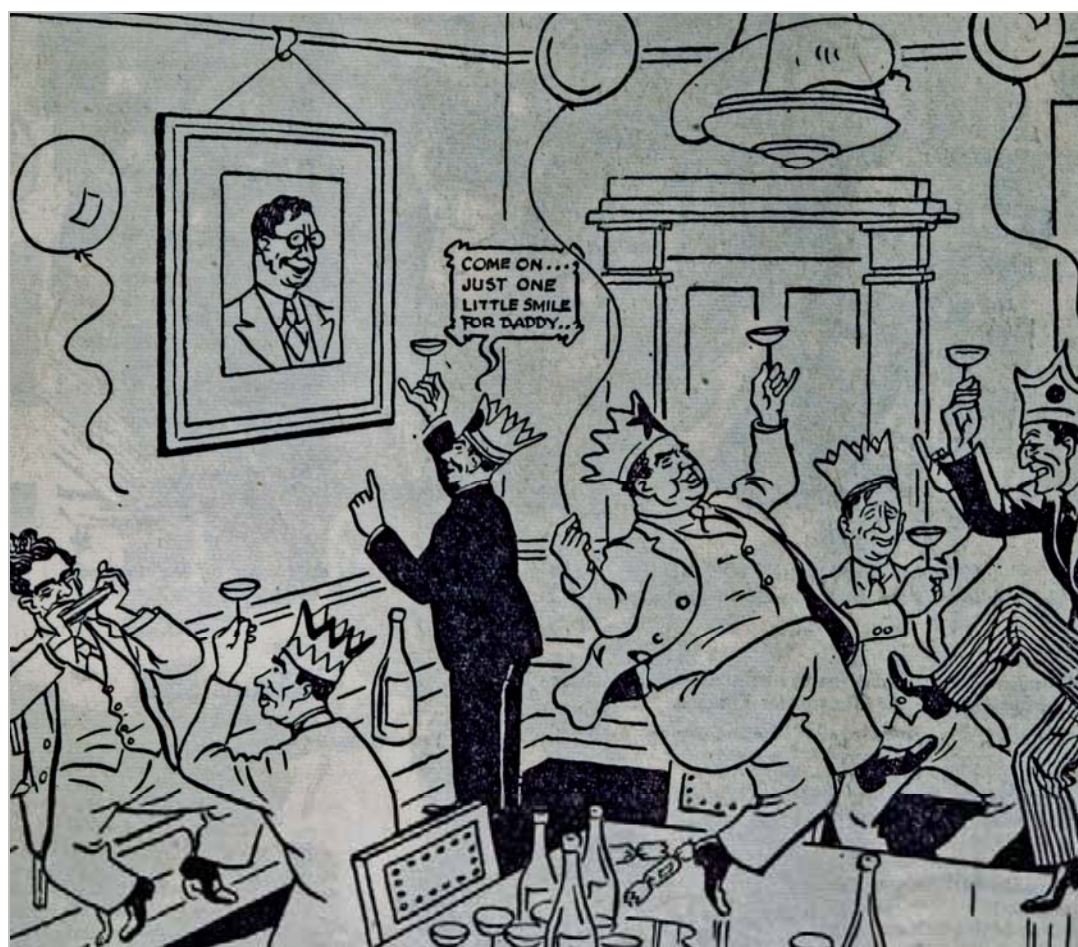
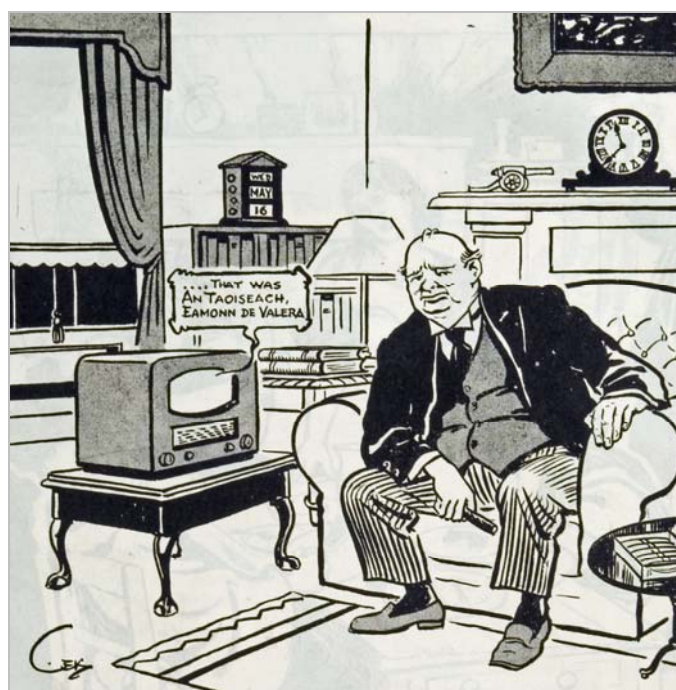
1. Describe exactly what you see in the cartoon.
2. To what issue is it referring?
3. Can you identify any symbols that the cartoonist is using?
4. What is the essential message of this cartoon?

'Listen and learn', June 1945

1. Describe exactly what you see in the cartoon.
2. To what event is it referring?
3. Why, in your opinion, is the cartoon titled 'Listen and learn'?
4. What can you infer from this cartoon?

'The first meeting of the new Cabinet', March 1949

1. Describe exactly what you see in this cartoon.
2. To what event is it referring?
3. What does the text refer to? Is it meant to be humorous or ironic or serious? If so, in what way?
4. What is the essential message of this cartoon?



## Election Posters

**Posters (left to right):** 1. ‘Speed the Plough’, 1938 general election; 2. ‘The Shadow of the Gunman’, 1932 general election; 3. ‘Skipper for this storm’, 1948 general election; 4. “Crocodile tears”, 1932 general election; 5. ‘Dead beat’, 1932 general election.

Three of these posters are for Cumann na nGaedheal from the 1932 general election. They portray de Valera in an unflattering and irreverent light. They had widespread appeal as they interpreted complex political issues of the day in a graphic and amusing way. This ensured that the ‘man on the street’ got the message, and yet could bring a smile to the face of a professor of history or a professor of politics.

**Source:** All posters courtesy of the UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership. Fianna Fáil posters reference: UCDA, P176.

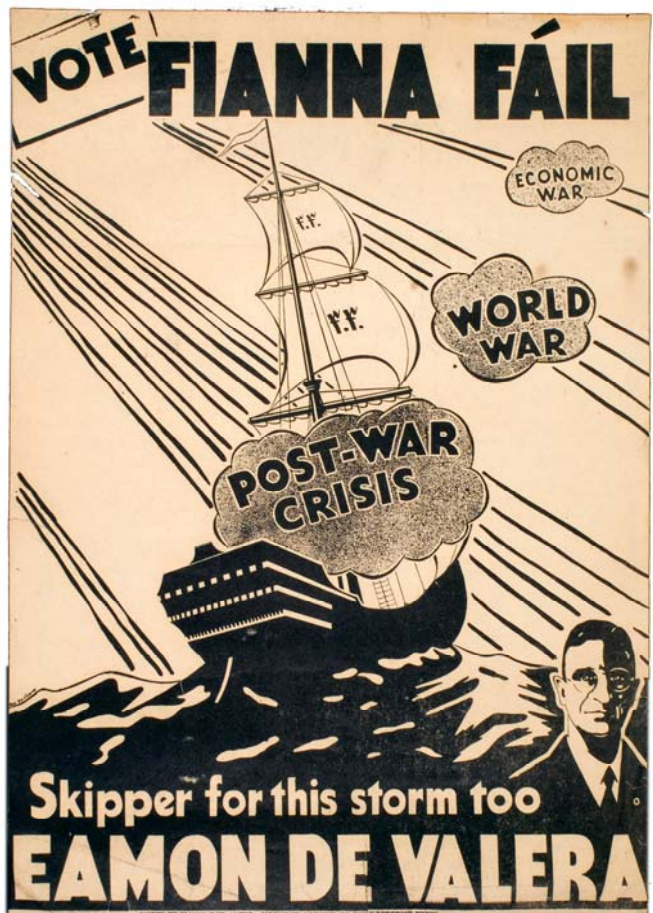
### **Questions:**

1. Choose which election posters you consider to be in favour of de Valera. Give reasons for your answer.
2. How do these posters try to persuade people to vote Fianna Fáil?
3. How do the Cumann na nGaedheal posters portray Eamon de Valera?
4. How do these posters suggest that Ireland has not prospered under Fianna Fáil?
5. How do these posters differ from election literature today?

### **Resources:**

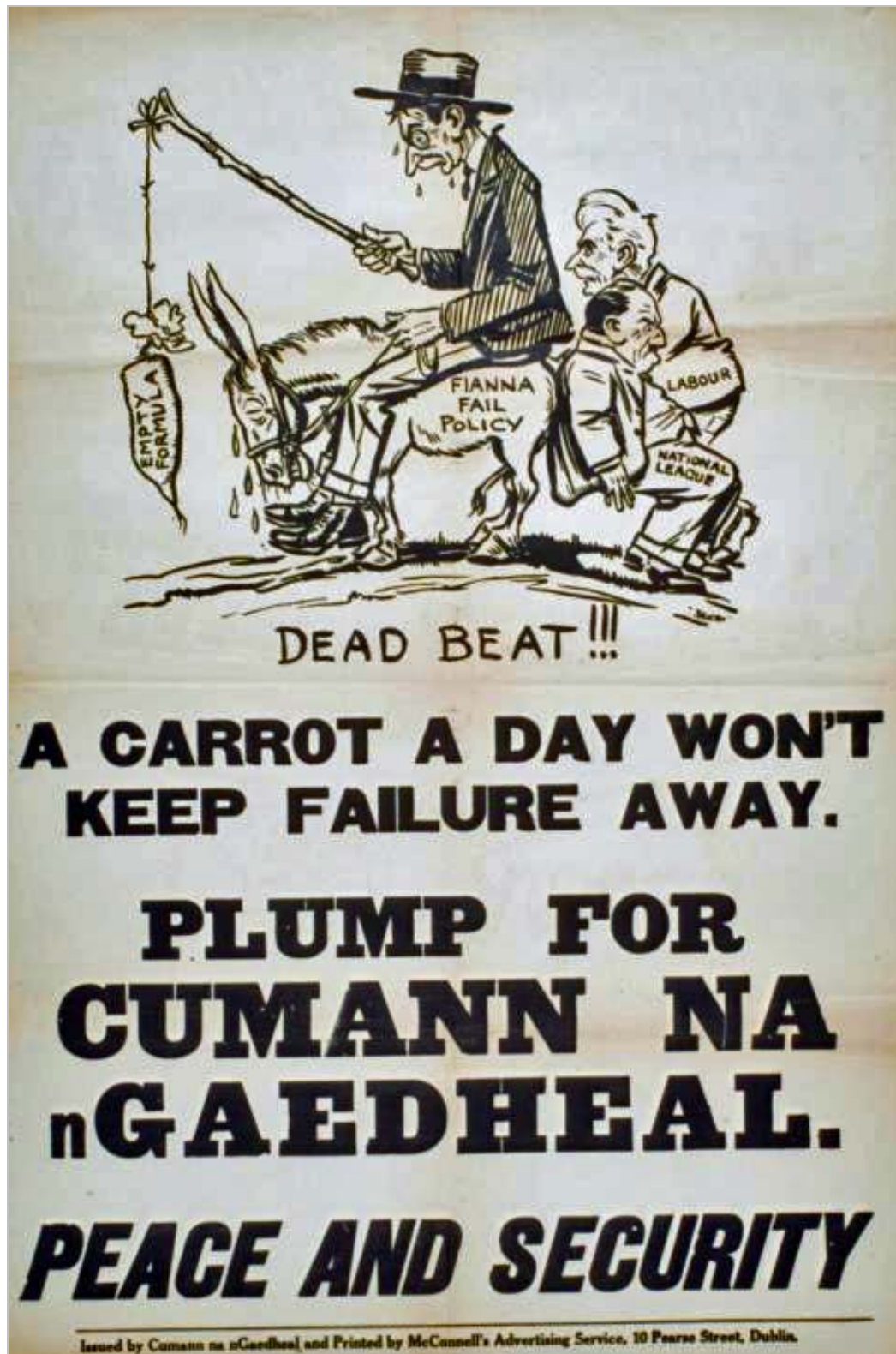
These items are examples of cartoons and election posters pertaining to de Valera and his contemporaries in Cumann na nGaedheal, and later, Fine Gael. A wider range of the posters is available from the UCD Archives, School of History and Archives, website ([www.ucd.ie/archives/](http://www.ucd.ie/archives/), last accessed 1 December 2007).











## 14. Photographs of de Valera

### Photograph 1: 'The Chief', 1919

De Valera wearing a native American ceremonial head-dress. He was made chief of a Chippewa tribe of Indians at the Chippewa Reservation Reserve, Wisconsin, when he visited it on 18 October 1919.



**Source:** UCDA, P150/871, courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, p. 22.



**Photograph 2:** de Valera and Sean T. O’Kelly outside Downing St, June 1932

This photograph shows the formally dressed figures of de Valera and Seán T. O’Kelly at 10 Downing St. De Valera was now President of the Executive Council, and O’Kelly his deputy.



**Source:** UCDA, P150/2181, courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

*Not reproduced in Judging Dev.*

**Questions:**

1. In what ways did the Free State develop its sovereignty between 1932 and 1938?
2. Did the Anglo–Irish agreements of 1938 help to strengthen Irish sovereignty? In what respect?

**Photograph 3:** de Valera and his secretary, Kathleen O’Connell, at work, 1944

This photo was taken in 1944 to celebrate Miss Kathleen O’Connell’s twenty-fifth anniversary as de Valera’s personal secretary. At this point, she had assisted him during the War of Independence, the Civil War, the founding of Fianna Fáil, his rise to power and the outbreak of the Second World War. If she had written a memoir it would have been a fascinating read.

It is also worth noting the role of working women in Ireland at that time. De Valera’s Constitution of 1937 had proved to be extremely controversial with women’s groups both at home and abroad. Indeed if Miss O’Connell had married, as a civil servant, she would have been forced to resign her position.



**Source:** UCDA, P150/246, courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, p. 244.

**Photograph 4:** de Valera talking to reporters outside Lincoln Jail, 1950

Here we see de Valera in 1950, now quite then elder statesman. Surrounded by the press pack, he is being interviewed outside Lincoln Jail, from which he had made his daring escape in 1919.



**Source:** UCDA, P150/623, courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, pp. 190–1.

**Questions:**

1. Why was this picture so newsworthy?
2. Why was de Valera imprisoned in 1919?
3. How did he make his escape?
4. What other events were happening in Ireland during 1919?

**Photograph 5:** kissing the ring of John Charles McQuaid, 1962

De Valera is pictured here on bended knee, kissing the ring of Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin. The occasion was the turning of the sod for the Science Building in UCD in 1962.



**Source:** UCDA, P150/3855, courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, p. 214.

**Questions:**

1. This photograph appeared in the *Irish Press*. Why was this newspaper established?
2. What impression does the picture convey of the nature of church–state relations at the time?



**Photograph 6:** de Valera teaches algebra to his eldest grandson, Eamon, April 1967

This candid family photograph indicates de Valera’s lifelong fascination in mathematics. De Valera and his grandson were so absorbed in their diagrams they appear oblivious to the camera.



**Source:** UCDA, P150/156, courtesy of UCD Archives, School of History and Archives; and the UCD–OFM Partnership.

See *Judging Dev* by Diarmaid Ferriter, p. 302.

**Question:**

1. What impressions does the photograph convey of de Valera as a ‘family man’?